TABERNACLE SERMONS (5 VOL)

by N.B. Hardeman

A five-volume collection of sermons by the renowned preacher N.B. Hardeman, originally delivered at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. These biblically grounded and eloquently delivered messages were influential in church growth during their original publication and circulation.

122 Chapters

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1.00.01 - N. B. HARDEMAN

N. B. HARDEMAN

N. B. Hardeman was born to Dr. John Bellefont Hardeman and Nancy Jane Hardeman on May 18, 1874, near Milledgeville, McNairy County, Tennessee. He was baptized by R. P. Meeks while attending West Tennessee Christian College about 1890. In June 1895 he graduated with a B.A. degree from this school which later became Georgie Robertson Christian College. He later received the M.S. degree from this school.

He began his career as all educator in the rural schools of West Tennessee. He was a member of the faculty of Georgie Robertson Christian College for eight years, 1897-1905. In 1908 he and A. G. Freed established the National Teachers' Normal and Business. College. It was renamed Freed-Hardeman College in 1919. He served as Vice President from 1908 to 1920. He was acting President for a few years and President from 1925 until his retirement in 1950.

Brother Hardeman studied the Bible under R. P. Meeks, A. G. Freed and Hall L. Calhoun. The text of his first sermon was Romans 1:16. He reached the peak of his preaching when invited by the churches of Nashville for the great Ryman Auditorium Tabernacle Meetings.

Brother Hardeman died in Memphis, Tennessee, on November 6,1965, after a brief illness and was laid to rest in the Henderson cemetery on November 8, 1965.

1.00.02 - Foreword

Foreword

We are thankful to Joe Hardeman and Martha Foy for reprinting Volumes I and III of Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons. Later we hope the other three volumes can be republished. For over a half a century these sermons were widely circulated and used. The sermon content was biblical and eloquently delivered by N. B. Hardeman, perhaps the most popular and influential preacher during his prime. He has been often called "the prince of preachers." The sermons N. B. Hardeman preached are the kind which enabled the church to grow and prosper. Because of current conditions both in and out of the brotherhood the sermons brother Hardeman preached should live again. Today the church sorely stands in need of this kind of preaching.

It is fitting to have brother Hardeman's grandson, Joe Hardeman Foy, and his wife, Martha, to underwrite the cost of the republication in order to make these available to the ministerial students at Freed-Hardeman University and to the brotherhood. Joe Hardeman Foy is all alumnus and a member of the Board of Trustees of Freed-Hardeman University. We are thankful for his continued interest and desire to see Freed-Hardeman remain faithful to the fundamental purpose enunciated by A. G. Freed and N. B. Hardeman in this Christian education endeavor.

We are thankful to the Gospel Advocate Company who has been the publisher of Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons for relinquishing all rights to Freed-Hardeman University to publish them.

E. Claude Gardner, President Freed-Hardeman University

1.00.03 - Preface

PREFACE

I am grateful to President E. Claude Gardner of Freed-Hardeman University for allowing us to support a new publication of Hardeman’s Tabernacle Sermons, Volumes I and III. Hundreds of faithful preachers trained under the author of these books; thousands have been influenced by the sound logic and crystal clarity of their exposition.

These two volumes are my favorites, along with "The Spirit of Christ" and "I Am Debtor" from Volumes IV and V, respectively, which at my request have been added to Volume III. The reflections of my grandfather on Romans 1:14 in "I Am Debtor" exemplify his philosophy Each of us is indebted to others for most of the privileges, strengths and knowledge that we possess; our obligation is to make our own contribution to mankind, in whatever degree we may, to continue the growth and development of human knowledge and character. Thus the ultimate question for the discharge of each person’s obligation is this: Is the world better for my having lived? The Tabernacle Meeting sermons are the product of all oratorical era now largely past. They were not written in advance, but their basic ideas were clothed in eloquent words inspired by the huge audiences and their rapt attention. The transcriptions are faithful to the sermons as delivered. Such elegant oral composition was possible only because of the orator’s complete mastery of the subject matter, and of the English language, its vocabulary, its construction and its usages. Our hope in supporting this revival is that young students and preachers may learn, by these examples, principles of logical argument and rhetoric that will help them achieve a more effective power to persuade. My grandfather encouraged his students, if they wished, to quote from his sermons without attribution. Many have done so over the years; others who wish to do so should feel free to use that same privilege.

These sermons were a powerful force in the growth of the church in Tennessee and elsewhere in the second and third quarters of the century. We offer them as living works that can enrich the knowledge and encourage the commitment of the brotherhood in these times.

Joe H. Foy

PREFACE

Inasmuch as there have been many excellent volumes of evangelistic literature published by the brethren, I feel that some explanation as to why this one is being brought out is necessary.

I have always felt reluctant about "rushing into print." I have not been accustomed to writing for the religious papers for at least two reasons first, I have known that there were many others much better prepared to do so than I; and, second, I have been so bud engaged for years that I have not been able to find the time. Friends have suggested and requested at other times that some of my speeches and sermons be reported and published; but I could not see that it was best to do so, and, therefore, did not give my consent. After I had accepted the invitation to do the preaching in

the great Nashville meeting, some of those most directly concerned wrote to know if I would grant them permission to have the sermons published and the proceeds from their sale used to help defray the expenses of the meeting. Under such conditions I felt that I could not refuse my consent, and so that accounts for the present volume.

Owing to the fact that my duties in connection with Freed-Hardeman College for a number of years have required so much of my time and labor, I have not been able to give that thought and painstaking care to the preparation and delivery of sermons that the great importance of such work demands. For that reason they do not have that perfection of form and accuracy of speech that otherwise they might. Not only so, but there are few men whose speech, however attractive it may be, will read as well when reduced to cold type as it sounds when delivered orally. I realize that I am not one of that few. With reference to the sermons contained in this book, a paragraph from the Preface of a similar volume by E. V. Zollars so fully expresses my own sentiments that I am taking the liberty to quote it: "I know that I am indebted very deeply to what I have read and what I have heard; yet how to give the credit due, I know not, further than to say I claim no merit for originality. If the thoughts are familiar, for the most part, to many of the readers of this little volume, it is because they have enjoyed privileges similar to my own. Even if the phraseology in many cases is strikingly familiar, do not blame me; for how can I hell it, since I have become thoroughly saturated with the teach ing, both verbal and written? Certainly if I say many things in much the same way that others have said them, it will not be wondered at under the circumstances."

Allow me to say further in the language of the same author: "I fear that some are drifting away from the old landmarks that so clearly characterized the restoration movement in its earlier days. Some of the old themes that used to be handled with telling effect by the pioneers are now seldom preached from some pulpits. It is, however, a noticeable fact that when `first principles' are shunned, evangelistic results are correspondingly meager. The men who are eminently successful in bringing souls to Christ are the men who preach a full gospel. Its facts, commands, and promises are all declared. Show me the man who eliminates 'first principles' from his preaching, and I will show you one who has eliminated the baptistery from his church, so far as it is of any practical service—nay, I will show you a man who is in doubt as to whether the disciples have any distinctive message for the world. Let us never forget that the union of the people of God, by a return to New Testament Christianity, will be a peculiar and distinctive message, so long as Christians are divided into hostile or semi-hostile sects through departures from the Christianity of the apostolic day."

Many who heard these sermons delivered and who desired to read them in print requested that they be left as nearly as possible in the form in which they were spoken. Hence, in preparing the manuscripts for the printer, as few changes as possible have been made.

Acknowledgments are due Prof. L. L. Brigance, with whom I have labored for a number of years, for valuable assistance in the preparation of the outlines from which many of these sermons were preached, and also for much labor and care in getting the manuscripts ready to be printed.

If the reading of these sermons shall cause some soul to see the beauty and simplicity of the gospel of Christ and lead it through obedience into the glorious promises thereof, the author shall feel repaid for all his efforts. THE AUTHOR.

Henderson, Tenn., June, 1922.

Chapter 4

1.01 - HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING For a number of years there had been a desire upon the part of many Christians in Nashville to conduct a great central meeting through the cooperative efforts of the different churches of the city. For various reasons no decisive step in that direction was taken till the early autumn of 1921. At the invitation of the Grandview Heights congregation, the first meeting to consider the matter was held in their house of worship on September 6, 1921. No constructive work was done at this meeting other than that those present agreed to place the matter before their respective congregations for action. The brethren were all agreed that if the work should be undertaken it should be done by the local congregations cooperating with each other. While they worked together, each congregation was all independent unit and was in no way bound or obligated by any action taken by others. A number of business meetings were held at different houses of worship in the city before all of the plans of the meeting were completed. In none of these meetings was the individuality of the local congregations lost sight of, and all action taken and every decision reached was subject to their approval later.

Quite naturally, there were a number of things concerning which there was room for difference of opinion, such as the time and place for the meeting, the proper ones to do the preaching and lead the singing, the kind of song books to use, and various other details. The brethren who attended the business meetings discussed these matters freely and fully, each urging the adoption of his views; but where no scriptural principle was involved, when it was ascertained what the will of the majority was, the minority gracefully yielded. Thus every decision was unanimous, and the believers were of one soul and one mind; and the spirit of unity, concord, and Christian fellowship continued throughout the meetings. At the first meeting to consider the proposition, J. E. Acuff, of the Charlotte Avenue congregation, was requested by common agreement to suggest certain brethren from the various congregations of the city to devise ways and means in a more detailed manner, each to act, however, in all advisory capacity and to serve only under the directions of the eldership of the congregation represented. Those named at the time were: George B. Farrar, of the Belmont congregation; G. S. Davis, Twelfth Avenue; R. W. Comer, Chapel Avenue; Frank Jones, Waverly-Belmont; Dr. W. Boyd, Donelson; P. W. Miller, Foster Street; L. B. Corley, Grandview Heights.

Other groups of brethren or committees who were later selected in like manner to perform the necessary preparatory work, and who were likewise to serve for the various congregations and not under any constituted authority of their own, were as follows:

Finance Hall Cullom, Norman N. Davidson, Charles G. Akin, J. C. Lawson, R. W. Comer, S. F. Morrow, A. M. Burton, J. W. Owen, and Alex Perry.

Publicity—Paul W. Miller, Wayne Burton, A. N. Trice, John E. Cotton, James A. Allen, Lytton Alley, and W. S. Moody.

Usher Arrangements—John B. Shacklett, J. H. Sutton, E. L. Starkey, J. E. Simpkins, Robert King, W. C. DeFord, and J. N. Owen.

Song Preparations George S. Davis, Brantley Boyd, Joe Ridley, J. T. Allen, J. W. Dickson, Roy Williams, and Edgar Stevens.

Scores of others later participated just as actively in various features of the preparatory work. Early in the year all office was established in Room 234 of the Maxwell House as a matter of convenience in dispatching the arrangements. From this office much advertising matter was distributed, both by mail and otherwise. Uniform advertising campaigns were conducted, hundreds of laborers working from the headquarters and the respective congregations in the distribution of circulars, blotters, and invitations to every home in the city. The advertising campaign set a new precedent among the churches of Christ. It was done in a wonderfully thorough manner. For weeks before the meeting began, various notices, references, and articles appeared in the daily papers of the city. About 100,000 blotters announcing it were distributed; 65,000 personal invitation cards were sent out; large illuminated signs were erected along the car lines; a half-page ad. appeared in both the daily papers on the day before the meeting opened; and also a page or two of the city telephone directory was assigned to different ladies of the various churches, who called everybody in Nashville that had a telephone and gave them a personal invitation to attend the meeting. The result of this thorough advertising was that when the meeting opened on Tuesday night, March 28, the great Ryman Auditorium, seating 6,000 or 8,000 people, was packed, and it was estimated that 2,000 people were turned away.

After much consultation and deliberation, N. B. Hardeman, acting president of Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tenn., was selected to do the preaching, and C. M. Pullias, minister of the church of Christ at Murfreesboro, Tenn., to direct the song service. That they met all expectations and justified the wisdom of their selection was attested by the fact that thousands were "singing their praises" when the meeting came to a close. The Ryman Auditorium is said to be the largest in the State of Tennessee. It will seat from 6,000 to 8,000 people. At many of the services during this meeting it was "packed and jammed," and sometimes it was estimated that 2,000 to 3,000 persons were turned away. There is something in the presence of a great assembly of human beings that is highly emotional in its influence. It is said that when old Xerxes looked out at one time upon his great army of a million men, he was so overcome with emotion that he burst into tears. To look out upon the great multitudes that gathered during the Hardeman-Pullias meeting, and especially to hear their voices blending together in singing the praises of God, was a scene and all occasion never to be forgotten.

While Brother Hardeman was speaking to the audiences that gathered at the Auditorium from time to time, the typesetters in the newspaper offices were only a few minutes behind him in setting up the same speech; and within a few hours thereafter the printed sermon in full was in the hands of many times the number who had heard the speech at the Auditorium, scattered for hundreds of miles in every direction. The Tennessean, with a sworn statement of circulation of forty-odd thousand, carried both the noon and night sermons; and the Nashville Banner, with a sworn circulation likewise of over forty thousand, carried the noon sermon in full; while both papers gave extensive news notices and sermon surveys. It is doubtful whether any preacher of the Restoration movement previously was ever so extensively quoted or had his sermons printed in

full for so long a series by the secular papers.

Everything seemed to be right for such a meeting. The time was ripe. It was ripe from the standpoint of a strong force of loyal adherents to the cause to back the movement—a harvest of three-quarters of a century of labor of stalwart and loyal laborers in the Master's vineyard in planting the cause in Nashville. It was ripe, too, from the standpoint of a general awakening of religious interests dominating the city at the very time and season of the year at which the meetings were held. The denominations, also well represented in Nashville, had been actively engaged in revivals of great magnitude, awakening the public mind to religious interest and fervor. Not only was the time right, but the place for such a history-making revival was strategic. In Nashville and vicinity there are forty-odd congregations, with a representation of from six thousand to ten thousand members, each of which is endeavoring to pattern after the New Testament church both in organization and manner of worship. Each is all independent unit in its respective community, selfgoverning, and, therefore, unhampered by overhead board or denominational control. Each is organized with its elders, or bishops, and deacons, after the pattern of the New Testament congregations, but with no other officers; and each seeks to rule in accordance with New Testament directions to these officials. The congregations recognize no other board or agency as having authority in the direction of their affairs. Each congregation is governed by the Bible as its only creed and guide, and each endeavors to worship after the order of the New Testament churches, without addition or subtraction as to the items of worship therein prescribed and recorded. The membership of these congregations, while they claim no exclusive right to the name "Christian" or any other New Testament privilege, have adopted no other name for distinction from others. They prefer union with them. The above-prescribed policy is adhered to in Nashville and community by a larger representation, perhaps, than that of any other city or community in America, thus making Nashville the American Jerusalem in the matter of restored primitive simplicity in Christianity. Thus was not only the time opportune, but the place was strategic; and the preparations for the revival began—not a few months ago, nor yet by David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, James A. Harding, James E. Scobey, T. B. Larimore, and a host of others of their colaborers now gray in the service; but the preparations were under way in the pioneer days of Tolbert Fanning and Philip S. Fall, who labored in Tennessee, while Samuel Rogers, J. T. Johnson, and Moses E. Lard evangelized in Kentucky, while Thomas M. Allen and the Creaths pushed the cause westward in Missouri, while William Hayden, associated much of the time with Thomas Campbell, preached to Ohioans, and while the Ohio pioneer, John Henry, was making his sixty-thousand-mile campaign on horseback and baptizing his twelve hundred converts. The results of this meeting cannot be measured by any of us during this life. It is believed that the remote results will be far greater than the immediate. While there were about two hundred baptisms at the Auditorium and the local church houses and some twenty-five restorations, nevertheless it is thought that the influences of this combined effort of forty or more churches of Christ cooperating in a great missionary undertaking will be felt among the churches all over the land and for many years to come. So far as is known, no meeting of such proportions has been conducted by the disciples of Christ since the days of inspiration. An old colored preacher, on the last night of the meeting, who couldn't suppress his feelings any longer, was heard to exclaim that "de only diffunce 'twixt dis an' Pentecost is dat we is jes' in Nashville 'stid o' Jerusalem."

It is believed that the big scale on which the meeting was planned, advertised, and carried out will help us to see the great interests of the kingdom in a bigger way than ever before and encourage and inspire us to put forth greater efforts to extend its borders than have ever been done in the past.

Some unusual order that prevailed. Scarcely was there a whisper in the vast audiences; no one left the building, but hundreds stood many times throughout the entire service. Another was that the speaker quoted from memory his Scripture lessons and references, which were numerous, not having a Bible in the building more than once or twice during the meeting. Still another very unique feature was the song service. Thousands of voices were lifted up in singing the praises of God, and the great building was made to ring with melody; and yet no instrument of any kind, not even a tuning fork, was used. It was rather remarkable that out of perhaps three hundred songs started and led by Brother Pullias, he seemed never to have missed the pitch of one a hair's breadth. And, finally, a thing that astonished the public as much as any other was the fact that not a thing was said about money and no collection was taken from beginning to end. At the last service it was announced that all expenses had been met.

Thus came and went, perhaps, taking it all in all, the greatest meeting conducted by the churches of Christ since New Testament times.

NOTE.—The above account was compiled from notes and manuscripts prepared by Brethren J. E. Acuff and Wayne Burton, of Nashville.

Chapter 5

1.02 - THE BIBLE

THE BIBLE My brethren and friends, I would be untrue to myself and to the best that in me is unless I express to you at this time my genuine appreciation, both to you and to almighty God, for the very kindly reception you have given me, for the presence of such a splendid audience, and for the interest you thus evidence in those things that transcend the realms of time.

I rejoice that it is mine to come to the city of Nashville— a city known throughout the length and breadth of our land as one of learning, of culture, and of refinement. This is a city characterized by a religious zeal that is unsurpassed by any other in our American Union. I appreciate the fact that you have reverence for Jehovah and respect for his word. I have come, not for self-exploitation, nor publicity, nor for personal glory, but that I may be able in my humble manner to present to you the sweetest story ever told, with the hope that it may revive those who have tasted the joys of the Lord, that it may convict others and persuade them to spend their days in the service of "Him from whom all blessings flow." As we launch into the campaign before us, I am conscious of the fact that it differs from some others that now challenge the attention of our citizenship, in that the issues are neither transient nor ephemeral, but are perpetual and eternal. The things with which we have to deal appeal to that part of man that not only has to do with time and timely things, but that must stand in the presence of the great God of the universe at the last day and render an account for the deeds done here.

I recognize that it is not in man that lives to direct his own steps; and, therefore, it is but becoming and it quite well behooves us to hide ourselves behind the cross of Christ and rest upon God’s word. And hence the text, from Psalms 119:105 : "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

I stand in your presence a firm believer in the all-sufficiency of this volume that lies before me. I realize that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And as said in 2 Peter 3:1 : "According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness."

Let me suggest to you that all this audience knows of either heaven or hell, or of the Holy Spirit, or of Christ, or of the angels, or of the boundless beyond toward which we are so rapidly passing, they have learned it either directly or indirectly from the word of God. In view of that, therefore, it is not amiss at this, our first, service to call attention to the study of this Bible as a boolean

I take it that this company before me assembled accepts this book as the word of God Divine. I think I speak to people who recognize that the very foundation of our country and the civilization in which we abide rests upon our faith, confidence, respect, and reverence for God’s word. Will you, therefore, with me study to-night some of the things that might be interesting, helpful, and profitable regarding this wonderful volume in our midst? I submit to you, first of all, that this is among the oldest books in all the world. I am aware of the fact that others claim to antedate it, but

they have been weighed in the balance and found exceeding doubtful. The Bible records events from the beginning of creation down to the year 96 A.D. Many of the things reported therein transpired long before the pyramids were built along the course of the River Nile. Let it be remembered that the songs of David and Solomon had been sung: and they had gone to their rewards before the great classic poet of Greece had given the account of the Trojan War and the wanderings of Ulysses. Many of the books of the Bible were complete before the first public library was built in the old, historic city of Athens; and all the prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi, had given us a vision of future events and had passed away before the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were announced. Two thousand years have passed since the Holy Spirit laid down the pen of inspiration to grasp it nevermore, during which time wonderful things in the earth have been wrought. And yet it is strange to say that the Bible is just as applicable to the people of this hour as it was to those of the first century, when fresh it came from the hand that penned it.

I think it interesting, further, to study the character of the writings, and also of the writers, because of the peculiar and unique features thereof. In this one library or collection there are sixty-six books, penned by practically forty different writers, stretching over a period from first to last of sixteen hundred years. And I ask: Who are they? Not a people surrounded by the advantages that characterize modern times, with all our equipment and facilities for learning, but descendants of a people that had been in bondage four hundred and thirty years, whose lives were burdened, and whose tasks were exceedingly difficult under the overseers and masters that used them to fill the already overflowing coffers of the great Egyptian government. They passed out from under that bondage by the hand of God and the leadership of Moses and wandered for forty years in the wilderness. Under Joshua they crossed the River Jordan and drove out the enemy, and finally took possession of the land promised unto their fathers. Untutored and unlearned though they were, not a literary folk by any means, scattered over a period of sixteen hundred years, writing about the same events, in a country not much larger than the county of Davidson, yet when their products are brought together and woven into one complete whole, there is not a contradiction or discrepancy of serious consideration found in the entire collection. The Jews have never been known as a literary people in fact. I think it well worth saving that. outside of the book of God and perhaps the history written by Josephus, there is not a literary production from the pen of a Jew that occupies first rank in the literature of the world. As a nation, they have disintegrated and have scattered to the four quarters of the earth; their very name has become a byword among the people; and yet they have lived and have given to the world a book that is found in every civilized land ’neath the broad expanse of heaven tonight, that occupies the first place, challenges the sincerest thought of the best of all the earth; and I suggest that it is not amiss to wonder, in passing, how account for matters of this kind?

Sometimes we are asked: "Is the Bible a book noted for its science?" Is it of scientific value? Let it be modestly said that, in the commonly accepted sense of the term, it was never intended as a treatise of that kind and character; but out of all the books ever scanned by mortal man, let me say, without fear of contradiction, that it is the only one ever written of which every word is dependable and absolutely reliable. Let me say, further, that there is not a real scientific principle known that is in violation of or contradictory to the word of God. I know that throughout the ages the enemies of the word of the Lord have sought to find discrepancies. They have endeavored to discount God’s volume on the ground that it is contradicted by scientific research, but they ought to

bear in mind that science is yet in its infancy—that the accepted theories of yesterday are contradicted by those of today.

Due to a failure to understand one or both, the Bible and science have been considered by many contradictory, and the fight has been on between them. But I have an idea that in the not far distance pseudo-scientists will have reached their limits, and then real science and the Bible will set out on convergent lines that will by and by come together. Forgetting, then, the bitterness of the past in the joy of newly found truth, they will clasp hands and together cast the crowns of their triumphs—the triumphs of science and Christianity—at the feet of their common Author and God shall be proclaimed Lord of all.

I have noted as a historic fact that the civilization of every land has had to go back, despite the claims and progress of humanity, to the foundation laid by God in that wonderful document given to Moses, and upon that the governments of earth rest as upon a foundation of adamant. Moreover, in the special relationships of man to man, let it be understood and forgotten not that we go back to the Sermon on the Mount to find the philosophy of life, and the passing of the centuries has failed to record improvements upon that found there.

I suggest this thought just now, in passing: that out of the great chaotic condition that exists in the nations of the earth there is a star of hope rising from its far-distant home a hope indicative of better things; and that hope is this: that when man, in all his boasted vanity, has proven a failure, when the nations of this earth have gone their limits, when business men of every type shall come to themselves, they may all recognize their dependence and accept the golden rule laid down by the greatest of all teachers—viz., that we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Then peace and tranquility, happiness and prosperity, will once more smile upon the earth

I call your attention next to this particular characteristic: The Bible, unlike all books written by man, does not become obsolete with the passing of the years. That is a statement that particularly belongs to the Bible, and to it alone. It is a boasted declaration of this generation that, due to progress and learning, our textbooks used a few years ago are no longer found in the schoolrooms of to-day. Where is the old blue-back spelling book? Where are McGuffey's old readers? Where are Smiley's arithmetics and Barnes' series of histories? They have yielded to the mutations of time; and, therefore, the books that we study today were unknown a generation ago. The very textbooks in our schools on science will give way to-morrow for those with different theories. There must be the adoption of a more modern book. The Bible knows no such thing as passing while the ages come and go. It is ever fresh, like unto a mountain spring from which all our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers slaked their thirst in genorations gone by; and still, to us, the same spring offers that drink afresh, and it will continue to offer it to those yet unborn. While it treats of the most sublime problems known to man—of God and of Christ, of heaven and of hell, of salvation and redemption—yet the passing centuries have never added one single thought unto the statements therein found. Scientists cannot get ahead of it. Human progress cannot overtake it or get beyond it. Every generation born upon the earth finds the Bible waiting for it, with its fresh and never-failing stores of wisdom touching everything that affects the welfare of humanity.

Another characteristic of the word of God is the fact that, unlike most, if not all, of the books written by man, it can be translated into different languages and lose none of its power. I take it that this explains why the Greek and other classics of days gone by have remained in the language

wherein they were penned. It has been demonstrated that a change to other tongues is but the depreciation, the sounding of the death knell, to the writings and productions of man. But here is a volume that seems to run freely into other languages. It has been translated into more than five hundred different tongues and dialects, and yet it is so plain and clear in its declarations that when we read it we scarcely stop to think that we are reading a book penned in a language other than our own. But let me announce a stranger fact still. Of all the books the world has ever known, there has never been but one that has incurred the hatred of mortal man. Many books have been disliked, but they had only to be let alone in order to pass out of existence and to be numbered with the past. But the Bible has had a persistent and murderous enemy ever on its trail, seeking to annihilate it, to wipe it from the face of the earth. Had you ever stopped to think of the reason for such a feeling manifested toward it? The Bible has a supernatural enemy who has experienced its power, and ever since he was "knocked out in the third round" the devil has marshaled all his forces to rid the world of the sword of the Spirit. But there is perhaps another reason which I suggest for your study to-night, and that is this: The Bible draws an appalling picture of man. It does not proclaim his career as one of progress, ever reaching toward holy realms, but rather the reverse. It suggests his course as one of dankness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. It does not picture man as having come into adverse conditions of life by no fault of his own, nor does it represent him as using all the powers of his being in trying to overcome a situation; but it says: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 5:1.) And then, coming down the ages to the New Testament, as revealed in Romans 1:29-31, the Bible pictures man as "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." And the picture further describes him as having gone astray and walking according to the course of this world and according to the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. His wisdom is ridiculed and his deeds condemned. He is without God and without hope. When a man looks upon that appalling scene, it is anything but encouraging and inviting; and, therefore, to rid the world of a portrait like that, the enemies have kept up the fight. But that is not all. Let me say to you to-night, the Bible is the only thing in all this wide world that claims to exercise authority and dominion over man. That very claim is contrary to our disposition and our nature. We are a democratic people, and love to boast of liberty, of absolute freedom; and I repeat: God’s word is the only thing that comes to us and proposes to hold us accountable and amenable for our deeds and for our steps along the pathway of life. Neither does the Bible consult us nor advise with us as to how we would prefer to have it; but it speaks, indeed, as one having authority—not upon a plane or level with mankind, but superhuman, and issues its decrees and its edicts in the form of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." Thus it speaks to the governors and kings, to fathers and to mothers, to masters and to servants, to the rich and to the poor, to the bond and to the free, circumscribing, therefore, our liberty and holding us in check. The disposition of the world is to break all bonds and to know no limitations, to yield to the appetites, the passions, and the lusts of our own being; and could the enemies of the Bible get rid of it, the man of sin would be revealed and anarchy would reign triumphant over the splendid land in which we live. But this is not all. There have been ambitious schemes and hellish purposes harbored by men—yea, by governments and by empires—to exercise dominion over

other nations, regardless of their wishes and contrary to the principles of holy writ.

Half a century ago the imperial German Government, prompted by such hellish intent and desire of world-wide power, started out to subject the peoples of this earth. Have you ever studied their tactics along this line? They first undertook to get rid of the book of God, and by legislative enactment they drove it out at the back door of the schoolroom and said: "We will train a generation of boys and girls, not under the influence of the God of the Bible, but under the influence of the god of war." And let me say to you that but for the fact that the power of the Bible was driven out and eliminated, the black crimes and the atrocious deeds that characterize historic pages could never have been possible. When I say to you that their propaganda started forty years ago, that it spread through their government, and that its influence reached the proud land of America, I but state that which all of us have come to recognize as a fact.

German professors were dispatched to every country on earth, and we were elated and wonderfully puffed up when Germany and the language thereof was the standard of education in our own land. But, sadly, as our observation has led us to see, the faith of the youth of our own land has been shipwrecked and the very foundation of our civilization undermined. But we are on the crest of turning back, and I am delighted to know that from various platforms educators, statesmen, and preachers are warning the people and arguing very strongly that upon the simplicity of that faith announced in Holy Writ rests the hope of our republic and of our civilization. Hence, as long as God’s word stands and men respect it, no such outbreaks are possible unto a civilized people. That no influence can be in its way, the enemy has sought to destroy the Bible from the face of the earth. May I suggest to you, as a matter of history, some of the efforts that have been made along that line? At first it was tried by physical force. The powers of church and state have been united to rid the earth of every book that bears the name of Jehovah upon it. Officers have been selected and empowered to make a detailed search into the homes to find God’s word, and, if it were found, to confiscate it and bring it unto the powers that be for its absolute destruction. Edicts and decrees went forth, laws were passed, and those persons found with the Bible were subjected to fines and imprisonment—yea, unto death itself. But the devil and his cohorts failed in a matter of that sort. Then they turned and called to their support the intellect and learning, saying: "By that means we will rid the earth of that hateful book which holds in check our ambitious schemes and desires." The Bible has, indeed, been an anvil on which many a hammer has absolutely been worn out. Old Voltaire, in the generations gone by, proudly boasted that while it took twelve men to write it up, he would show the world that one man could write it down, and predicted that before the close of his century there would not be one found upon the earth. Following in his tracks, our own Tom Paine, who did so much for the cause of liberty and freedom during the darkest days of the Revolution by bringing out the various issues of "The Crisis," became puffed up and inflated and turned his attention to the writing of a wonderful book that he called "The Age of Reason." This spread like wild fire all over the land, and tauntingly and proudly its author and his friends boasted that in fifty years the Bible would be found only in some of the museums of earth. But be it remembered that thrice fifty years have come and gone; Tom Paine has also gone the way of all the earth; his book is scarcely mentioned, read, or heard of; while every year there flows from the presses ten million copies of the book of God.

How do you explain this remarkable fact? What the philosophy? I think there is but one explanation, and that is found in the declaration of the peerless apostle to the Gentiles, when he

said in Hebrews 4:12 (A. R. Y.): "The word of God is living and active." This is corroborated by Peter's declaration that the word of the Lord lives and abides forever. And in that is a peculiar remark well worthy of our consideration. I am conscious that we live in a land characterized by death; that all the things beheld by the natural eye have death and decay written thereon. I wonder, is it a fact that in this wide world of ours, that has become a veritable charnel house of death, is there one thing which the forces of corruption have been unable to touch or to destroy? I am made to understand and to believe that the word of God still lives in that inexhaustible and inextinguishable manner—yea, it lives with a life superhuman and nothing short of Divine. It is comparable unto nothing, save, perhaps, the Word that was made flesh.

Jesus, the Christ, had no special marks about him to distinguish and differentiate him from the rest of his fellows. Yet he declared that in himself was life. The world believed it not. The evidence of it was not his splendid teachings nor the very fine precepts by him given, but it was that he was able to burst the bars of death asunder and to rise triumphant over the powers of the Hadean world. The Bible does not "behave" itself, if you please, unlike other books. There is nothing about it that is especially distinguishable, and yet there is that difference between it and all the writing of man that there was between Jesus, the Christ, and the rest of the world that lived in his age. With what I have suggested to-night as but a skeleton, let no man present think that this is a product of mere mortal man. If so, I suggest that the matter could be clearly tested. Let man, wherever he chances to be, write a book its equal or its superior; and this he ought to do unless these twenty centuries have so dragged him down and deadened his powers that he has "evolved in the wrong direction."

I submit to you, further, that God's word has never been equaled by the literature of any nation the world has ever seen. Strange indeed that in the career of Greece and of Rome, or in the great Elizabethan Age, some collection of literature was not penned that would transcend in prominence and influence the word of God. Man did not write it. I want, as his counsel, to put in the plea of "not guilty."

Let me say also that the Bible belongs not to any period or to any age. It belongs to all classes of mankind and to every condition of life wherein humanity may chance to dwell. The Bible appeals to the common characteristics and impulses of every man and woman upon the face of the earth. It comes unto the humble, unto those of contrite spirit, unto broken hearts, and gives unto them a halo of hope and a glittering star to guide every footstep further on; it comes to every man, in whatsoever station of life he may be, and challenges the very best thoughts of his being.

Indeed, the Bible is the miracle of the ages. Despite the attacks of pagans, infidels, philosophers, and pseudo scientists, the Bible still stands forth against all such, and is more widely read, more highly respected, and more influential tonight than any other book in all the world.

Since its inspired and immortal truths were penned thousands of years ago amid the quiet hills of Palestine, wonderful changes in the affairs of men have been wrought.

I think of once lordly Egypt that has been forced to pass under the dominion of a foreign foe. The orators, the poets! the painters, the sculptors, and the architects of once glorious Greece have long since passed away, and their works have slowly, but surely, yielded to the mutations of time. Imperial Rome raised her head sublime, and from the seven-hilled city spread abroad her power and her influence over all the nations of the earth, then humbly bowed her head and ceased to be.

Desolation marks the site of old Carthage. Tyre and Sidon no longer send their ships to distant ports. The proud fleets of Spain, laden with the rich treasures of the Aztecs and of the Incas, have long since ceased to sail the seas. The picture of worldwide dominion painted by the ambitious schemes of Napoleon has long since faded, and the "man of destiny" died amid the lonely scenes of Saint Helena. Empires have been overthrown, dynasties have fallen, and the meteoric light of would-be reformers has flashed across the arched sky, only to be swept into oblivion and forgetfulness; while the Bible, a Divine product, woven into the texture of human thought and history by the gradual unfolding of the ages, still stands, bidding defiance to every wave of infidelity, giving comfort and hope to Christians, and pointing sinners to the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. It is the book of books, that book that outshines all other books in the literary firmament, as the sun outshines the splendid planets that in their orbits revolve around him.

It is, indeed, the mariner’s north star. It is the compass of every Christian to guide his frail bark across the tempestuous sea of life and finally induct him into those scenes that we expect to burst upon our enraptured visions over there. It is, indeed, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It lives and abides forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. If you will believe it and obey it, the promises are yours. As we stand and sing the song selected, I am glad to invite you to come and do His bidding.

NOTE.—For some of the thoughts in the above sermon I am indebted to "The Fundamentals," Volume V.

Chapter 6

1.03 - RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH As a text tonight I want to read you a few verses from Second Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as cloth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Timothy 2:15-19)

I take it as a matter of fact that the most trusted companion and beloved associate of the great apostle Paul was this young man Timothy, found by him on his second missionary tour. Him Paul took and circumcised, and from that until the close of the apostle’s career they together converged their thoughts and ideas. Near the close of that eventful career of the older, two letters were addressed to this young man well worthy of being memorized and thoughtfully and earnestly studied by every youth of the land and by all those who recognize their responsibility to God. In 2 Timothy 2:15 thus announced I repeat the statement to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." I submit to you that this is equally applicable to-night to all those who would have God’s favor and approval upon them.

Man is a thinking being, and thus is distinguished from all the other creatures of earth. The Bible is addressed unto intelligences—not to passions, nor the desires, nor the emotions, but to that which is high and noble, which marks the difference between us and all other things created. For that reason God has given this instruction, that you and I study with the intent before us of being approved unto God.

Time was when man did not need such admonition; but in view of the fact that the days of inspiration were drawing to a close and Heaven’s will to mortal man was almost completed, Paul said to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I recall the fact very well that back during the personal ministry of the Savior on a certain occasion he said specifically: "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings.

Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." (Matthew 10:18-19.) Now, in instructing the apostles further with reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said in John 14:26 : "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Then, again, as stated in John 16:13 : "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Thus the apostles, in marching out over the territory and fields untraversed and unexplored,

guided by inspiration, took the old Jerusalem blade in hand, blazed the way, peeled the sapling, knocked the bark from the respective trees, and left open the pathway directing man to salvation and redemption and the remission of sins.

After all that had been done, Paul then said to Timothy and to the rest of us: "Study that you may be able to follow the old blazes and walk in the same path and be governed and guided and directed accordingly." Do you know that it would not do me any special good if I could open my mouth to-night and speak by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God? Strange to you as that may seem, it is in perfect harmony and accord with the book of God; for could I so speak at this time, I would be privileged to proclaim unto you only that which now I can do, provided I have heeded the apostles' instructions, for be it remembered that Paul said in Galatians 1:8 : "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And, to give double emphasis, he repeats and says: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man [that gets an American, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, an Englishman, or any other man under the vast domain of heaven's realm] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." And I am conscious of that supreme solemnity to-night.

I recognize that every time I rise in the presence of dying humanity, woe is unto me if I proclaim not the gospel of Christ. Why ought man to study? Due to the fact, first of all, that the Bible, unstudied and unsearched, is like unto a mine unworked and undeveloped. The great Klondike region of to-day, pouring forth riches from its veins of gold, is the same Klondike that has been there throughout the generations and centuries that have passed; but for years and years it remained unprofitable, undeveloped, unattractive, without benefit or usefulness to mortal man; but when the search was made by digging into things that were therein hidden and buried, treasures came forth and streams of wealth flowed out that have enriched the world. My friends, the great mass of humanity is an honest, earnest body of people. We differ on things political, social, and religious many, many times because of the fact that the questions in which we are interested have not been studied and investigated, for study and investigation always bring out the facts.

Time was when every man in the world believed that this earth was flat; and when the great Italian geographer, Toscanelli, suggested its rotundity, and Sir John Mandeville confirmed the idea, and Columbus determined to prove it, the world laughed with scorn and ridicule; but the search and the investigation and study demonstrated that the earth is a globe that revolves upon its axis, and, therefore, brings about night and day.

Just so with reference to the word of God. Thousands of people have passed from the stage of life and entered into the boundless beyond without ever stopping to question or express the thought solemnly to themselves: "Am I accountable unto God for the investigation of his word? Do I know whence my bearings are taken? Can I read my title clear to mansions in the sky?"

I submit to you, further, I ought to study God's word, in company with you, because of the fact that it contains all the light and revelation that the world has ever had. Occasionally I have met with people who claim to have some special revelation, who claim to know more about things sacred and eternal than do the rest of common mortals; but upon closer inspection and closer investigation, I have yet to find the man that knows one single solitary thing of the great beyond that the rest of us could not know if we apply the admonition given by Paul to Timothy. Therein,

ladies and gentlemen, is the source of all light to guide our barks across the tempestuous sea and into the grandeurs and glories that we expect to burst upon our visions over there. In that book is the whole revelation, the scheme of redemption and salvation, the hope of the world, and all things for which the human heart sighs. Therefore, study it, not only with a view to this life, but with special reference to the life beyond. Let me say, it is the book which will be opened on the plains of eternal judgment, and out of the things written therein you and I will be judged and our destinies determined. In view of such, I think it timely for us to study God’s will toward mortal man; but the text assigns a reason for such. "Study to show thyself approved unto God"—not for the sake of public controversy, not for personal advantage over your fellows, not that you may receive the eulogy and commendation of man, but to be approved by Jehovah. "Study to show thyself approved unto God ;" and if Heaven’s smiles are lavishly bestowed upon you, count all things else as naught.

I trust, therefore, I may speak your sentiments that in our investigation of truth Divine the one supreme object in view is that God will be pleased and that we may stand approved in his sight. Not only so, but "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," and at the same time "rightly dividing the word of truth"—a workman that has no need of fear, that has nothing to be ashamed of, surrounded by a halo of light upon his countenance, conscious of the fact that God’s word is the foundation upon which his hopes are founded. Study as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, and at the same time rightly divide the word of truth, or handle aright God’s book and teachings to mankind. The last statement therein found suggests, as you will observe, the possibility of a wrong division; and I think I am not unmindful nor unconscious of the danger and confusion and chaotic scenes that have resulted because of a failure at this point. When boys and girls come to Freed-Hardeman College, with which I have connection, and bring us textbooks for their investigation and study, I never think, nor does any other member of that institution, of offering the advice to the boy or to the girl to "close your eyes and open the book; and wherever it opens, there begin to study." If a boy says, in arithmetic, for example, "I want to study common fractions," I know there is a certain part of that book where that particular subject is discussed; and I turn him not to bank discount nor partial payments, but unto the specific part designed to teach the subject of fractions. If he brings any other book, the same principles prevail. When Paul said, "Rightly dividing the word of truth," I ask you: Upon what basis shall we proceed? In our old geographies right at the first there were two large maps, one facing the other—one of them on the right-hand page, showing the eastern hemisphere, and the other on the lefthand page, showing the western hemisphere. I remember, further, these hemispheres were subdivided naturally into continents, and that in the North American Continent we had still further subdivisions viz., the Dominion of Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Central America. When the boys began to study our own civilized land and wanted to know of the manufacturing industries of the country, I never thought of turning to that part of the geography that discussed the great plains, but I directed them unto our New England and middle Atlantic sections, because I understood in those divisions such information could be found. When it came to the production of corn or wheat or the raising of hogs and the fattening thereof, I turned them not to the Rockies nor to the sun-kissed coast of the Pacific, but to the North Central States, assured of the fact that I was acting in the right way. May that now serve to illustrate the fact that the Bible is divided into two great parts. As agreed upon by all, there is a blank leaf just about the center, indicating these divisions—the Old Testament of thirty-nine books, from Genesis to Malachi, and the New

Testament with its twenty-seven books, from Matthew to Revelation. That there are further subdivisions admits of no possible question. What are they? We walk by faith, and I recall the fact that the Savior, in that little trip with two of his disciples to Emmaus, said, in Luke 24:44 : "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms." And when we thus follow his direction, no mistake can possibly be made. Will you, therefore, continue, as patiently as has characterized your hearing heretofore, in the investigation of these subdivisions? I think I realize the importance of a proper division of the word of God, of a correct understanding of matters just at this point. In the survey of a piece of land, the accuracy and perfection thereof depend upon finding the beginning corner. If we can, therefore, find the proper place to begin, and there plant our Jacob's staff, and level the compass, and then run through to the close accurately, there is no question but that perfect harmony, absolute oneness, will characterize the results of every man who thus does.

Much of the confusion that exists in the religious realm is due to the feet that we have planted our tripod, our Jacob's staff, if you please, at different places from which to take our bearing; and so long as that custom and that idea prevails, confusion on the part of honest, earnest, sincere people will evermore characterize our labors and our endeavors. Think you to-night, ladies and gentlemen, that the law of Moses is that by which we are to be governed, directed, and unto which we are accountable? If so, let me persuade you to the contrary by saying that it was never intended for a single soul beneath the shining sun or the twinkling stars except a man that was born in Abraham's house or bought with his money. There is nothing in the term "law" that suggests its application or its duration or its extent. It simply means a rule of action, a code or a principle by which men and women are to be governed or directed. It may be applicable to a special people for a limited time. No one thinks that the laws of the city of Nashville are applicable to the people of Davidson County. The laws of Tennessee are not binding upon the people of Kentucky, nor are the people of Arkansas subject to the statutes and laws of the "Volunteer State." So why is it that people have jumped at the conclusion and imagined that because God gave a law unto Moses, and through him unto a special people, it was intended for all time and applicable unto all men? This is one of the strangest things with which we have to do.

There are a series of questions that will, perhaps, bring out the truth respecting this part of the investigation. I want, therefore, to specifically and definitely propound them. First of all: Unto whom was the law of Moses given ? In Deuteronomy 5:2-3 there is this statement: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." That, ladies and gentlemen, was with reference to an event that transpired just about two months after Moses, by a mighty hand, had led the house of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and across the Red Sea, on the other side of which they sang the song of redemption. Passing down the eastern shore of the Red Sea, they came unto the group of mountains in the southern part of that wonderful country designated as Horeb; and while the great multitudes 'waited below, Moses ascended the height of that historic mountain, and there, fresh from the hand of God, received the decalogue, or Ten Commandments, which was the covenant between God and his people. That was the constitution or the great Magna Charta of a theocracy—a system of government that was to be inaugurated for a special people for a definite time. May I ask, then, as a further thought, just when this happened?. The answer is forthwith from

Hebrews 8:8-9 : "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [what day?] when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."

There you have it—the time, the place, the people; those that were alive that day, descendants of that mighty host that had spent four hundred and thirty years in bondage, scattered along the shores of the River Nile. But I ask again: Why was the law given, and how long was it intended to last? In Galatians 3:19 Paul has this to say: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till [and thus the limit is fixed] the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of the mediator." The Bible student will recall the fact that four hundred and thirty years before that—namely, 1921 B.C.—God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and suggested unto him the promise: "Abraham, I will make of thee a great nation; I will multiply thy seed like the stars of the heavens and the sands of the seashore; I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee, and in thee and thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." There was the first definite promise of salvation to mortal man.

Four hundred and thirty years after that, as Paul said, because of transgression and to bring to men a recognition of their sinfulness, in stepped the law inaugurated and brought unto the posterity of Abraham until the Seed promised should by and by make his advent upon the earth. If you are interested to know to just whom that referred, I call your attention to Galatians 3:16, where it is said: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

It would not be a violation, therefore, of the word of God for me to thus say that the law was added because of the transgression until the Christ should come, after which, when by him fulfilled, it was banished, obliterated, and wiped out of existence, as the further thought shall demonstrate. But you ask again: "What bearing, what attitude, what relation did Christ sustain "hereunto?" From Matthew 5:17-18 we have this statement, where Jesus said in that memorable Sermon on the Mount: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Thus the Savior gave his solemn declaration that he came not to destroy nor to violate the law, but he came to fill it full and to fulfill it; and thus he spent a third of a century walking and talking and moving among men in perfect harmony with and in obedience unto the law, until such opposition had been aroused, such prejudice had been engendered, that he was finally arrested, arraigned, hurried through various mock trials, and at last consigned to death outside the city’s walls. Heaven veiled its face, the sun no longer shone upon the earth, all nature became clad in the very garb and habiliments of mourning, because of the fact that the Son of God had assumed the fulfillment of the triumphant and culminating purpose of his existence among men. After several of the utterances on the cross were enunciated, at last the Savior bowed his head upon a heart made to ache and said: "It is finished."

I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, what, among other things, does that embrace? Certainly there was included that theocratic form of government, that system that reigned from Sinai to Calvary, that he came to fulfill. "I have accomplished my purpose with reference "hereunto."

It would naturally follow: "What became of that wonderful document that so successfully guided them, fulfilling its purpose for the fifteen hundred years preceding?" Paul declared (Colossians 2:14) that Jesus the Christ blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." In Ephesians 2:13-22 it is declared: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who bath made both one, and bath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in the ordinances; for to make in himself of twain [the Jew and Gentile] one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." But hear again Romans 7:1-7 : "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which bath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." I believe this audience under stands that illustration. The woman that is married unto a man is bound by the law of God, with only one exception, as long as he lives. If while husband number one lives she be married unto another man, though the courts and though the General Assembly of Tennessee may decree to the contrary, Paul says that she shall be called an "adulteress ;" but if the first husband be dead, then she is loosed from the law that hitherto bound her, and is no adulteress, though she be married to husband number two. Now, see the application: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." But some one says: "Brother Hardeman, how do you know that Paul was talking about the law of Moses ?" Well, listen further: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The reason I know this is Moses' law is because Paul clearly says so, in that he quotes one statement found nowhere else in all God's book except in the law of Mosey Paul said: "We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

And, applying the principle thus demonstrated, here is the picture that you have: The law of Moses stood back there representative of the husband; the Jew stood as the wife. So long as the law of Moses was in existence, every Jew on earth was bound in strict allegiance and regard "hereunto; and while the law was still in existence, if a Jew had been married to some other law, he would have been likened unto the woman—guilty of spiritual adultery before God; but when the husband,

the law, ceased to be, the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ became husband number two, unto which, with the middle wall of partition having been torn down, the enmity no longer existing, both Jew and Gentile are privileged to be married even unto him that is raised from the dead—not unto him that walked over the Judean hills, not to the character known as Jesus of Nazareth previous to his death, but married unto him. Unto what him? Unto him that is raised from the dead. And the man to-night that gives his church relationship and the marriage ceremony previous to the resurrection of Christ stands in violation of this plain, positive declaration of the word of God.

Let it be remembered, brethren, that you and I, as Gentiles, descendants of Japheth, were never subjected to the law of Moses. It was never applicable unto us. Its promises were never ours, neither its threats nor punishments. Strange, is it not, therefore passingly so—that, notwithstanding two thousand years have passed since it was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross, there perhaps are people to-night, never included in it, that are blinded, deceived, and deluded by the thought that they are amenable to it? My friends, there is a better covenant, founded upon better promises, that is applicable to-night, not to Jew alone, not to Gentile alone, but to the sons and daughters of men wherever they chance to dwell upon earth; for in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, male nor female—all are one. And if we be Christ's, then we transcend the limits of the law and are Abraham's seed according to the promise.

Go back to the promise given by God to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law, and become heirs of God according to the promise made unto him in the long ago. Thus on the pages of God's word it is clearly declared that the law is blotted out, wiped away' stricken from existence, become dead, that we might serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. But I must speak just a moment with respect to the second division and rapidly pass. The prophecies simply mean the foretelling or the prediction of events not yet come to pass. They are never destroyed, wiped away, or blotted out, but can only pass in every instance when they merge into history. Once for all, let it be said that every prophecy spoken by God has been fulfilled or is being fulfilled or will be ere time's knell shall be sounded and all the ransomed of earth gathered home. The Psalms constitute that part of the Old Testament written in metrical units that could be sung and accompanied by the lyre. They were expressive of the emotions, sentiments, joys, prayers, and raptures that thrilled the heart. They were counted and referred to by both Christ and the Jews as a part of the law. But may I pass over that now, in conclusion, and suggest this: that under the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ our Lord we live to-night under a new law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is a regime and order that is heaven-born, that is world-wide, and that is blood-bought? Induction into the privileges and the rich benedictions thereof is laid down plainly in the book of God. Unto those of you that believe the gospel with all your hearts, that genuinely and truly are willing to repent of your sins, thus to resolve by the grace of God to forsake the wrong, to abandon sin and evil relationships in every form as much as in you lies, that will publicly confess your faith in the Lord and be buried in the name of the sacred three, with the avowed purpose to walk in newness of life, and then walk it until by and by God shall touch you with the finger of his love and bid you come home, I am glad to extend Heaven's invitation while we stand and sing. The text for to-night is 2 Timothy 2:15 : "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I shall spend just a moment in review of some things said last evening, that some of you who were not here may get the line of thought I endeavored to present. I called your attention to the fact that after the days of direct inspiration of the Spirit had passed, Paul gave instruction to his son, Timothy, and through him likewise to all the rest of us, to study God's word; that Paul told Timothy thus to study that he might show himself approved unto God—not only to show himself approved unto God, but "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." I tried to emphasize the fact that, due to improper division, much of the confusion extant to-night can certainly be traced, and in the lack of the application of this text many of our differences have their origin.

Without arguing the question at all, I presumed that no one denies the fact that the Bible is divided into two great parts—the Old Testament, given by Moses, and the New, that came by Christ. And then I raised the point further as to whether or not these had subdivisions. Such are learned from the Savior's own declaration in Luke 24:44, where he said to the disciples: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses' and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." I also stated, as you will recall, that at that time the New Testament Scriptures were not written, and we have no doubt but that the Savior referred to the Old Testament, with its thirty-nine volumes. When you commence, therefore, to read the Bible, as to just where you should turn and what part you should study depends altogether on what you want to know. If some one were to ask me with reference to the creation of the earth, the origin of things in general, I certainly would not refer him to Acts of Apostles, because he might read that, perchance, time and again and learn but very little of these matters. If you wanted to know something about the great baptismal flood, I would be far from referring you to Paul's letter to the Romans—not that it is not good scripture, understand, but it does not propose to talk about anything of that kind. If you wanted to know something of the new Jerusalem, "the city that bath foundations," I would never think of asking you to read the book of Numbers or of Leviticus. And so let us proceed with the same good sense that ought to characterize our investigation of any other matters, upon the principle that God understands our intelligences, and wrote this book not for his own guidance, but to serve as a directory for man in his journey through this life from the cradle to the grave, from time to eternity.

I believe I raised the question as to whether or not there is anything in the term "law" that indicates its application, its universality, or the extent of its duration. I think there is not a person present who will not agree with me that no such attributes or characteristics are inherent in the very term itself, but these things must be learned from other sources.

Then in passing still further, I suggested that this law of Moses was given unto the people that had come out of bondage in Egypt. "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers," said Moses, "but with us, even us, who are all of us here [under sacred Sinai] alive this day." (Deuteronomy 5:3) It was intended only to last until the seed should come unto whom the promise had been made. It was given because of transgression. The Lord's attitude toward it was not to violate nor to destroy it, but to fill it full; and this he did at the close of his eventful career, for while hanging suspended between heaven and earth, he bowed his head and said, "It is finished ;" and thus, having yielded up the ghost, the law of Moses was ended. When I raise the question as to what became of it, Paul frankly and flatly declares that Jesus Christ blotted it out, took it out of the way, nailed it to the cross, and tore down the middle wall of partition between us. The law, the Ten

Commandments, contained in ordinances, was given only to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles. But the new law made of the twain, Jew and Gentile, one new man. Christ reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. But some one raises a question after this sort: "What part of the law was thus nailed to the cross?" Do you know, ladies and gentlemen, that the Bible does not talk about parts of the law? When you hear such terms as "the judicial part," "the moral part," "the ceremonial part," just remember that that is not the book of God, but it came from the phraseology of some man who does not speak as the word of God directs. Paul said, "blotting out." Blotted out what? The law. What law, or what part of it? All of it, and nailed to the cross.

These are the facts in the case, opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. "But," says one, "I want to file an objection. First, I want all of the Bible; and if that statement be true, that casts out a large percentage thereof." My friend, had you not better wait just a minute? Suppose I make the prediction to you Nashvillians that there is a tremendous flood coming to wipe out all humanity, and everything in whose nostrils is the breath of life, from the face of the earth; and I suggest that some of you go out into the forest and fell timber and begin preparation for the building of an ark, that will be launched upon the bosom of an ocean that has no shore, for the salvation of yourselves and your families. Some good brother says, "Brother Hardeman, that thing has already happened; I will not make preparation for anything of that sort"—thereby admitting that you do not want that part of the Bible. But you say, with reference to worship and serving God: "I want it all." Still, if that be true, my friends, we have no business with meetinghouses and places of worship in the city of Nashville; for all of us would have to take the train, go to some Eastern port, and then board a steamer and sail across the mighty Atlantic, and, reaching old Joppa, march up thirty-two miles to Jerusalem to worship God. But even then we are not ready; for after reaching that point, we would have to find a priest of the tribe of Levi, of the house of Aaron, to offer up our sacrifices unto God. You may say: "But this is past." Indeed so. We live under a system of government and religion to-night that knows no special place, that asks no sacrifice of animals, that demands no Jewish priest.

Many there are who object to my declaration that the law of Moses, the basis of which was the Ten Commandments, has been obliterated and taken away. We fail to understand how such can be true. And yet we have no trouble in understanding other things parallel. Let me use as an illustration to-night our own beloved Tennessee. This State has had three separate and distinct Constitutions. The first one was when it was admitted into the Union—on the first day of June, 1796. Based upon this, the statutory laws were enacted, and for a number of years every good citizen respected and recognized and had due regard for the laws of the State. Then when the State grew, its resources developed, and the opportunities widened, the people said: "Our Constitution is inadequate to the growth of the State." So in 1834, under the administration of Governor Carroll, delegates were selected, a convention was called, and a second Constitution was adopted for the "Volunteer State." How do you think that delegation acted? They read very carefully Constitution number one. Every statement therein found that had proved a success, that was considered applicable, was adopted. They brought it over from Constitution number one and made it a part of Constitution number two. Some of the articles, however, were left out. From 1834 on down for thirty and six years the people observed the laws based upon the second Constitution, and not those resting upon the first that had been established and done away. But in the year

1870 the people, through their representatives, met again and inaugurated and adopted a third Constitution, taking parts of the first and second—those things that had proved worth while and made such a part of the Constitution under which we now live. Every law-abiding citizen within the borders of our State respects and observes and lives in accordance with the laws based upon Constitution number three. I observe and respect them tonight, not because they were founded in 1796, not because they were back in the Constitution of 1834, but because they are resting upon the Constitution that is now living, which proposes to exercise authority over us.

Just so in the legislative dealing with humanity by Jehovah himself there have been three separate and distinct constitutions, or dispensations, prevailing upon the earth. The first one, known as the system of Patriarchy, lasted for twenty-five hundred years—from Eden to Sinai. Then God, having called his people out of bondage and having led them to the foot of Mount Sinai, drafted and inaugurated a second constitution. Many of the things found in the first were brought over and made a part of the second. And the Jews observed these principles. Why? Not because they found them back in Patriarchy, but because they had been made a part of Judaism that lasted for fifteen hundred years more from Sinai to Calvary. These were but preparatory, however, to the giving of that constitution that was unlimited and unrestricted. All those principles adapted to Christianity as found in the old were incorporated in the new and became effective from the day of Pentecost.

Suffice it to say that of the original Ten Commandments, nine of them were accepted by the Savior, brought over, and made a part of the New Testament dispensation; and every law-abiding citizen under the flag of high Heaven tonight respects them and is living in obedience "hereunto. Other principles have been added, and hence we live under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. But one of them—number four—which saith, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," was left out, with other records of the Jewish dispensation; and in its stead God has given us a day with sweeter memories, characterized especially by the triumphant resurrection of our Savior from the dead. This New Testament, dedicated, not by the blood of animals, but by the blood of Christ himself, likewise is divided. But before I pass to these I want to call your attention to the eighth chapter of the book of Hebrews: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount. But now bath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their

mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." And then he said: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:9-10) Hence, there is granted and given us tonight a system, a covenant, based on better promises and offering greater rewards. Does this covenant, therefore, thus inaugurated, have its subdivisions? Naturally and quite easily understood, the New Testament is likewise divided into three parts, the first—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—properly called the Books of Evidence, or the books of Testimony, the specific purpose of which is to cause men and women to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In John 20:30-31 is the following, equally applicable unto the other books mentioned: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The second division of the New Testament is properly called the Book of Conversions—the acts and doings of the apostles, the record of thousands that rendered obedience to the gospel of Christ and were able to pass out of darkness into light by the acceptance of his word. The third part is the Epistles, addressed unto the churches, telling Christian people how to live, serve, and worship God that at last the crown may be won.

If you, therefore, to-night be an alien and a stranger and disbeliever in the Lord Jesus Christ, and wanted that part of the book addressed to you, I would not direct you to the book of Jude nor Revelation nor the Colossian letter, but to the first part of the New Testament, dealing directly with the life, character, tragic death, and final announcement on the part of the Son of God.

Just to illustrate: Let me imagine, with all kindness and courtesy to those of whom I speak, that a Jew to-night believes the Old Testament in tote, but denies the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose that kind of a person would consent to make investigation and search the Scriptures. I fancy that I can see him as he turns to Matthew, first chapter, and there is greeted by a long line of genealogies, carrying him back to the days of Abraham and down to the birth of Jesus Christ. I doubt not but that he halts and says: "This is exactly like the record back in the Scriptures I call my own." He reads the second chapter, which gives the decree of Herod, of the flight into Egypt, the coming back to Nazareth that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. As he reads chapter number two, he knows every statement therein respecting the Child of Nazareth has been foretold in his own Scriptures. Then his interest is aroused, and, with encouragement, he continues throughout the book of Matthew the story of the wonderful deeds and miracles wrought by him and that he is proclaimed to be the Son of God. Still interested, he passes on to Mark, only to find the former statements corroborated and emphasized; and then on to Luke, still interested, still aroused, and reads of the mighty deeds of him, until at last, like old Nicodemus, he bursts forth: "No man can do these things, except God be with him." As that story is thus read, link after link, statement after statement, perfectly harmonious, absolutely corroborative, forming a chain of evidence complete, he is almost forced to admit that Jesus Christ is what he claims to be. He follows on until the arrest is made, the various trials are hurried through, sentences passed, and death comes, then the

burial. He sees the tomb and the stone placed at the mouth thereof, and waits and watches to see the final outcome. He learns on the third day that the bars have been torn asunder and that Christ is risen indeed. He follows as the Savior leads the apostles into Galilee and gives unto them a commission that is world-wide in its scope, heaven-born in its origin, and bought with the priceless blood of the Son of God himself. He hears the Savior bid these twelve men to go to Jerusalem, and is interested to such an extent that he says: "Let me go with them." At last the spirit comes and fills the house wherein all are seated, and he hears the disciples speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. And then he listens to the first gospel sermon in the name of the risen King, when Peter explained the miracles and said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And next he says: "Whom God bath raised up.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God bath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." No wonder, then, the record declares: "When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart." They were cut to the heart; conviction had been brought; faith had been engendered; and he had, together with the others, become a believer in the fact that Christ had tasted death, that he had been buried, and that he had risen again, and had brought salvation unto the sons and daughters of men. Hence, they all said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Still further he waits, and hears the splendid response by the Apostle Peter, unto whom the keys had already been given; and as that multitude knocked for entrance, Peter injected the key, turned the bolt, and flung wide the door, saying unto those believers that were thus affected: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children; and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The concluding verse (Acts 2:47) says: "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Follow through the book of Acts of Apostles, and you find the disciples starting at Jerusalem, spreading through Judea, then to Samaria, thence to Galilee, thence to the uttermost parts of the earth, and in which record there is the account of those that yielded obedience unto the gospel of the Son of God.

Having, therefore, been led from a disbeliever into a faithful believer in the word of God, having been led from the believer’s state into that of a child of God by further obedience, now what? Then comes the letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessolonians, addressed unto Christian men and women, unto sons and daughters of Abraham and of Sarah. My friends, there are just three classes of humanity, wherever you may chance to go. Unbelievers constitute one class, believers a second, and Christians represent a third. God’s book, the New Testament, is applicable and adapted in a specific manner unto each class therein found. Unto the unbeliever I would say: Study the first four books thereof, that faith may be yours, that conviction of the truthfulness of the claims of the Son of God may be established in your heart, life, and conscience forever. I would bid him render perfect that faith in obedience to the gospel of

God’s Son by meeting every stipulation and requirement laid down in the book of Acts. After having done that, heaven is still not reached, and you have but been introduced into the straight and narrow path. Then take up your line of march; continue along the path already blazed out, until by and by all shall be well. May I suggest that all along this pathway in which humanity is to travel there are signposts on every side? Soon you come across one that suggests to you to add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

You find another just a little further on: "Pray without ceasing." It is impossible to live that kind of life, to travel that road, unless prayer flows forth from the innermost recesses of the soul. On another signpost I see: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Mortify therefore your members which are learn the earth. " On still another I see the sign in glittering terms bidding Christian people to practice and live the principles laid down in the Christian religion; and, still further on, the final admonition: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

I appreciate the fact, as has been indicated and mentioned especially in the prayer of the evening, that the aged brethren are among us. They have borne the heat and burden of the day for these many years. Their forms, perchance, are already bending back toward Mother Earth. Upon their brows hoary hairs are found, and on their cheeks the finger of time has marked out furrows. I appreciate the fact, my friends, that they are nearing the goal, the eternal shore, and that sea upon which all of us by and by must launch out. But, let me tell you, if you will but place your hand in that of the Savior, with a firm resolve to submit to his will, be governed, guided, and directed by his authority, he will lead you gently along the pathway of time, down its gentle slopes to life’s decline, until at last your feet begin to be bathed in the waters of death; and then, somewhat shocked thereby, you stop and say: "Master, what is this?" Christ says in response, "My child, be not afraid; follow me ;" and as you march still further on, you begin to recognize that the waves are soon to leap over your silvered locks; but Jesus says: "Be thou faithful; still hold fast thy hand in mine." And after a while, when the breakers burst about you and the whitecaps overleap your brow, Jesus, with a firmer grasp, initiates you into the grandeurs of our Father’s home, into that "city that bath foundations," that blessed home of the soul across which the shadows never fall. Let me encourage you that have buckled on the armor of the Lord by suggesting that it is not in vain.

I would to-night that I could cause every one that is not as yet a volunteer for service under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel to buckle on the armor of the Lord and to fight bravely the battles of life, until by and by the great Captain of our salvation shall bid us to stack arms on the glad plains of a never-ending eternity, there to lay aside our battle-scarred armor and to hang our swords upon the jasper walls of that eternal city. Then, with psalms of victory and with crowns of glory, we will hymn his praises while eternity rolls her endless ages on.

Therefore, if in this audience to-night there are any disposed in heart and in mind to accept the terms of salvation tendered in the New Testament, in that covenant sanctified by the blood of Christ, if you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you repent of all your sins, if you publicly confess that faith before this splendid company to further your obedience in the name of the sacred three, I bid you come.

Chapter 7

1.04 - THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD In Hebrews 4:12 you will find this statement: "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Revised Version suggests this: "The word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

I am sure that in this statement there is a wonderful truth that possibly we do not fully accept or appreciate be cause of the fact that our attention has not been fixed upon it. We live in a land that might just as appropriately be styled "the land of the dying" as it is frequently called "the land of the living." Death and decay and passing away are written upon the wings of time and timely things. In view of the fact that all things are transient and ephemeral in their nature, Paul boldly declares an exception to that general statement: "The word of God is living, and active." Is it not strange, therefore, that of all things beheld by mortal man upon which the forces of corruption have fastened themselves, there is one within our midst unaffected by the passing of time? The Bible has been pursued from century to century by bitter and relentless foes, but it has survived all the efforts of its enemies and the corroding influences of time. It is still "quick, and powerful."

I had occasion to speak to you this noon from the statement found in Hebrews 1:1, where the same writer declares that God has spoken unto men. I tried to emphasize the fact that God has spoken by his Son. Since God has spoken, I ask: Is there any power, force, or effect in what he has said? Is what the Lord said vital to the salvation of the sons and daughters of men, or has it passed according to all timely things? Shall we assume that it is still living and active in our midst?

There has always been a disposition on the part of humanity to minimize the word of the Lord. For some rear son not fully known to me, we seem to want some extraordinary experience. I recall that when Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was affected by that loathsome disease of leprosy, and when he was told in plain, simple language to go down to the River Jordan and dip himself seven times, that such procedure was not according to Naaman’s fancy. He had it all thoroughly fixed in his mind and said: "Behold, I thought the man of God would come to me and strike his hand upon me, and perhaps say some word, or some peculiar miraculous event would come to pass, and I would be rid of the leprosy." When it did not happen according to his opinion, he was reminded by his servants that he had better go and do what the Lord had said. Not only have men upon earth tried to discredit the word of God, but even in hell men have sought to set aside the sacred oracles. In Luke 16:1-31 there is a record and story of what is called "the rich man and Lazarus," both of whom, as you know, died. One of them was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. Then began that conversation in which he asked Father Abraham to send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool his tongue. When the negative answer was given and all hope of himself had been abandoned, he then said to Abraham: "Send Lazarus back to my father’s house, for I have five brothers still alive, and I want you to have him warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment." But Abraham said: "They have Moses and the prophets; let

them hear them." The rich man wanted God to set aside his word and in its stead perform a miracle. But Abraham insisted: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The rich man continued to argue the question, and said: "Nay, Father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." He seemed to understand the nature of his brothers. The word of God had but little effect upon them. He seemed to think they would pay very little attention to Moses and the prophets, and insisted that if one went from the dead—something out of the ordinary—they would repent. Then Abraham said: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

If there was ever a time for God to answer the feeble and humble petition of a soul writhing in agony and set aside the regular plan, this seemed to be the occasion; but his spiritual law is no less immutable than his natural law. So long as the law of Moses was in force, every soul was amenable and accountable to it. This should impress all men with the fact that when they reject the word of God, all hope is gone.

We have to-night not only Moses and the prophets, but, in addition, Christ and the apostles as they were guided into all truth. The word of the Lord thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto every good work. He has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness. In view of all this, is it not strange that there are persons upon the earth seeking and expecting something separate and distinct from the word of God? There are those in our land that acknowledge the Divine origin of the Bible and pose as its friends, but whose claims tend to set aside God’s word in the most vital concerns of life. If men now speak as the Spirit guides them and if revelations have been made since the visions to John on Patmos isle, then the Bible is no longer our standard and complete guide; and unless you and I can uphold God’s book to the world and let it be known that we propose to be governed and guided solely by it, we had just as well acknowledge that it is a book of fallacious teachings, of myths, and of old wives’ tales. It is a square issue. Either God’s word is our guide, either it must be respected and manifestly obeyed, or else every man can launch his boat out on the great ocean of life and let it drift whithersoever the tide of circumstances may carry it. As for me and mine, I believe with all my heart that the word of God is living and active and powerful, which means it is full of power and adapted to the purpose intended—namely, the bringing of conviction and conversion to the sons and daughters of men. In one of the plainest and easiest of all the Savior’s parables—named, that of the sower—we have this statement: "The seed is the word of God." I know quite well, in common with you, that in every seed there must be the germ of life; that life is perpetuated, made possible, by virtue of the liveliness and the vitality that lies within the grain of corn, wheat, or whatever it may be. And it makes no difference how long that seed may have been garnered. If it came from a crop of a thousand years ago and has been preserved, wherever and whenever it may chance to be planted, regardless of who does the dropping or sowing thereof, it will produce fruit like unto the original kind; for God said in the book of Genesis that "of everything created, let it bring forth fruit after its sort and after its kind."

If, for instance, there had not been a church of God upon the earth, after the New Testament order, for the last nineteen hundred years; if all the congregations and Christian people had been blotted out and wiped off the map, but God’s word still survived and you people to-night were to read, understand, and obey it, it would make of you exactly what it made on that memorable Pentecost of the long ago. It would make of you Christians only, and would cause you, by

obedience to its teachings, to be members of the church of which it speaks.

Sometimes we are told, just in this connection, that of course while Jesus Christ was upon earth there was power in what he had to say, that his spoken word was effective, that it carried conviction, power, and vitality; but they tell me that all we have now is the written word, and sometimes it is spoken of in a way that tends to discredit and minimize it.

I want to raise the question: Does the mere fact that God's word has been written rather than forevermore spoken by his Son--does that tend to reduce the force or the effect or the influence thereof? Is that the principle upon which we act in our relationship one to another—namely, do we regard our oral words more sacred and binding than we do our written documents? Is it a fact that all our deeds, our mortgages, our government bonds, securities, etc.—are they rendered valueless because of the fact that they have been written? Had we better destroy our county court clerk's office, our recorder's office, and do our business by word of mouth to give force and power thereto ?

If I were buying a piece of real estate within your city limits, and from one of your best citizens, would I want to make only an oral contract? Just somehow or other I would prefer that we reduce that thing to writing and that you subscribe your name "hereunto. I am more particular than this, for I would rather have it written down the second time here at the courthouse and certified by the recorder of the good county of Davidson on the ground that we believe a written document is more forceful and effective than any oral contract or agreement.

Now, to those who think there is more force and effect and power in oral statements than in the written word I want to say: I hardly think the devil himself would agree with you on a proposition of that kind. I think, by sad experience in his mighty conflict with the Son of God, that he has learned what all of us should know—viz., that "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." The Savior understood full well that there is power in the word of God. If there be sufficient power and energy back of it to withstand the enemy of our race, to make possible the opening of the gates of paradise and give us an insight to the tree of life and all things that bloom in beauty and grandeur over there, it ought to be considered by you to-night as having enough power and force for the accomplishment of that which God intended—namely, the salvation of the souls of men. In John 9:1-41 there is a very fine story told, illustrative again of the force and power of the voice of God. A young man was born blind, and the disciples came to the Savior and said: "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered: "Neither bath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said this, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the young man with the clay, and then said unto him: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent)." The young man went and washed, and I have thought that perhaps he came back singing:

"Amazing grace—how sweet the sound!— That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost [to the beauties of this world], but now am found; Was blind, but now I see." Do you think to-night that there was virtue in the anointing of clay? Do you think there was virtue and power in the waters of the pool of Siloam? Absolutely not. This young man did not give praise and honor to the anointing of the clay. He never, so far as history shows, looked back to the pool of Siloam as his savior, but

he gave honor to whom honor was due. He recognized that the power rested in the Son of God Divine, and he had only but to speak the word, and eyes that had never seen opened to behold the grandeur and glory and brilliancy of the light of God's day. In John 11:1-57 there is another splendid story. About two miles east of Jerusalem, beyond the garden of Gethsemane, behind the Mount of Olives, was the little town of Bethany, where lived Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. With these Jesus was wont to stay. These he loved, and with them he associated. It came to pass that the brother in that home became sick. Word was sent to the Savior with reference to the same. Jesus replied: "This sickness is not unto death." Then it was that he tarried for two days, and said to his disciples gathered about him: "Lazareth sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples misunderstood him, and said: "If he sleep, he shall do well." They understood that his sleep was that of rest. Then Jesus said plainly; "Lazarus is dead." As he approached that humble home, Martha went out to meet him, perhaps with tears streaming down her cheeks, and said: "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus said: "Thy brother shall rise again." Then she replied: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." In the course of time, Mary, who had lingered behind, likewise came, and, as she approached the Savior, fell down at his feet, saying: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews which also wept with her, "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." Then the sweetest verse of the story is: "Jesus wept." Some of the people said: "Cannot this man that bath opened the eyes of the blind—cannot he even now speak the word, and bring Lazarus back?" Lazarus was buried in a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said: "Take ye away the stone." Martha cried out: "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." But the Savior, groaning in agony, cried with a loud voice and said: "Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus came forth in his graveclothes, with the napkin round his face, and the Savior said to those standing by: "Loose him and let him go." My friends, the power that can speak the word and cause the grave to give up its dead is the power that belongs to the word of God to-night. It is that which Paul says is living and active and effective for the purpose intended. Do you know that but for the fact that there is power in the word of God, man would have no prospect or possibility of the resurrection from the dead ?

Ofttimes to the little city of the dead wherein those whom I loved and those who loved me He sleeping to-night I have frequently gone and beheld the sacred mound, and often I have called their names and tried to commune with them in fancy's vision; but they were disturbed not from their solemn silence. All the people of Nashville might go out to your cemetery and call to loved ones sleeping, but it would avail nothing. But, thank God, there is an assurance given by the Savior, as announced in John 5:28, when he said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." But for the fact that in the word of God there is wonderful power—a power that defies the Hadean world and that is able to burst the bars thereof—this world would have no hope beyond the sunset's radiant glow. God's word is the power by which man is the be converted. It is the power by which he should be directed and guided in his journey through life. It is the power that will at last cause death and Hades to deliver up their dead. Our hope of immortality rests upon the power of God's word. But that is not all. In the fourth chapter of the book of Mark there is another story illustrative of the same idea. After Jesus had spent quite a busy day in giving a

series of parables to those on the western shore of Galilee, he said: "Let us pass over unto the other side." This he did that he might have occasion to rest from the multitude. The record says that he went into the rear part of the ship, and there he lay upon a pillow, bidding them to sail across the nine-mile stretch to the further shore. While the Savior slept, a mighty storm swept down upon them. The lightnings flashed, the thunders roared, and the waves became so great that they overleaped the bow and filled the ship. The mariners and those on board became frightened, and, coming to awake the Savior, said: "Master, caress thou not that we perish ?" Do you know that here is a picture true to life? While all things are running smoothly, while everything is lovely and the sky is clear, and while all is calm, we rarely ever think of an appeal to the Power supreme. When all things go according to our own fancy, we rather become puffed up and inflated, wonderfully egotistic, independent; we care for but the things of earth. But when we lose our bearing and our station among men; when the stalwart form is touched and made to feel the infirm nature; when the clouds begin to lower round us; when we look out and become conscious of the fact that life is, at best, but a brittle thread, we then begin to cry: "Lord save me. I am conscious that I am nearing the other shore, that death and destruction are apparently just ahead. Won't you pick me up and bear me safely across to the other shore?"

While the storm king raged and the winds blew, while the tempests rolled high, they went back and said: "Master, caress thou not that we perish ?" And then it was the Savior rose and rebuked the wind and simply said: "Peace, be still." You know the result. The record says: "The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Fear came upon those passengers, and they said one to another: "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him ?" My friends, the power that can calm the tempest and allay the storm king's rage, that can make the ship to ride upon the bosom of the mighty deep, that can stop the winds, that can bid defiance to the physical forces of nature, is the power that characterizes the word of God. It is the power by which the world must be saved, if saved at all.

Forget it not, ye that live, two thousand years have passed, twenty centuries have smiled upon us, since the valedictory of God's book was written; yet it is just as powerful tonight as it was when fresh from the pen of inspiration. But that it not all. I remember that in the text of the forenoon (Hebrews 1:3) Paul said that Jesus Christ is the upholder of all things. How, then, does he uphold? "By the word of his power." There are a number of things that well illustrate this principle.

I am not accustomed, may I suggest, to being in cities. I came from the country, away back close to the Tennessee River, where the train is not, and where society's ways are unknown. It is, indeed, attractive to me when I see your skyscrapers towering heavenward. I have seen the preparation for these buildings being made. I have seen men dig down into the bosom of Mother Earth to lay a safe and secure foundation. For what ? That it may uphold the twenty or the thirty or the forty stories that must rest upon it. And when I see this, I am made to think that Jesus Christ is the upholder of all things—not by columns of stone, not by piers of brick, but simply "by the word of his power." At the city of Memphis I have viewed, time and again, both the Frisco and the Harahan bridge. I saw the construction of the latter in two or three phases of its development. The waters were parted, a solid foundation was reached, and those mighty piers were erected. What for? That they might uphold that great mass of steel that spans the "Father of Waters" from the "Volunteer State" to the soil of Arkansas. There those mighty columns stand, bidding defiance to the immense volumes of water that sweep down the Mississippi Valley. On this bridge the trains pass back and

forth, richly laden with human freight and human lives. The safety of it all depends upon the stability and the power of those gigantic piers that underneath it stand.

I have gazed upon your splendid bridge at the foot of Broadway, and also this one down at another part of the city, and noted the construction thereof. Wonderful in deed are the feats performed by men. But Jesus Christ, according to Holy Writ, has but to speak the word and all things are beheld. It is by the power of God's word that this old earth occupies its place and revolves around the sun at the enormous rate of eighteen miles a second; at the same time it rotates upon its axis at the rate of a thousand miles per hour. And you may leave this terrestrial sphere and go out to the respective sister planets of Mars and Jupiter and Saturn and Uranus, and then far beyond Neptune to all the myriads of worlds that float in space about us, even to the twinkling stars, and all are upheld by the word of God Divine. Are we an appreciative people? Do we feel grateful for the fact that God has spoken to us? Can we treat lightly and pass indifferently the message and the declaration of Him who has thus spoken unto mortal man in the plainest, simplest, easiest terms? He has announced the law of pardon to the alien sinner, to the foreigner, to the stranger He has made known the terms of adoption, the laws of our naturalization, by means of which we may be born into God's family. We may be translated out of darkness into light, out of the kingdom of His Satanic Majesty into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But in order that the rich provisions of heaven and the benedictions thereof may be made ours, God announces we must hear his word; not only that, but we must believe his word with all our hearts. And, in addition to that, God has suggested in that same powerful word that we must repent of all our sins—that is, resolve by the grace of God to abandon the wrong, to turn our backs upon the former career that was enmity toward God, to change about, and let that firm resolve result in a reformation of life. Short of that, any repentance is not acceptable unto the Lord. That same word, in its wonderful power and its living activity, bids us to acknowledge the Son of God before our fellows. And, again, that same wonderful word assures us of the fact that if we thus do, and live faithful "hereunto, heaven will be pleased to gladly confess US as children Of God, precious in the sight of Jehovah.

I need not stop to tell you, more than merely to call your attention to it, that in the same word, for reasons known to him, Jehovah has ordained it the duty of all nations to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That, my friends, is in the same word of God, coordinate and in perfect harmony with the obligation on your part and mine to believe and to repent. Just why the world rebels at that, I do not know. Just why man should interpose his opinion and partially accept God's way, I never have understood. Why the prejudices against my duplicating the burial and resurrection of my Savior, I cannot. understand. All men, every character in your splendid city, will tell you that God commanded people to be baptized. It is not the authority of Hardeman. It is not of my brethren. It is not an ordinance of your city. It is not a law enacted on Capitol Hill. Neither is it a proclamation from the President at Washington. But it comes from the King of kings, the Lord of lords—Him who speaks as man never spake. It is from Him that has authority and to whom all power in heaven and earth has been granted. And as you and I stand on the plains of that eternal judgment, that same solemn declaration—to believe the gospel, to repent of our sins, and confess our faith to be baptized in His name will face us. If we refuse it here, ten thousand worlds would be gladly given for one opportunity like this to-night. While truth instructs and mercy lingers, while angels look out from their heavenly regions and anxiously wait for those that may come to acknowledge the Christ, it is our pleasure once again to extend to you the

invitation and pray for your response. The presence of an audience like this on Saturday evening is indeed an inspiration to me, and I rejoice to know of your interest in these lessons that have to do with things eternal.

I want to get before you Paul's charge to Timothy as found in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and 2 Timothy 4:1-88 : "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." At the time Paul wrote this he was a prisoner at Rome, not knowing as yet what would be the verdict of the higher court, to which he had appealed.

Paul penned, perhaps, two-thirds of the New Testament; but out of that there are just four personal letters addressed—viz., a very short message unto Philemon, another short letter unto Titus, while two are directed to Timothy. This of itself shows the apostle's interest in this young man.

Here is a rather unique picture presented. As a rule, both men and women select for their associates and companions those of similar years; but in this case there is presented an aged apostle, his hair frosted by the passage of the years, bearing in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and also his most trusted friend, closest associate, a young man just budding, blooming, and blossoming into the full power of manhood. In writing unto the Philippians, Paul said: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me." (Php 2:19-23) The most solemn charge ever delivered to mortal man or clothed in human words was announced by Paul to Timothy when he said: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word." I have attended some courts in the country where I chance to live, and have heard the charges of the judge delivered to the jury and to the gentlemen of the audience at large. Many of them were impressive and attractive; but when I think of this one, delivered by the peerless apostle, in which he called to witness both God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead, I can but be impressed with its weight and importance. "I bid you preach the word."

T am sure that Paul yearned for Timothy’s greatest possible success; that he earnestly desired that his life should be spent in that which would bring him the highest joys possible and render him of the greatest service to his fellows.

There are many activities of life that are attractive. There are many positions in which wonderful good can be done. The world needs its men in business affairs; likewise those that till Mother Earth, thereby supplying the needs of life. There is a place for the honorable, the upright, professional man of the world; but, according to the apostle’s idea, it appears that to dedicate and consecrate one’s life to the proclamation of the word of God is the highest type of men’s affairs upon the earth. The one who faithfully, loyally, and earnestly devotes the best of his powers "hereunto has not made a failure.

I am especially conscious of the responsibility that I assume when I rise in the presence of dying humanity. I must give an account to God for my deeds, my acts, and for the effort I make in your presence to-night. Therefore, the solemn, serious obligation of preaching the word.

O, there is much preaching in the country every day, every week throughout the year. Unfortunately, sometimes men that claim to be preachers are attracted by the exciting things of the earth—things which appeal to sentiment and to popularity. Men fail to recognize that the gospel is God’s power unto salvation, and sometimes drift into the discussion of those things that are foreign to God’s word. But I want to say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that the business of living, the matter of passing along through life, fulfilling the mission that God intended, is no child’s play. Preaching is not a matter of mere entertainment; it is not a matter of passing away the time; but it is a solemn, serious obligation. I do appreciate the fact that there is a disposition on your part to patiently, earnestly and encouragingly listen to what may be said just along this line. But when Paul said to Timothy, "Preach the word," I have often wondered and studied just what is meant thereby. Three short terms, monosyllables, in the charge; and yet how much is comprehended therein I Will you go with me upon a little survey of the word of God to find out just what that means, if possible? After the stoning of Stephen, the Bible says the disciples at Jerusalem, except the’ apostles, were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word. This account is found in Acts 8:1-4. That is the very thing that Paul told Timothy to preach but I have learned nothing especially as to what it means be that quotation; but in Acts 8:5, immediately following, the writer of the book of Acts takes up the story and says "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, anc preached Christ unto them." Did Philip preach something different from the rest of them, guided as he was by the same spirit? We do not believe that there was a difference in their preaching; so we have learned that when the apostle said, "Preach the word," it is equivalent to saying "Preach Christ." But after Philip reached the city of Samaria, the record says in Acts 8:12 : "When they [the Samaritans] believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ." Now, what were they all doing? All were preaching the word Philip, what are you doing? "I am preaching Christ. I am preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." In conclusion, these three things, therefore, are inter. changeably used to express the very same idea. But presently the angel of the Lord appeared and bade Philip go down southward from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. He arose and went, and came in contact with a man anxiously trying to learn his duty. In verse 35, therefore, the record says that "Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Hence, there are four terms—"preach the word," "preach Christ," "preach the things

concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Christ," and "preach Jesus." But that is not all. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:16 : "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!, Hence, the five expressions, characterizing identically the same thought when he said to his beloved son: "Preach the word." Well, he might have said, "preach Christ," or "preach the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Christ," or "preach Jesus," or "preach the gospel"—all of which is the embodiment of that upon which the salvation of the souls of men depend.

I would suggest to you that out of the multiplicity of sermons proclaimed by various ones, there was not a single contradiction or discrepancy regarding any of the statements thus made. The reason therefor is the fact that all were guided by the spirit of God. They spake the same things and were of one mind and one heart.

If you will let me say it, I think there is no more productive field of infidelity in all the world to-night than the fact that sometimes professed preachers of the gospel proclaim doctrines that are contradictory, one arguing for one point and the other denying the same, and both of them claiming to be governed and guided directly by the Spirit of God. Make me believe that God is back of that contradiction, and I am ready to raise the black flag of infidelity and blight the hopes of mankind the rest of my days. God is not the God of confusion, but his word runs in parallel lines. It is the truth. One statement therein never contradicts another. But Paul said: "Preach the word." I raise, perhaps, the most important query of the night. I want to ask: Why did Paul thus charge his son, Timothy? Why spend the days of the long life that was promised in preaching the word? If there be no power, no force, or no effect to be accomplished thereby; if in the matter of conviction and conversion men and women are saved independent of the gospel of Christ, then I raise the question: Why did Paul thus charge Timothy? Why not say: "Timothy, engage in some other line of activity. Spend the rest of your days in other fields, and let the preaching of the gospel take care of itself; and in God’s own time and manner, separate and apart from the gospel, men and women will be saved ?"

Well, as a matter of fact, under the commission that was given by Christ to the twelve, the record fails to make mention of a single case of conversion in all their dealings unless in connection with said conversion God’s word was there proclaimed as his power unto salvation. I know that sometimes men now—thoughtlessly, perhaps, claim to have been converted before they ever heard of the gospel, before they knew anything about the gospel. Just put it down, once for all, that such a case of conversion is unlike those recorded in the book of God. But when I ask, "Why preach the word?" I am ready to make before this splendid audience this statement as a matter of challenging your investigation (hear it): There is not a single step that man is called upon to take, from the time he leaves the world of sin and wickedness and woe until at last he sweeps through the gates that stand ajar to receive the golden crown, but that said step in affected either directly or indirectly by the word of God.

I will be in your city for several days yet. If any man should find an exception to that, it would be a favor rendered to let me know it, because, if I know my heart, I have but one supreme intent, and that is to be true in the proclamation of the word of God. I cannot afford to speak other than those things which careful study and prayerful investigation have led me to believe to be true.

I know that in this audience and in the world at large there are differences among people that ought to be one. While that is true, there are some things of common interest and general

acceptation agreed upon by every man that professes to love the word of God. I want to speak to you, therefore, plainly about some vital questions that you and I have to answer. I do it with the greatest degree of kindness and with the earnest hope that the truth may be seen and that all may speak the same thing.

Ladies and gentlemen, all of us believe that before a man can enter the kingdom of heaven he must be begotten preparatory to a new birth, without which the Savior said he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. As a matter of fact, no person accountable unto Jehovah has ever been saved on earth under the reign of the gospel that has not been begotten and born again. Nobody questions that statement. People of all religious faiths grant the truthfulness of that sublime statement. Is it not strange that when I raise the next question, confusion results and opinions prevail? But it must be put. How is a sinner begotten?

There are, doubtless, sinners in this congregation who will grant that, according to the Bible, they must be begotten. I am here as your friend, trying to fulfill that which I believe God would have me do—viz., to assist you in finding out heaven’s manner of accomplishing that thing. I would do you no good if I were simply to try to impress upon you the necessity of your being begotten, and yet leave you without information as to how the thing is done. And I want to say to you in advance: I propose not to give my opinion nor my interpretation nor my comment upon the word of God, but simply and plainly to repeat the passages, believing that God means what he says and says what he means.

How is a man begotten? In Hebrews 4:12 there is a passage that indicates some characteristics of this question. Paul said: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." But that does not tell how man is begotten. That just gives a particular feature of the word of God. Well, let’s try again. This time I call your attention to 1 Corinthians 4:15. Paul said: "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." My friends, that is what I believe about it. Why? Because that is what Paul said. How is it? "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." How? "Through the gospel." But let me ask James what he has to say on the same thing. James (James 1:18) says: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."

I can now begin to see why Paul wanted Timothy to preach the word. It is that by which men are begotten. But in 1 Peter 1:23 there is this statement: "Being born again." How? "Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter 1:25)

How is a man begotten? Paul says, "Through the gospel;" James says, "With the word of truth;" Peter says, "By the word of God." And so I pass that question as settled to all that believe God’s word and know that these passages are correctly quoted.

But, in addition to that, a man is dead in trespasses and in sin, and before he will ever pass to the golden glories of the by and by he must be quickened into a new and holy and higher life.

Without making the matter long, I simply call your attention to Psalms 119:50, in which David said: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word bath quickened me." Then in Psalms 119:93 he says: "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me." But not only must a man be begotten and be quickened, but the Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." A question of vital importance, then, is: How do men and women get faith? Paul says in Romans 10:13-17 : "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who bath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

"Timothy, I charge you to preach the word, for it is that by which men are begotten; it is that by which men are quickened; it is that from which we get our faith." But, in addition to this, Peter said in Acts 16:7 : "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." Not only that, but man must have a pure heart: for said the Savior in Matthew 5:8 : "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

You ask: "How is that accomplished?" In Acts 15:9 Peter said that God "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." That faith comes by the hearing of God’s word. Not only so, but man must have a pure soul as well as a pure heart. Peter said (1 Peter 1:22): "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Not only must the soul be thus made pure, but I suggest to you that the soul must be converted. I but speak that which you already grant. How is it done? When David marched out under the bending blue of heaven’s vast expanse, he said (Psalms 19:7): "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Timothy, "preach the word." And that is not all. Every man that expects to walk the streets of that celestial city must be sanctified. How is it done ? In John 17:17 we have an account of the last prayer our Savior ever prayed before his arrest, in which he said to the Father: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." If you, as sinners, expect to be clean, Jesus has told how; for he said in John 15:3 : "Now ye are clean." How ? "Through the word which I have spoken unto you." In James 1:21-25 God said: "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." This is not all. After man, by the word of God directed, has been begotten, has been quickened, faith engendered, and thus the steps all along the line continue, at last becoming a child of God, a newborn babe, God’s law and heaven’s order is that he shall grow and develop and unfold larger and larger unto the perfect man and stature that God intends. You ask: "What is the process?" Let me call your attention to 1 Peter 2:1 :

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

"Timothy, the young Christian will need food, he will need strength and support. Preach the word in season and out of season; continue to reprove, to rebuke and exhort; for, be it remembered, the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned into fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Continue to preach the word, regardless of the ways of men."

But, my friends, we are on the journey toward the pilgrims' home above. God knows that humanity needs a guide and a light along the path by which their weary footsteps may be safely directed to reach the goal intended in the Divine plan. David said (Psalms 119:1-5): "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Back in the country from whence I came they used to go to meeting at early candle light, and brethren and citizens in general carried their old lanterns. After the services were over, I have seen them go out the front door, strike a match and light up; and as they held the lantern up to view, because it did not threw the light all the way home at a single flash, they did not throw it to the ground and despise it. They understood how that was. Each one said: "I will light it; and as I start across the hollow and over the hill and through the skirt of woods yonder, if I will but hold on to the lantern, it will by and by show me every pitfall along the way, every gully, every stump, every rut in which I might fall. If I will but do that, at last I will have reached my humble home ready to pillow my head for the slumbers of the night." Will you not, with that illustration, get an insight into God's word? When I become a child of God and rise to walk in newness of life, God's word does not picture all the pathway before me. There are many tempestuous scenes through which I must go that are not then portrayed; but I rejoice to know that if I will take God's word in my hand, and, as I start to march down the darkened aisles of time, if I will but hold fast "hereunto, it will guide my footsteps Bright, keep me ever off the barriers and from falling over the precipices that are along life's way. May I climb the steps of life's ladder at last, cautioned and guided by God's word, until it fades away into the superior grandeur and luster and brilliancy of the perfect day in our Father's house above.

"Preach the word." It is that which is adequate to man's begetting. It is that by which he is quickened. It is that from which he gets his faith. It is that by which his heart is made pure. It is that by which he is sanctified. It is the food of the Christian.

But, finally, we all realize that life has its sorrows and its sighs, its tears and its joys, its sunshine and its shadows. I recognize that in every life some rain must fall, some days must be dark and dreary. Regardless of who we are, the burdens of life and the difficulties are certain to fall heavily along our pathway. And when troubles come, we are so constituted that we love comfort and consolation to sweeten the bitter experience by which we are made to taste the disappointments characteristic of the lives of men. It may be, perchance, that into some home a precious babe has been born, and for some reason or other it is snatched from its mother's bosom to blossom on the other shore. When it is torn away, friends may rise up to comfort her; husband and sisters, father and mother, may offer words of consolation; but all these words are inadequate to the demands of

the mother’s heart. Then what? She can turn to the book of God Divine and hear our Savior say in Matthew 19:14, for instance: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And with that glad announcement and splendid promise, like a halo of light flashed across life’s pathway, hope springs eternal in the human heart.

It may be, my friends, that an older one, a companion, a father or mother, falls by the wayside. We carry their remains out to the silent city of the dead, and tears unbidden flow down our cheeks because of the grief and sorrow we feel. Friends try to comfort, but they largely fail. But God’s word says: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Such splendid promises enable us to walk out to the silent city and there deposit the beloved form of one that is nearest and dearest and still realize that behind the darkened cloud the sunlight of God forever shines. It is because of such that we can bury a father, a mother, a brother, or a sister, and erect the sacred mound. God’s word is the source of the sweetest joys that earth can give and a foretaste of the bliss that lies beyond.

I want again to-night to commend that splendid message and that word of truth Divine to this audience. I wish that I had the ability to impress upon you the necessity of respecting, in a practical way, the word of God Almighty. You ought to be in humble subjection to God’s authority, to Heaven’s will, to say with all your heart, "I believe it;" earnestly declare that from your sins you will turn away; have the courage to march down the aisles and extend your hand and publicly confess your faith in the crucified One; be buried in the name of the sacred Three, and then rise to walk in newness of life; and walk in it, my friends, until by and by God’s finger will touch you and angels will gather and encamp around you to bear your spirit home to glory, to nestle in the bosom of God’s love, while eternity rolls its endless ages on.

If there are any here to-night who have that disposition to render obedience to the gospel call, it is a pleasure once more and evermore to grant that privilege. Now, while we stand and sing, won’t you come?

1.05 - FEDERALISTS AND ANTIFEDERALISTS

FEDERALISTS AND ANTIFEDERALISTS

I express to you, ladies and gentlemen, the gratitude of my heart for such a splendid audience thus assembled. I regret that all cannot be seated, and appreciate the fact that you have a disposition to stand while I speak. I trust that the service may be so pleasant and so interesting as to pass the time away very rapidly. I shall not censure you, however, in case any of you become somewhat tired. In the announcement of the theme for to-night—viz., "Federalists and Antifederalists"—I would not have you think I am transcending propriety in one who proposes to preach the gospel and launch out upon fields of governmental discussion, but because of the fact that I think in these two terms and the principles for which they stand there is a matter involved that may help us in our bearing and attitude toward the word of God. I have tried during the entire week to give a connected series of talks with one point in view, and that is, to get into the minds of those who have so kindly attended the absolute and all-sufficiency of the word of God and to take that as our standard by which we are to be governed in our journey across the pathway of time. In the year 1774, when patience could no longer withstand the tyrannical hand that was bearing down upon the American colonists, they began to devise ways and means to rid themselves of the yoke of oppression that was upon them. Right soon thereafter they set forth a declaration over in North Carolina in which the first announcement was made that finally burst forth throughout the realms of the colonies and culminated in that wonderful document known as the Declaration of Independence.

After that we entered into the mighty conflict with the mother country, and, as a result of several years' fighting, in 1781, at old Yorktown, freedom from the yoke of England was gained. It had, indeed, been bought at a wonderful price. The entire land was seemingly drenched and baptized in the precious blood of our sires.

Two years more rolled on until the Treaty of Peace was formally fixed and signed, and after that, upon their own responsibilities, these colonies set out to direct their own course of action. They had a system known as the Articles of Confederation, which was lacking in that it had no executive department of government. They could make whatsoever laws they wished and could pass upon their violation, but there was no power behind the throne to carry into effect the executive part thereof, and hence failure was the result. In the year 1787 the people sent their respective delegates to a general convention, the object of which was to revise the Articles of Confederation and make them adequate to the demands of the colonies in general. After quite a deal of discussion, as is told in history, some very wise character made this splendid suggestion: that since these articles cannot be made adequate to our needs, let's wipe out the whole thing, clean the slate, and, commencing at the foundation, let us adopt a Constitution for the United States of America.

Four months were spent in discussion, investigation, and deliberation. Naturally there were many different sentiments regarding the Constitution, but they gradually narrowed down until there were

just two contending forces, arguing back and forth.

One idea of government was championed by Alexander Hamilton, and the other by Thomas Jefferson. The difference was after this fashion: Mr. Hamilton’s conception was that the States should sacrifice their powers and form a strong federal government. Mr. Jefferson said: "We have just fought, bled, and died in order to get rid of a monarchial form of government. Let the States retain their powers. Let the doctrine of States’ rights prevail, not yielding too much to the central government and not giving too much authority to the machinery at our capital city."

These two ideas having been thoroughly discussed and various compromises suggested, finally, on the seventeenth day of September of that year, the constitution was adopted. Then they started out to elect a President, a chief executive of the nation. It was unanimously conceded that Washington should be the President. John Adams was elected the Vice President. Every one regarded the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. As soon as Mr. Washington was inaugurated, in 1789, he looked around to select the cabinet members, which at that time were four in number. Political enmity and party spirit had not yet developed into the intensity of modern times. At the head of the Treasury Department, Washington selected Alexander Hamilton, who was a federalist of the deepest dye. As Secretary of Foreign Affairs, now called Secretary of State, he appointed Thomas Jefferson. So these two gigantic minds occupied prominent places. Mr. Henry Knox was made Secretary of War, and Mr. Edmund Randolph was made Attorney-General.

Thus the great ship of state was launched out upon the mighty sea before it. Soon after the machinery had been set in motion it was understood and generally known that the country was deeply and woefully in debt. Alexander Hamilton had a master mind along that line. He secured the passage in Congress of a bill assuming all the State debts and all the debts incurred by the war. It was his chief ambition to start the nation solvent and paying its way. He devised ways and means in harmony with the Constitution. He put a tariff (and this was the beginning of that muchdiscussed question) on foreign articles, on spirituous liquors, and things of that sort. By and by streams of revenue began to flow into the treasury; and, as Daniel Webster so eloquently said of him in later years: "He struck the rock of internal resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth; he touched the dead corpse of public credit, and it sprang to its feet." Thus the government was launched under the flag and under the policy of "Pay your debts and assume your obligations."

Just after that step had been taken there was another matter that was by him proposed, and that was that the government go into the banking business. Hamilton insisted that the government establish a national bank, in which it should be the chief stockholder.

Just at that point Thomas Jefferson, the Secretary of State, interposed objections, and the first great fight in the new government began, with these two champions on either side.

Now, I want you to get the arguments put forth by these great leaders. "Upon what ground, Mr. Jefferson, do you object to a national bank and to the government’s going into the banking business?" Well, it is plain and easy, as every schoolboy knows. Jefferson said that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land; and while, indeed, it is not an infallible document, as is admitted by provision being made for its amendment, yet if we launch our ship of state on the Constitution we have adopted, we cannot establish a national bank, because there is no provision

for it. On the other hand, Mr. Hamilton said: "There is nothing in the Constitution prohibiting the establishment of a national bank. The Constitution says not a single word about a national bank. There is not a line in it that says: 'Thou shalt not have the government engage in the banking business.' "

These two ideas laid the foundation for the two great political parties, which were known as the Federalists and Antifederalists. But as time went on, other names characterized these parties. Mr. Hamilton's party came to be known as "loose constructionists"—that is, to construe loosely the Constitution, on the ground that we are at liberty to do anything that it does not specifically prohibit. Jefferson's party was known as "strict constructionists"— that is, they proposed to be governed strictly by what "was written," and declared there was danger in "going beyond." In the heated discussions that grew out of these great differences the question became: "Shall we be governed by what the Constitution and the law of the land says, or shall we be at liberty to provide any measure, inaugurate any system, or engage in any kind of business, just so the Constitution does not specifically forbid it ?" At first Mr. Hamilton's idea prevailed; and when they came to the naming of the second President, John Adams, a Federalist, was elected. But Mr. Jefferson continued to preach the doctrine of respect for the Constitution and to hammer it into the people that we would not be correctly guided unless we regarded the supreme law of the land, unless we gave respect to our great Magna Charta, our Constitution. So when the election for the third President rolled around, Jefferson, an Antifederalist, was elected. But I have made a political speech now long enough. I want to pass from that to this: I think, my friends, what I have said is an honest, fair, unbiased, and unprejudiced discussion of a difference that exists to-night between many of us with respect to the word of God. Jesus, the Christ, has legislated and announced to the world a great constitution—God's word—and has given it unto mortal man. It, unlike the Constitution adopted by our fathers, is not subject to amendment. It, unlike the one by them accepted, is an infallible constitution—one that needs no general assembly, no convention, no conferences, no delegation of people to add "hereunto or to say imperfection characterizes it. I believe this gets at the very vitals and gist of the matter, and that all of our differences have sprung from the attitudes we have assumed to God's constitution.

Friends, what shall be my conception of the word of God Almighty? Do I look upon it as a law granting me the liberty to do anything not specifically forbidden therein? Or, on the other hand, have I accepted God's constitution and do I propose to be governed by what it says rather than by what it does not say? We have drifted into this kind of an idea, and it has generally come into popularity—namely, that the Bible is a book of broad, general principles that in the main ought to be respected just as a kind of general proposition and guide. But with reference to details—with reference to the establishment of the "banking business," or the organization of any kind of a society or corporation not specifically forbidden—we are at liberty to be guided by our "sanctified common sense."

Well, it is just a question as to how we shall construe God's book and heaven's constitution. How do I view the Bible? Does God want me to be a "loose constructionist," or does God want me to be a "strict constructionist?" That will settle, ladies and gentlemen, all of our petty and minor discussions. It was not a question with Hamilton and Jefferson as to whether there was anything wrong in a national bank or the establishment thereof. I presume Mr. Jefferson would have said there was no harm in it. That was not the issue. But the question was: Are we going to respect the

Constitution or not ? That was, and is, the issue. And all down the line of our political history, instead of our statesmen and politicians discussing the vital principles of government upon which rest the hopes of our republic, they have too often just skimmed the surface, without a thought of the principles back of it.

Just so in matters of religion. We have wandered away on far-off discussions of petty differences. What is the principle? Go back of all these, and it resolves itself in this: "Shall I construe God's word strictly, shall I be governed by what God says, or shall I be privileged to do anything under heaven just so God, in so many words, does not declare: 'Hardeman, thou shalt not.' "

I wonder, in passing down the years of time, how God dealt with humanity under the patriarchal dispensation. The first pair born on the earth was commanded of God to offer an animal sacrifice unto the Lord—a bloody sacrifice. That was God's command as given in Genesis 4:1-26 and referred to in Hebrews 11:4. Abel, by faith (and faith comes by hearing God's word), brought unto God a sacrifice—one of the flock—and offered it unto Jehovah. Likewise, Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground. Unto the former God had respect, but unto the latter God had not respect. On what principle ? Is there anything wrong in offering a sheaf of oats or wheat unto God? O. no! Well, what is wrong? Had God ever said: "Thou shalt not offer the fruit of the ground ?" O. no ! Well, what is wrong? Just this: It is the question back of it all: Which are we going to do? Are we going to do what God says and walk by faith, or do what seems good unto men and walk by sight? When God told Noah to build the ark three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high, with a window and a door; to pitch the same inside and outside with pitch; to make it with first, second, and third stories, he meant that the ark should be made exactly that way. These were not general directions, but definite and exact specifications, and were so understood. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." (Genesis 6:22)

But, overlooking numbers of illustrations, I pass rapidly to the time when God, by the hand of Moses, led that host of people out of Egypt and brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai. It was there that God gave unto them a constitution, a decalogue, a principle of government that was to last the next fifteen hundred years. And at the very beginning thereof he said: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." A frowning sentinel was placed on guard to uphold and maintain respect for God's word.

Well, there were Federalists and Antifederalists in Moses' day. It was not long until Nadab and Abihu took each his censer and offered strange fire unto God, which he had not ordained. They construed the constitution after this fashion—viz.:. "Our hearts are right; we have the spirit of worship, and we want to worship the Lord; and we see no harm in what we have done." But God sent out a fire, and they died as a warning to others that God's constitution and heaven's order must be respected. When God told Saul to go down and utterly destroy the Amalekites, to kill men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass, Saul acted on the general broad-gauged idea, and thought surely he had interpreted and construed the constitution rightly, and that certainly if he obeyed the spirit of the command, all would be well. But God placed his condemnation upon the king because of the fact that he did not respect in the absolute the command of his word.

Even Moses, unto whom God said in the wilderness of Zin, "Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water," called unto the people and said: "Hear now, ye rebels; must

we fetch you water out of this rock?" And he smote it, thus violating God's decree, doing that which had not been ordained; and, as a result, this grand old man of one hundred and twenty summers was never privileged to enter into the land that flowed with milk and honey. God at last took Moses to Mount Nebo's height and from its summit permitted him to take a view of the promised land. I have often tried to think of the splendor and grandeur of that attractive scene. I doubt not but that he could see far to the north the hoary heights of old Hermon, on which the Savior was transfigured. He could look beyond the river Jordan westward and see the smiling plains, the beautiful valleys, and the silvery streams. But Moses' work was ended and his crossing of the Jordan denied because of the fact that he had disobeyed God's voice and God's word. Jehovah dug his grave, and there buried Moses, with none, save perhaps an angel, to drop a tear of sorrow and grief upon the sacred mound. Not only that, but I recall the fact that a man on the Sabbath day started out to pick up sticks--quite an unusual thing for a man to do; but he reasoned about it and said: "I have no disposition to disobey God, and there is no harm in picking up sticks." And if I had been there, my friends, I would have said: "My dear sir, I see no harm in picking up sticks on the Sabbath day." But we must remember God's law. Because this man simply undertook to pick up sticks on the Sabbath day God Almighty had him put in prison that night and commanded the people to lay aside their robes and stone him to death. Why? Because he had not respected heaven's constitution. Well, does God's law state that you must not pick up sticks? O. no! And I presume that he could have taken Moses' own law and asked him to show where God said, "Thou shalt not pick up sticks," and Moses could not have shown it, because it was not there, which is evidence of the fact, ladies and gentlemen, that we are to be governed by what he says and not privileged to do that which he does not say. "You shall not, as heretofore," said Moses, "do every man that which is right in his own eyes." But I come down to the New Testament just a moment. In Hebrews 2:1-3 Paul said: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" I think the principle of our lesson is shown clearly in the temptation of the Savior and in his escape and victory. When the devil came and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," I want to ask you, what is wrong in the suggestion therein made? Sometimes I have heard preachers say that the wrong would have been in listening to the voice of the devil. I think that is not true; for if the devil can make a good suggestion, I want it, and it is not wrong just simply because he said it. "Lord, are you hungry?" "Indeed so." "Are the pangs of hunger gnawing at the very vitals of your being?" "Yes, sir." "Do you see anything wrong in bread?" "O. no!" "Has God ever said: 'Thou shalt not turn stones into bread?' " "No." "Will you not soon convert water into wine?" "Yes, sir." "Well, didn't you have bread back in your home?" "Yes, sir." "Has God ever prohibited it ?" "No, sir." Then, my friends, the devil made the argument and asked: "Why not do it?" God does not prohibit it. Mark you, if there is no harm in it, if you like it and it strikes your fancy, then what? Are you at liberty to do it just because God has not specifically forbidden it?

Christ lays down the principle. He says: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That is to say this: "I am not my own. Not my will, but shine, be done. I am in the custody, under the guidance, of God Almighty; and if God wants stones turned to bread, he will say so; and when he so announces, that will be time enough. In the absence, therefore, of such commands and of such authority, I still endure the pangs of

hunger, because I propose to be governed by what God's word says rather than by my own personal preference and peculiar fancy."

I submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, this fact: that back under the Mosaic reign the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night was the sole guide. If the cloud moved, the people likewise moved; but when the cloud stood for two days or two weeks or two months, the host of Israel broke not their camp. They were governed by what the cloud did. Where it moved, they moved; and where it stood, they stood.

God's word is the guide and the cloud unto the people of to-day. It is time enough, my brethren, when he says do a thing for us to act. "Where it speaks, we speak; where it is silent, we are silent."

Let us not, therefore, be wise above that which is written. Possibly this will help us to understand 2 John 1:9, which says: "Whosoever transgretheth, and abideth not in the doctrine [or teaching] of Christ, bath not God." God forbid that I should be led by my own lusts, my own appetites, and my own pleasures to transgress, or go beyond, the authority of the book of God. My obligation, therefore, toward the Bible is the obligation that Mr. Jefferson felt toward the Constitution—viz., it is the supreme law of the land; I must do what the Constitution says, and not presume to go beyond it. The only safe course in life for you and for me is this—viz., take God at his word, believe what he says, become and be just what God requires; and then, his word still our guide, let us live as he directs, worship according to his decree, and practice those things, and those only, for which there is authority in his word. If we do so, I feel certain that when the storms of life are all over, when we shuffle off this mortality, we will be privileged to march home to glory, into the paradise of God for evermore.

I want, therefore, before this magnificent audience to say this: I do not claim infallibility. I am not so set in my own ways that I could not be changed; and if any man, I care not from whence he comes, will point out to me, or to my brethren, for whom I think I can speak, anything commended by God, authorized by the Scriptures, that we do not preach and practice, I pledge you, to the very best that lieth within me, we will introduce it just as early as it is possible for us to do so. On the other hand, if there is one single thing preached or practiced by that brotherhood with whom I stand identified to-night that is not authorized by the word of God, I stand individually pledged to give up that thing before the morrow's sun shall rise. Why? Because I expect to meet God in the by and by. I do not want to be responsible for sowing seeds of discord or division outside of that which God commanded. And I do hope, my brethren, from the depth of my being, that our conception of the word of God and attitude toward it may be such that all lines may move in convergent ways, and that the time is not far distant until a once happy, honest, earnest brotherhood throughout the length and breadth of this land can clasp hands again on the old Book and earnestly contend once for all for the faith that was delivered unto us. I also hope we will not be ashamed to stand up before dying men and tell the story of the cross, regardless of opinions contrary; that we will preach the gospel straight from the shoulder, unswerving, uncompromising, unyielding, because if there are any people under heaven to-night that have right and reason to rejoice, I think I stand with that company. We have no creed, no discipline, no confession of faith, no church manual, no ritual, except the Bible, the book of God Divine. We have no leader, no head, except the immaculate Child of Mary. We claim to be nothing under the shining realm except Christians—Christians only. We stand pledged to the idea of speaking where the Bible speaks and

keeping silent where God’s book is silent. This gives the only possible basis for Christian unity, and for its accomplishment, under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel, our earnest prayers are constantly ascending toward the throne of God.

I ask, in conclusion, to-night, if there are those in this splendid company, who have given such fine attention and have evidenced such splendid interest, that want to become Christians, and only that. I want you to join no organization, no body, no party unknown to the book of God. I want you to wear no name other than the name "Christian." I want you to accept no creed other than the Bible, which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It is my good pleasure once more to extend to you the gospel call.

1.06 - CONVERSION

CONVERSION The subject I want to discuss to-night has been announced already, and it is the simple theme of conversion; and as I enter upon the investigation of it, I am sure I have the assistance in thought of this entire audience. As a text, I call your attention to Acts 3:19, in which Peter said, concluding the sermon in the temple: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted [or turn again], that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

I need not tell you that Peter had gone up to the temple, prompted perhaps by a natural desire to tell the story, and also in obedience to Heaven’s command to go into all the world. The very fact that he had wrought a miracle upon a lame man above forty years of age had increased the interest and doubtless gave him a better attention, a more riveted attention, than otherwise he might have had; and, concluding the wonderful discourse in which the primary facts of the gospel were emphasized, Peter said: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." This verse, if there were no others in the Bible, emphasizes the necessity of conversion. Why repent? Why turn again ? Note the necessity, the objective, and the reason— that your sins may be blotted out. It emphasizes, in this connection, that man is a sinful creature. It carries in the very announcement that he is condemned and unfitted to stand approved at the last great day. Therefore, with the conversion, this condition may be overcome; you may be rid of that which subjects you to wreck and ruin. Here is the suggestion: "Repent and turn away, that your sins may be blotted out." The blotting out of our sins is preparatory to the chief aim—the attainment of the eternal happiness of man.

Another scripture emphasizes the necessity of conversion.

It is in Matthew 18:1-3, where the disciples came to the Savior and said: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now, I think it would be hard to frame in any language a law more emphatic, more forcible, more prohibitive in its possibilities, than that which is therein said: "Except a man repent, and be converted, and become as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

Now, if God says you cannot, I have never been able to figure out how you can. Of course, if I had said this, I would try to devise some way to set it aside; but God just puts it in a plain, simple, positive way and declares: "Except a man be converted and become as a little child, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Let no man, therefore, deceive himself by thinking that in some mysterious manner as yet unknown to him God will take him home to glory regardless of his being converted. That will not happen, because God said it must be otherwise. You must be converted and become as a little child. It does not look very consistent with the Savior’s declaration, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," that said child is conceived in sin, with a heart as black as midnight.

Such is not characteristic of a little child. When Jesus made this comparison, he could not find a purer, holier, more spotless character; so he said to his disciples: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Now, it makes no difference how much money we may have, it makes no difference how much learning may be ours, it does not matter what political office we may hold, we must be converted. God is no respecter of persons, classes, or castes of humanity. He simply puts the emphatic negation that absolutely no man can be saved except he be converted unto the gospel of the Son of God.

I have not attempted to address you upon any theme about which there are more differences than this one I have for study to-night. A very popular theory in many parts of the land and country is that conversion is wholly an act of God Almighty, that it is purely the Maker's transaction, and some scriptures are used in that connection as demonstrative of that idea. For instance, I have heard John 3:8 explained by suggesting that conversion is like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." You just know it happened, but don't know how or anything about it.

Well, there are others. I will have more to say on that as the meeting progresses; but suffice it to say now that if conversion were altogether a work of God, reducing man to nothing more than a mere machine, acted upon, with nothing to do concerning this, no will power, no effort of his own; if conversion be purely an act of Jehovah on man, and if God is no respecter of persons, he is under obligation to convert every man and woman on the face of the earth. Nothing would be consistent with the characteristics of Jehovah except universal salvation. To illustrate: If God Almighty, independent of a man's will and not consulting his intelligence and power, comes in a mysterious way and converts one man, why should he pass another up and not likewise convert him? "But man has nothing to do with it." "O. no!" Then, why did he take the one and refuse the other, since he is no respecter of persons? Ladies and gentlemen, that thought does not stand up in the light of common reasoning or ordinary consistency. On the other hand, we are disposed to swing like a pendulum from one extreme to another. There may be such conception as this abroad in some other quarters: that God has nothing to do with it at all, that it is altogether man's work—wholly in his own hands. Why, friends, this is just as foreign to the truth as was the former. Such would be dishonoring to God and would be refusing to admit the power and efficacy that rest alone in him with reference to the cleansing of the souls of men.

But, as in general, the truth lies betwixt the two—namely, in conversion, God has his hand in it all; likewise man has a part; and as Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 3:9, in this matter of salvation, "We are laborers together with God." There is nothing in a conversion unless it was begun, carried out, executed, and consummated as a result of God Almighty having a hand therein. On the other hand, there has never been a genuine conversion unless man had a part in it. In John 3:16, all three of the parties concerned in the case of conversion are represented. Now watch: "For God so loved the world [that is God's part], that he gave his only begotten Son [hence the Son has a part], that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life [that is man's part in it]." But in another passage (Ephesians 2:8-9), wherein the two elements are brought to view—God's side, the Divine side, and the human side- Paul said: "By grace are ye saved through

faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is the thought proclaimed. God had a part in perfecting, in revealing, in making it known; and hence it was prompted purely by his love, his mercy, and his grace; but man, standing as he was at the foot of the cross, must accept God's terms; and hence, on man's part, it is a matter of faith. It is by the grace of God and by the faith of man, and thus you have the principles of salvation in which both heaven and earth are equally interested and likewise have a part. But let me suggest to you this thought in order that discouragement may never be ours. In the days of the Savior, and likewise in the days of the apostles, there were people who absolutely refused to be converted, for the Savior said in Matthew 13:15 : "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them "

They refused when the matchless Son of God himself preached unto men and women by the thousands wherever audiences could be had, and beckoned unto the people time and again, and said unto them as he did to Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37): "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And unto the Jews he said (John 5:40): "And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." My friends, if it should come to pass that at the last great day you and I should be turned away from the beautiful gate into the blackness of despair and the darkness that awaits, it will not be by virtue of the fact that God would not accept us, but because of the fact that we would not respond unto Heaven's call—that we would not turn and be converted, that God might blot out our sins and initiate us into the family of the First-born.

Now, with these statements, I call your attention to the next thought. The confusion, as it occurs to me, that exists in the world to-night is due to a failure to analyze the process by which such is to be brought about. There are three things characteristic of man that the subject of conversion contemplates.

First, I need to have my heart converted unto God. I tried to tell you yesterday afternoon just what the Bible had to say regarding that. That part of my nature that thinks, that reasons, that understands, that believes I need to have that converted so that instead of thinking in the wrong direction, instead of believing the wrong thing, instead of reasoning about the lustful affairs of the earth—I need that converted to believe in the Lord, to reason correctly with God in the right philosophy of life; and hence that part of my heart needs to be converted. But my will power likewise needs to be changed from the downward way, with my purposes, plans, designs, and schemes turned about and faced toward the higher and nobler, better and grander things of the earth. I need my affection, love, desire, confidence, trust—all of them changed and centered upon the right ideal and the proper conception of life and duty. In addition to the change of heart, I must have my life, in its purpose, in its plan, in its intentions, in its tasks, also changed. I must abandon my former career wherein soever wrong and reverse the matter and let such a change result in a reformation of life. In addition to that, I must have my state or relationship or attitude unto the government of God changed and be naturalized or adopted into God's family. I think, with these suggestions, you can appreciate better the facts of the gospel as well as the commandments thereof.

Suppose to-night, as a matter of illustration, that a citizen of a foreign country has learned of the beauties, advantages, and opportunities of our splendid land of America; that after having learned of such, after having gained by testimony, convicting and convincing, evidence of the superiority thereof, he decides and purposes in his heart to become an American citizen. The very fact that his resolution is formed, that his purpose is planned and centered—that does not of itself make him a citizen of the American country; but, in addition to that, he must renounce his allegiance unto the country in which he was and submit unto the law of naturalization; and not until the entire process is consummated has he the right to claim the protection of the "Stars and Stripes" and have "Old Glory" wave over him in defiance of all opposition.

Another illustration. A young woman thinks of one day being married to a young man. What is the first process therein ? It is first a change of affections from former surroundings and centering them upon him whose wife she expects to be. And when she has thus learned to love and believe him and put her trust and confidence in him, that does not mean she is his wife. There is another step. She must form a resolution to turn her back upon home, upon father and mother if need be. She will forsake the palatial residence and go with him to live in a log cabin if the circumstances demand such. That is her purpose and intention; and when she thus resolves to turn, she is not married; and were the young man to die, she would not be a beneficiary in his estate. Then, if she has that love, that faith, that trust, that confidence, and that determination to forsake all others, what next? There is one thing that must be said before the great State of Tennessee will recognize the marriage, and that is, there must be a ceremony by proper authorities; and until that, let come whatsoever may, there is no marriage, no wife, no beneficiary in the estate of the intended husband and no right to wear his name.

Now, all of us understand that. We are a unit with respect "hereunto. Did you know that in the Bible, under the figure of marriage, the idea of conversion is presented? Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, came to earth and courted and wooed and sought the love, the confidence, the trust, and the esteem of lost and ruined humanity. Having appealed to them in the tenderest strains, he persuaded many of the sons and daughters of men to center their affections upon him. But that does not mean marriage to Christ yet. That is simply the first step, the first process. Then these same characters decide to abandon all else, to turn their backs upon the world. But the mere fact that they so decide does not make them children of God or the bride of Christ. After this, prompted by love, affection, trust, and confidence, God says you must march out under the bending blue, where orange blossoms indeed kiss the brow of beauty, and let the ceremony contained in the great commission (Matthew 28:19) be said that changes your state or relationship and makes you a beneficiary of his will and gives you a right to wear his name. If the marriage relationship pictured in the Bible is not like the one thus described, then it is a misfit, and it is an illustration that fails to illustrate.

I need not tell you that in the gospel plan of salvation there are three things that correspond to those parts. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is that by which a man’s heart is converted to-night. Repentance is that by which a man’s life is changed; and, short of repentance, no salvation, no conversion. Short of the fact that a man’s faith leads him to change his life, there is no hope for him. Just as, therefore, faith comes to purify and change the heart, as repentance comes to purify and change the life, there is a marriage ceremony, given just one time in the Bible, in the name—not of Tennessee, though great is our State; nor in the name of Solomon, David, Abraham,

Moses, John the Baptist, Paul, or Peter; but in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—to change the state. When that ceremony is completed, then, indeed, is one a beneficiary of His estate. Then the man has a change, not only of heart, but of life and of relationship, and has a right to claim a part of heaven's inheritance and the right to take upon himself the name of Him whose he has become; and if he will thereafter live as a faithful, consecrated wife ought to, at last, when heaven's home is adorned and all things made ready, Christ will come to touch his bride and bid her come home to joys and bliss eternal. But there are different kinds of conversions. That word does not carry with it any special way or direction in which the matter is to be done. No man was ever converted to one thing but that at the same time he was compelled to turn from the other. I cannot go toward this side of the auditorium but that I turn from that side, and vice versa; and hence, if it were not for the fact that man had gone away from God, there would be no need of talking about a man's being converted back to God. If a man had never turned in the wrong direction, there would be no occasion for suggesting that he turn and face about in the opposite direction.

I call your attention to the first pair in God's paradise of the long ago, as Grandfather Adam and Grandmother Eve stood in their innocent state and guiltless condition on the plane of justification. They were fit company for Divine association, and with them God loved to mix and mingle. Now, as a matter of fact, all of us are aware that in the course of time they became subjected unto death and to consequences that took them out of the paradise of God, with the door barred behind them. They were made to grope their way down the darkened aisles of time, and, so far as they knew, without one ray of hope even in the distant future to chine upon them or to give them encouragement.

Now, what were the steps taken in man's fall? In man's conversion from God, just what happened? Well, first of all, I suggest to you that there appeared a preacher on the scene; and, therefore, you can eliminate from your mind the idea that he was converted from God by direct process. That was not the fact in the case. But the first thing that happened in man's downward course was that a preacher, "galvanized into respectability," appeared upon the scene in the form of a serpent—the devil, if you please there in the garden of Eden, with the grandmother of mankind. What was the first thing that was done? As a matter of fact, that character commenced to preach unto her a doctrine and proclaim a message unto that woman that by and by allured her, caught her ear, and gained her attention. But what did he preach? If you will allow me to say it as it is, he preached unto her a He. But be it remembered that a He preached and believed has exactly the same effect upon one's feelings as if it were the truth. He merely said unto her: "In the day that you eat of the fruit of a certain tree you shall not die. God has said that you shall, but that is not so; you shall not." Well, all right. Now what? The next step was, very unfortunately, that Grandmother Eve believed what the preacher said, and thus yielded assent and recognition unto the truthfulness thereof. But the very minute that she believed that statement God did not damn her. He did not drive her out of his presence upon the doctrine of faith and faith only. But what then? In addition to her having believed a He, then what? The Bible says that she put forth her hand and ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat; and as she (1) heard, (2) believed, and (3) obeyed, she became guilty in God's sight and was disinherited and driven out; and that is the process. Watch that just here with these steps. Step No. 1, she believed a He; step No. 2, she obeyed a He; step No. 3, she became guilty; step

No. 4, God drove her out and closed the gates of paradise behind her and put a flaming sword there as a signal and a guard, lest man should put forth his hand, eat of the tree of life, and live forever. And now, as a result of disobedience, death universally reigns upon all the posterity of that accursed pair; and, as Paul declared in Ephesians 2:12 : "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." And that is the condition, my friends, that prevails tonight with reference to every man that has put forth his hand and violated the commands of Almighty God. By virtue of our own sin, our own iniquity, we have separated between us and our God and he has hid his face from us. And it is said: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins ;" and: "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." Hence, man must be converted—turn again, reverse the steps.

Starting now, as he does, not on the plane of justification, but on the plane of condemnation, what is the natural, the simple, and the reasonable manner? Just simple to retrace your steps. It is just as far back up the line as it was down. There are as many steps back to the plane from whence they came as there were down to condemnation, wreck and ruin. But the process must be reversed; and hence, commencing now just where Adam by transgression landed, and taking man as he is, meeting conditions and circumstances, not as they might be, but as they are, let us retrace our path, assured of the fact that man must be converted or there is no heaven for him.

Now what? God provides the scheme of salvation, and orders the apostles, prompted by love, to commence with man as he is and lead him back to the state or the plane from which he fell. What is the first step? Exactly like that one up yonder—preach or teach. Hence, the Savior said: "They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and bath learned of the Father, cometh unto me'" But what to preachy The devil commenced by preaching a He. Let gospel preachers now begin by preaching the truth, for it is the truth that makes us free and that makes us stand in the presence of God justified. But that is not all. Just as they back there believed the He, just so men now must take the first step and believe the truth. Hence, he is marching backward and upward toward the plane from which the first pair descended; and remember that the very minute that Grandmother Eve believed, she was not driven out of the garden. Upon what basis, then, do you think that the Lord commanded that the sinner retrace the steps, believing that God will open wide the gates and bid him step back into the garden of Eden? It took more than faith to damn him. It takes more than faith to save him—a faith perfected by obedience.

Therefore, in addition to man’s believing the truth, God says: "Sir, I want you to obey the truth." Hence the second thought of the gospel plan of salvation. Take that. Then what? After you have believed the truth and obeyed it, God says: "I will pardon your sins." When the first pair believed and obeyed it, they became guilty. When we reverse the steps, believe and obey it, God Almighty pardons us. The next step is, they became guilty in God’s sight and were driven out. We accept the terms of salvation in the reverse, in the conversion, the turning again, and are adopted into the family of God, from which the first pair wandered in the long ago.

Ladies and gentlemen, mark you, a change of heart, or a conversion of heart, and pardon of sin do not have their origin in the same place. Repentance of all sins and the remission of sins occur in two different places. Change of heart takes place in the mind of man here upon earth; pardon takes place in the mind of God above, in heaven. Repentance and turning are acts of the

individual; blotting out of sins, an act of God.

I doubt not in the penitentiary of our State there are those that really have had a change of heart. They would give ten thousand worlds, they honestly think to-night, for another opportunity of liberty. They have shed tears over their wretched state and mad act accomplished; they have bowed down in repentance. But that is not forgiveness out yonder eight or ten miles west of the city; pardon takes place up here on Capitol Hill, in the mind of an entirely different person altogether, and there is no earthly way for that prisoner yonder to know by what takes place within himself what is in the mind of Governor Taylor. He cannot prove by the way he feels just how Governor Taylor is feeling on the proposition. There is repentance yonder, there must be a change of heart, there must be submission; but on Capitol Hill is the place of forgiveness. And what evidence can that man that is pardoned have except by Governor Taylor communicating the information ? And when the note or the runner is brought, it is a matter of faith in the Governor that he has really been pardoned. He passes into liberty and freedom, walking by faith.

Just so I believe the gospel here in Nashville to-night, I repent of my sins, I walk down into the water, and in the name of the sacred Three I am buried like unto that of the Son of God, arising fully resolved to walk in newness of life. Then what? I have God's word for it that from the courts of glory, from the realms of bliss Divine, he has pardoned my sins. Hence I walk by faith, not by sight. I walk by faith, not by feeling, because my feelings are deceptive and God's word fails not. The heavens may pass away, the rocks may become a molten mass; but the word of God endureth forever and forever. The foundation of God, therefore, stands sure. And when thus I submit to heaven's terms and become converted to God, to Christ, I know as much as it is humanly possible that all my sins have been wiped out; and if I will but continue faithful, at last God will be pleased to lead me up the glittering strand and into the sunlight of his matchless presence.

I ask to-night, as in a moment we will stand and sing, are there those of you that will be converted? Do you believe the gospel with your whole heart? If so, I would not have you change that otherwise. Are you fully persuaded to reform your way of living and direct your life in harmony with the commands and the principles of the word of Jesus Christ? Will you submit to his terms? If so, there will be a complete conversion on your part and you will be able to read your title clear to mansions in the skies.

1.07 - THE GREAT COMMISSION

THE GREAT COMMISSION

It has already been announced from this platform, and also from the papers, that the subject for discussion tonight is "The Great Commission." In order that you may get the facts in your mind at the very outset, I want to quote to you just what the Bible has to say, and thus in just as simple a manner as I possibly can, I want to analyze the statements therein found, believing as I firmly do that you are properly prepared in heart and mind for this study. In Matthew 28:19-20 there is this story: Jesus Christ, speaking unto the apostles, said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." As reported in Mark 16:15-16, it is after this fashion: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." As given in Luke 24:46-47, it is as follows: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Now, if you will hold these passages thoroughly in mind, I want to analyze with you honestly and thoughtfully and if possible to get not only the truth, but the whole truth as incorporated in these three accounts. But before I do that, I think that you may be better prepared to appreciate it by a little bit of review of the things that preceded.

Religion is of Divine origin, and let us remember that the first religion ever established on earth was purely of a family sort and type, there being just a few people back in the early morning of time. God Almighty saw fit to inaugurate a system wherein the father of the family was ordained as a priest in the home; and wherever they chanced to go, he could stop and erect an altar where they could offer sacrifices, assured that it would meet with Heaven’s approval.

Thus the matter continued down the line for twenty-five hundred years, until Jehovah saw fit to call his people out from bondage in Egypt and lead them by the hand of Moses across the Red Sea and bring them to the foot of Mount Sinai. While Moses and Joshua were on the summit thereof, God instituted a national religion. Instead of building an altar wherever man chanced to be, God suggested: "I will build for the people a tabernacle, a house of God, builded upon a silver foundation. I will record my name, and those of you that wish to worship Jehovah will have a certain place to which you may go."

That, ladies and gentlemen, was the inauguration of that system known as Judaism, that lasted from Mount Sinai down to bleeding Calvary, a period of fifteen hundred years. In the year 1095 B.C. there was a kingdom established, gratifying very largely the desires of Israel. Saul became the first king. Forty years from that date David became king of Israel and reigned another forty years, followed by his son, Solomon, for still another forty years, at the expiration of which time

975 B.C.—very unfortunately, as we view it, the kingdom was divided. Ten tribes went down to Bethel, following the leadership of Jeroboam. The other two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—led by Rehoboam, remained faithful to God's order, worshiping at Jerusalem. The ten tribes, under a reign of nineteen kings, continued until B.C. 721, when they were swallowed up by the Assyrian nation, like unto whom, in their idolatrous ways, they had become. But the two tribes lasted until the year 606 B.C., when the greatest battle of all history back there was fought, when old Nebuchadnezzar, of the east, king of Babylon, met Pharaoh-necho, then king of Egypt, at Carchemish, near the Euphrates, and there the battle raged as to which one of these two monarchs should sway the scepter of authority over mankind. The victory was gained by the eastern king, after which he swept down upon Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiakim and held them in subjection for nineteen years, at the close of which time, Zedekiah, the last of the house of David, rebelled. King Nebuchadnezzar had the old gentleman's eyes put out, desecrated the temple, and carried away the sacred vessels therein, together with the most of the people, into Babylon, to finish out a period of captivity of seventy years—fifty-one years longer than they had hitherto been in subjection. At that time the house or the tabernacle of David fell down and passed into ruins.

Time rolled on, and in the year 536, by the decree of old Cyrus, the Jews came back from Babylon and began rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem under the splendid leadership of Nehemiah. Another five hundred years go by, during which time the Jews are subject to various nations, when, in the providence of God, John the Baptist, forerunner of Christ, the one who was sent to bear witness of the true Light, appeared, announcing a message unto the people then living, calling their attention to their indulgences, to their selfish gratifications, begging them to repent and reform from such, for he declared that the kingdom of God was at hand. Soon after he was put in prison, our Lord himself, having been, if you please, acknowledged by the God of the universe, likewise took up the work laid down by John, and began to preach unto the people: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He selected twelve and sent them out upon a mission that was restricted and narrowed in its application: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then he sent the seventy and likewise bade them to tell the people that God's kingdom was come nigh. All of this was but preparatory for the transition out of a national and into an international and world-wide religion. When at last the Savior died on the cross, he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was contrary and against them and took it out of the way. He tore down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of the commandments contained in ordinances, that he might make thereby in himself of the twain—Jew and Gentile—one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

Having spent three days and nights in Joseph's new tomb, he burst the doors thereof on the third day and came forth triumphant over the powers of the Hadean world, disclosing his identity to those round about, until at the end of forty days he led his apostles out to the heights of Galilee and there announced unto them a system of religion that was not narrowed down to a family nor even limited by national ties, but that was world-wide, that was heavenborn, that had been bought by the precious blood of the Son of God himself. The twelve having been selected, he gave them

the most sacred charge ever couched in human words or delivered to mortal man. The salvation of the souls of men is the objective toward which all things are bound and toward which everything is converging. The one supreme object to be accomplished is the remission of sins, the saving of men and women, and the increasing of the kingdom of God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Hence, as is recorded by Matthew, he is declared to have said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

There are some things in this commission, as a secondary matter, addressed unto them who at first obedience became members of his body, that do not properly come into the discussion to-night, and so I pass that by for the time being. I must suggest to you the fundamental things therein as I conceive to be applicable to an alien sinner. The first obligation that rests upon the church of God to-night and upon every Christian is that we are to go; and let me drop this thought, that a body of religious people that is not missionary in heart, in sentiment, in theory, in practice, is not the body after the New Testament fashion.

But, in addition to that, Christ said: "Go ye therefore, and teach." I submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, that the religion of the Bible is a taught religion; that the Christianity of the book called the "book of God" is a taught Christianity—that is, a thing men learn. Hence, Paul said to Timothy: "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Any system of religion, therefore, that is not based on elementary teaching is unlike the one mentioned and referred to in this connection. Man stands absolutely unable to direct his own steps. He is launched out upon the great ocean of time, unable by his own inherent powers to steer his bark safe to the harbor. God says, therefore: "I want you apostles, when the Holy Spirit shall have come upon you, to go and teach; for it is written, They shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, the hath heard and bath learned of the Father cometh unto me." But I know quite well that you cannot teach very much unless you have somebody to whom the teaching is addressed, and the commission furnishes the answer unto that demand: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Go, teach all the races and classes of humanity everywhere. But, Matthew, what do you want us to teach? And you know, my friends, that Matthew did not tell. He did not say whether to preach or teach Democracy or Republicanism, and for that reason I leave a blank here and pass on. But Matthew did not suggest whether people ought to believe or disbelieve it—simply made no mention thereof; and so another blank. Neither did Matthew say one word on earth about whether people ought to turn toward him and repent of their sins; and so I leave a third blank, and pass to the next declaration, anxious to find out just what is said.

Note: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Then what? Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Well, Matthew, what for? Why baptize them? Matthew did not tell, nor will I—just yet. Well, Matthew, where shall we begin—at Nashville, Knoxville, Chattanooga, or where? Matthew is as silent as the stars above regarding that specification. The point I want to get before you is this: Just to have and to hold in your minds if possible the various items and stipulations by each of these characters mentioned, and at the close of the investigation I want to strike a line and make a summary of what each of the witnesses shall have to say. I think that is about the way our lawyers proceed in a suit pending. If they have

some two or three witnesses, they call them in and have them duly sworn and then placed upon the witness stand. They make note of each point therein mentioned and each item to which they give evidence; and when this one is through, they bid him to stand aside and bring in No. 2; and then they bring up items of a like nature as we do in the schoolroom in compound numbers, until the entire list is finished, and at the close thereof the lawyer rises and says: "Gentlemen of the jury, here is the truth, the whole truth, as told by these witnesses." And upon that he makes his pleadings and expects a verdict according to the evidence and law presented.

Just so to-night may I have, if possible, Matthew, Mark, and Luke after the same fashion? Matthew declares they were to teach, and that all nations are to be subjects thereof. Not only so, but the taught were to be baptized. In what name? In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But he did not declare for what purpose, he did not announce where it was to begin; and, furthermore, regarding the things applicable to a sinner this deponent saith not.

Well, will you help me to study that just a little further? It seems to me to be absolutely plain. I know that I know what it says. I know that you know without any question whatever. I presume there are thousands of people in this audience to-night that could quote what Matthew declared. But we are a wonderful people in trying to explain things according to our peculiar fancy.

There are those that say: "Of course Matthew thus testified, but the baptism mentioned by him is not the baptism that is practiced in this country in a pool of water, or it is not water baptism at all, but that has reference to Holy Ghost baptism."

Well, maybe you might be mistaken about that. Perhaps there is some room for doubt, if not positive proof and genuine evidence to the contrary. I think I can say to you truly to-night that, while there are thousands of things I do not know, I believe there is one thing I do know—namely, that the baptism spoken of by Matthew in the commission is not a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Why do I thus speak so positively? First of all, it is the baptism that is rendered in the name of the Holy Spirit and by his authority; but I think that is not conclusive. I want to call your attention to the fact that the baptism mentioned in this commission was a baptism to be administered by man. The same apostles that were to do the going were likewise to do the teaching, and the same ones that God commanded to teach he likewise commanded to do the baptizing; and if I were in the schoolroom, I would just ask the boys and girls to designate the subjects of these words: "Go." Who? "Ye." Who, "ye?" "Ye apostles—go and teach." Who teach? "Ye apostles—and baptize." Who baptize? "Ye apostles." But you say: "That is perfectly true; but what has that to do with it?" My friends, it settles the question beyond a shadow of a doubt; for no man that ever did or ever will live ever administered Holy Ghost Baptism. Since it is true that the baptism of the commission was to be administered by man, it follows, as the night follows the day, that it was not a baptism of the Holy Spirit; for, notwithstanding the fact that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb, he says: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Since this baptism in the commission was administered by man, it is evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But I have had people to suggest another thing to me, and I always appreciate the kindly suggestions of anybody, regardless of how much we might differ. As a matter of fact, I think it rather a reflection upon us that we cannot even differ in political, social, or religious matters without becoming offended.

Some of the best friends I have do not believe as I do on certain questions, but I appreciate their honesty and sincerity. But here is the objection sometimes raised: "I have been told that baptism is a duty that belongs to Christian people and is not a duty obligatory upon the sinner." Well, I want to ask a question or two right here. Can you think, ladies and gentlemen, of a single, solitary Christian duty on earth that a man can perform just one time and get a clear receipt from future obligation? Is prayer a Christian duty? Certainly. Can I pray one time and settle up my account along that line? "O. no," somebody says; "that recurs." Well, is the Lord's Supper a Christian duty ? "Yes." Do we do that just one time only? O. no. Is giving of my means a Christian duty? It is. Well, can I write my check for one hundred dollars or five hundred dollars, and do you think the Lord would give me a receipt in full of all accounts? I think not. If baptism is a Christian duty, therefore, you must acknowledge one fact—namely, that it stands in a class absolutely by itself, and there is not another single Christian duty under heaven that a man has to perform but one time. The truth is, it is applicable to an alien in becoming a child of God.

Now, will you let Matthew stand aside for a moment and let me present Mark in the witness chair for your study? "Mark, what have you to say about it?" He says: "Hardeman, my deposition has been taken, and you will find it upon the files of heaven's chancery; and as I said then, so say I now, and of what I then declared I bid you go and see."

Well, now, carefully and quietly let's study. Mark said that the Savior said unto the apostles: "Go ye into all the world." What did Matthew say? "And teach all nations."

Matthew said, "Teach ;" but Mark said, "Preach ;" but they mean one and the same thing. Any man that rises in your midst and expects your careful consideration and courtesy ought to be able to teach something; and if he can teach nothing, he possibly has answered the wrong call and responded to the wrong demand. "Go ye therefore, and preach." Matthew did not say what, but Mark says: "Preach the gospel unto every creature, wherever they chance to be found." That is why I am glad to-night that this section on the left is occupied by the colored race and the rest of the sections by others, for I have never found in God's book where the gospel is limited to any race, country, or clime.

Now that much was obligatory upon the twelve.

After you shall have preached the gospel unto every creature, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If that were anything else except a matter of religion, there never would be a single question as to the significance and meaning thereof. What did the Lord say? It is not what I might think it ought to be; it is not a question of what I would have him say or of what my great-great-grandmother might have thought regarding it. That is not the question. What did God say about it? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Now, to be just a little bit critical along that line, I call your attention to this statement. This is what we call in grammar a "complex declarative sentence," the principal statements of which is this: "He shall be saved." Now, what "he?" If the Lord had put no modifying thought therein, I would suggest just any "he," wherever you might find him, a universal salvation everywhere—"he shall be saved." But that is modified, if you please, by what we call a "limiting" or a "restrictive" clause, and it is a certain "he." Out of all the sons and daughters of men on earth, Jesus Christ picked out one class, accurately described, variously detailed, and made the declaration that "he shall be saved." What

"he?" The "he" that believeth and is baptized.

"Lord, did you say, ’He that believeth shall be saved?’ "No." "Did you say, ’He that is baptized shall be saved ?’ " "No." "Well what did you say?" "I said, ’He that believeth and is baptized.’ That is the man that shall be saved."

Now, Christ was not talking about an innocent babe. He had not in mind an irresponsible idiot. He did not include in that an untaught heathen. He had in mind a man that was accountable to God, a man that heard the truth, a man that could understand and appreciate the truth, and announced the terms of salvation unto the man in the language that is mentioned. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

There are two thoughts equally joined, coordinately so, joined together as a supplement the one to the other, indicative of additional ideas. Let me make to you this statement: that whenever and wherever salvation is promised unto man on certain named conditions, while there may be more conditions implied, there can never be less than those stipulated. Jesus Christ bound together faith in the Son of God and baptism in his name. I did not write that, none of my brethren, nor any general assembly or legislative body on the face of the earth. That declaration came from the Son of God Divine, and I must meet it at the everlasting judgment.

Sometimes when I am called upon to perform a marriage ceremony, I wind up the matter with this kind of a statement, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder;" and that is well taken, too. All right; let’s try it. "He that believeth [item No. 1] and is baptized [item No. 2] shall be saved [item No. 3]." What did God join together? Faith and baptism. And now let me repeat the final part of the marriage ceremony: "What God, therefore, bath joined together, let not man put asunder." Heaven has never authorized the divorce or the parting of those two statements, and as long as time shall last that statement will be in God’s book exactly as it is therein put.

Now, will you watch the statement? "He that believeth [the first point] and is baptized [the second point] shall be saved." Just allow me to say this: If you will take away the word "salvation" and put a thousand dollars in its place, we would have some baptizing in Nashville, just as sure as you are here. Suppose the passage read: "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a thousand dollars." I think, ladies and gentlemen, I know enough about humanity to know just what would happen in this splendid city. Why not, my friends, with equal thought and equal analysis and reasoning, understand that God Almighty has placed salvation at the end of obedience to his will?

But, Mark, where shall we commence? Now, Mark didn’t say, and so I pass it again. But let me introduce to you Luke as the third witness. Luke says: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." I have learned two things additional to the evidence of Matthew or Mark. What they said can be absolutely true, and yet Luke’s supplement "hereunto.

Luke injects into the commission as given by the Savior the item of repentance; and, therefore, a gospel sermon to-night that leaves repentance out is a sermon and a gospel that is mutilated. A sermon to-night with faith left is not the gospel commanded by Christ to be preached unto all the world and to every creature. Where begin, Luke? "At Jerusalem." Hence, after Jesus Christ had given the commission, I am not surprised that he said: "Go to Jerusalem, and there tarry until you

be endued with power from on high." There is too much at stake for it to be left to men unguided and unaided by inspiration. Hence, go and wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. They went to Jerusalem and waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit; and when Jesus wended his way back to glory and had dispatched the Spirit from heaven to earth to consummate the work of redemption by him begun, the apostles began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit of God gave them utterance. And having explained unto the multitudes assembled the miraculous doings of the day, Peter said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words." I want you to know, my friends, how Peter understood and applied that commission; and be it remembered also that it was a fine occasion for its beginning, for these were Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, that had there assembled. So Peter said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

What is Peter doing? Preaching the gospel of the Son of God, announcing the first fact therein—they had killed the Christ and with wicked hands had crucified the Savior of the world.

He next speaks of the fact that he has been buried, but that it was not possible that he should be holden of death; therefore God hath raised him up. What for? For to sit on David’s throne--David’s tabernacle rebuilded, which from the days of Zedekiah had lain in waste; but, indeed, of the seed of David, God had raised up his Christ to sit on his throne and sway the scepter of authority over the entire realm of mortal man.

Hence, he finally concludes by saying: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God bath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Thus Peter preached the gospel, guided by inspiration; and when it went home to the hearts of the people, they were pierced, they were pricked, they were cut to their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles; "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now, note that Peter said unto them: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all them that are afar oh, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." And so on. The last verse suggests that God added unto the church day by day such as were being saved.

Thus, ladies and gentlemen, have I tried to present to you the full statement as recorded by each of the characters, respecting the wonderful commission given by God to men. With the same old gospel preached tonight, with the Savior’s love, with God’s mercy, with heaven’s interest, with the Spirit pleading, I beg of you in this presence to believe on the Lord with all your heart, to renounce

that stubborn will, to turn your back upon the past, to confess with the mouth that which I trust you believe in your heart, and then to walk down into the water and there be buried, and rise determined to walk in newness of life. I bid you come to-night and give me your hand, give God your heart, and start out toward "the city which hath foundations" while all things are well.

1.08 - THE CONVERSION OF A CIVIL OFFICER

THE CONVERSION OF A CIVIL OFFICER

I am exceedingly grateful, ladies and gentlemen, both to you and to Almighty God for that disposition that characterizes this splendid audience in manifesting its desire to hear proclaimed, not the opinions of men nor fancy's stories that might be related, but the sound, sober, and sane announcement recorded by inspiration. I rejoice that I have been able to present to you the unvarnished truths of the word of God. I believe that I have from time to time before me an audience made up of honest, earnest, sincere, unprejudiced, and unbiased people. I think I can read in your very countenances and expressions that anxiety for the truth which alone can make us free and which only will be worth while when time and timely things shall have passed away.

I want to get before you to-night the story of a conversion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I want all of you to listen very carefully to the recitation thereof. From the eighth chapter of the book of Acts, commencing with verse 26, I read. But before I give you that reading I want you to see the geography of the places about which I expect to read. There was the city of Jerusalem, which if this table here were to represent it, the town of Samaria, thirty-six miles north, would be just about the center of the gallery; then coming down from Jerusalem in a southwest direction, there was a road down to the seacoast unto the old town of the Philistines by the name of Gaza. After the stoning of Stephen and the persecutions following, the members of the church, save the apostles, "were scattered abroad" and "went everywhere preaching the word.,' Then Philip— not Philip the apostle, but Philip an inspired deacon and an evangelist—governed and guided and directed by the Holy Spirit, went down to the city of Samaria. He there preached Christ unto them, and a number of both men and women were baptized.

I begin now the story: "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." Now, he was very specific about that. There are in the geography and history two towns on the coast by the same name "Gaza." One of them was the old town that had been deserted, and the other was the newer town and the one in which the people then lived. Now, the angel said: "Philip, you arise at Samaria and go down toward the south unto the road that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, that is desert, or deserted." "And he arose and went: and, behold a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh

the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what cloth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believes" with all shine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of Clod And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him And when they were come un out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Most of the revivals of modern times consist, ladies and gentlemen, of the recitation of various cases of conversion that have come under the vision and definite experience of the preacher of the hour. Now, they are told for two purposes—viz., first, that by the recitation of the certain cases sinners may see just how the matter is done; and, second, that by concrete examples sinners will be encouraged to "go thou and do likewise." While I grant you there is a wonderful power in example, I want to say to you that the Lord found that out a long time before the preacher did, because when he went to have the New Testament written he said to the holy spirit: "Let us just take one book itself and devote that particularly unto the reciting of various and sundry cases of conversion." And, out of all the multiplied thousands that were converted by the apostles as they were thus guided, Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, selected quite a number for our example and pattern. As a matter of fact, I think you and I ought to congratulate ourselves in this respect. There are two classes of conversions and two classes of examples from which to make a selection. Now, we can select a modern case of conversion or we can have the privilege of selecting a Bible case. Then it is just a question as to which one we prefer. But be it remembered that those in the Bible practically have passed twice under the supervision and vigilance of the Holy Spirit. At the time they were being enacted the preacher of the occasion was guided by the Spirit of God direct; and, again, when Luke went to write the record and given us the story, the Holy Spirit governed and guided him there. I have no hesitancy in announcing that those in the Bible are genuine, cannot possibly be frauds; and any one in this splendid audience who can say truthfully, as we study this or any other case, that the essential features thereof are identical with his, ought to rejoice and be glad.

I want to call your attention to another fact and a precaution God has taken in this important matter of conversion. In the schoolroom we have our textbooks written in the very best possible way, and I recall what I think is a good illustration just here that might help to get the point before us. In some of the rather difficult and complicated matters and problems there is this procedure in, for instance, "Partial Payments." On one page there is a recitation of Chancellor Kent’s United States rule for computing the interest in a partial-payment problem—item No. 1, then item No. 2, then item No. 3, and so on down the line just what to do until the end is reached. Then on the other page the author solves a problem for you, gives all the facts unto you, and works it all out. Many a time I have read the rule and, in the words of the schoolboy, "kinder gotten balled up" on it. Now, do you know what I did? I went back and saw how he applied this part of the rule to his problem; and then when I got the problem, I went back and read the rule again. By having both the rule and the example, we can thoroughly master any problem.

Now, I want to say to you that the rule of salvation with us is just as simple and just as easy. God gave a plan of salvation as presented last night. We studied the great rule of conversion as laid

down by the master Teacher upon the pages of the Bible. And now to-night God proposes to solve a problem by this rule. If any here tonight do not understand the rule, let us go and see how it was applied by inspiration; and if we get somewhat confused in the problem, let us go back and read the rule again. Now, then, I think it but just and right before further proceeding to ask these questions: Who was this man about whose conversion I read? Where did he live? In what condition or state was he? What-was done for him? What was said to him ? What intelligence or obligation was communicated? In the next place, what did he do? And by tracing all the steps carefully it looks to me like we ought to be able to see the plain truth as intended. We cannot afford to be otherwise than strictly honest and earnest about it, because, as I have said before, it is not a trivial matter. I am not taming about frivolous and light affairs. It is no child's play in which we are engaged. I am not simply dealing with the emotions and passions of men, but am trying to address myself unto that part of you that is cool, calm, and deliberate, that recognizes responsibility, and that is accountable to God for not only the deeds of tonight, but of every day; and I am conscious that I must give an account not only for the way I must live and my attitude toward Heaven's truth, but my proclamation of that truth tonight.

Well, the Bible is specific along this line. The record says that there was a man of Ethiopia. Now, just what his name was the Bible does not say, but it does tell the position he occupied and the condition of the man. He had charge of the treasury under Queen Candace's government, corresponding, if you please, unto the position of Secretary of the Treasury held by Mr. Mellon in the American government, and which, if offered many people of this good State, would not be turned down with a frown, but most of us would be glad to have the privilege of serving in a capacity like unto that.

Now, I mention that, not because of the fact that a treasurer is more appreciated in the sight of heaven than any other man, but because of the fact that sometimes I have heard it said in ridicule that he was only an Ethiopian, just as though that rendered him less favorable in the sight of God. But here is a man occupying a prominent place; whether he be a Jew or a proselyte, I do not know; but be it said to his credit that by his faithfulness and his business ability he had gained the confidence of the queen of one of the richest and most influential countries of the age; and when the time had come for the make-up of the cabinet, for the selection of those men in whom she proposed to trust the wealth of her land, to have charge of all her treasure, this man stood out prominently and received the appointment at her hand.

Now, further, the record says that this man had gone to Jerusalem "for to worship." That is why I knew he was either a Jew or a proselyte under the Jewish religion; and I think, just in passing, those of us who claim to be Christians ought to get a lesson here. You figure out how far he would have to go—a distance of about a thousand miles. By what means of transportation ? No locomotives, no cars, no automobiles, no flying through the air—nothing of that sort. The Bible states that he was riding along in his chariot, perhaps at the rate of about three, four, or five miles an hour. But the point I want to make is this: He had his heart set upon worshiping God after the law of Moses and according to the Jewish idea that then prevailed; and he found time he took time—to absent himself from his business so that he could go and worship God according to the light that then shone about him. Let me tell you: The person, ladies and gentlemen, that makes his business first and his religion second, I have an idea, is just about as near heaven as he will be when Gabriel sounds the last trumpet. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

I sometimes get ashamed, therefore, if perchance I happen to miss the meeting of the saints on the first day of the week and put up some kind of a trivial, shameful, and ungodly plea to let it pose as an excuse for not attending to the obligation binding upon me.

Here is a man whose business in every way is more weighty than ours and upon whom more responsibility rests than perhaps any man in the city of Nashville; and yet, notwithstanding the fact that he had charge of the treasury department, his convictions toward duty and toward God came first. I want to say to you that wherever there is a man of that sort that is honest and in earnest and interested in his soul's salvation, you can just put it down that the hand of the Lord it not far from him, and a way will be provided in the providence of God for that man to be translated out of the darkness into the marvelous light of the Son of God.

Well, now what? This man had been to Jerusalem "for to worship," and was returning. I have indicated to you that God was interested in the conversion of a man of that sort, and I know this is true because of the feet that God moved toward that very aim, and you note the process. God sent from heaven one whose business it was to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. But he did not send the angel unto this man that was to be converted, but, thirty-six miles away, God sent the angel down to the city of Samaria; and the angel appeared unto Philip, a preacher, an earthen vessel, to whom had been committed the terms of reconciliation, and the angel said unto Philip: "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."

Now, I presume Philip had to leave Samaria before the officer left Jerusalem; but to show you the accuracy of Heaven's calculations, just as Philip came to the very road in which the officer was traveling, there was the chariot before him. And as Philip thus approached the road, he had done all the Lord told him to do. He just simply stood there and heard this man read from the prophet Isaiah. Then what? Why, the Holy Spirit wants this man converted because there never was a conversion under the reign of Christ Jesus our Lord but that it was begun and carried on and consummated as a result of the Holy Spirit's working to bring about the end in view. So the Spirit has a part in this; but I call particular attention to the fact that instead of the Holy Spirit's coming to the man to be converted, like the angel, the Holy Spirit went to the preacher. How unlike these modern days! God's angel and God's Spirit working for the salvation of an honest man; and yet instead of going to him, both the angel and the Spirit go unto the preacher and both of them give this kind of suggestion "hereunto: "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." And Philip ran thereafter, and heard the man reading. That throws a little further light upon the matter. That man was reading aloud, because the Bible said that Philip heard him.

I am sure that he had learned what a great many of us have learned in our time that you can better center your attention upon a printed page by reading aloud than you can in silence. But there is another statement also. In passing up and down the country on the public thoroughfares and round about, it is not uncommon for us to find people reading. I never think anything about that. But what are they reading? Some of our splendid secular papers. The good ladies on the journey are reading, perhaps, a magazine or various articles, and we think nothing about it. There are some of you who have lived here in Davidson County quite a while. Have you ever seen a man riding along some of your splendid roads reading from the word of God? You never saw that. It is a little embarrassing to get on the train and begin to read the Bible. It is such an unusual thing that

all the eyes are staring and some one will say: "You must be a preacher." Why? Because it is not common to see folks reading the Bible. If you were to open up a paper on the sport page and begin reading about Babe Ruth's home runs, that would be all right; but if you read about Isaiah, the prophet, that is a different thing.

Here this man had not learned modern affairs, and he did not know any better, and did not have any better judgment than to be interested in his soul's salvation, and the strange part of it is that he was reading the Bible.

Well, I have often thought about how Philip introduced himself to him. He just simply followed after him, and said: "Sir, do you understand what you are reading ?" Now, think of that just a moment. If I were sitting in the hotel reading an article and a rank stranger came up to me and said, "Sir, do you understand what you are reading?" don't you think that I would take it as a little offense? And I would say: "Certainly I do. Do you mean to insult me by imagining I would be reading something I don't understand?" Now, I do not know why Philip "butted" in that way. He cut loose from all formality. He did not say, "Excuse me, please I" or, "I beg your pardon ;" or any of the little courtesies we have now; but he just said: "Sir do you understand what you are reading?" It may be that he could tell from the tone of the man's voice and the expression on his face that he was troubled. Time and time again I have been able, I think, to detect that. I have seen students down over their books delving and doing their very best, and I would not hesitate to say this to them: "Do you understand what you are reading?" How did I see that they did not understand? By some kind of an expression they had. The very way they bowed over it was indicative of the idea that they were puzzled, bothered. "Do you understand it?" This man, without taking the least offense, said: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" And he just slipped over and said: "Philip, I want you to sit with me." He perhaps thought from the countenance that was presented by Philip he might secure aid. "Maybe you can help me, and I want help, I want light, and I want the truth, regardless of the source from which it comes."

Now, Philip got up into the chariot and started in on the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah as now marked off in our English Bible. The passage is as follows: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." And he said: "Sir, of whom does the prophet thus speak? Was Isaiah talking about himself or of some other man?"

Now, do you want to reflect upon that treasurer's intelligence by saying: "Certainly he ought to have known to whom that refers?" I submit to you to-night that but for the fact that we have the revelation of Christ Jesus our Lord, there is not a man in this audience but that would be in the same condition as was that officer.

Let me say in all kindness and with absolute respect (hear it): There is not an unbelieving Jew on the face of the earth to-night that can explain Isaiah 53:1-12.

"Philip preached unto him Jesus." I wonder what that means. What is implied in preaching Jesus unto the officer? If I were to preach unto you to-night some other man, I think I would begin after this fashion—to make a concrete example of it, let me say this: If I were to preach to you of some splendid, great, good man, like John Wesley, whose memory I respect and whose work I

appreciate to the fullest, I would give a review of his career and teaching and influence. I regard him as one of the great men of his age; and if I were to tell you and to preach unto you John Wesley, I would go back unto his old grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley, who was born about 1600. I would tell you something of his ancestry and of the line from which he came. I would tell you still further of his father, Samuel Wesley, whose determination and persistency should encourage every boy, and of his mother, Susannah, who guided her children in honorable PATHS. I would tell you about his purpose and the desire that he had to reform and to revive the church that was characterized by the cold, formal sort of religion that then prevailed. I would tell you how, in company with three others, he started a society that by and by spread in prominence and influence until at last the result swept across the Atlantic and aroused the land of America, especially the land of Dixie, from the center thereof to the outermost parts. I would tell you of the wonderful influence of John Wesley, of the life that he lived and the death that he died in 1791, and of his last statements. If I had done that correctly, I would feel like I had preached unto you John Wesley.

Now, my friends, how would Philip preach Jesus unto that man? I have no doubt in the least but that he went way back in the line and began in the ancestry of our Savior to show how he came according to the prophetic declarations—how that by and by he was born of the Virgin Mary in a stable and cradled in a manger; how, to evade the edict of old Herod, his father and mother took their flight into the land of Egypt, and there stayed until Herod had died; and how at last they came to dwell in Nazareth. I would tell you how he came from Galilee, skipping over the hills and across the plains, until he came to the rolling waters of the river Jordan unto John, his forerunner, and demanded to be baptized; and when John forbade him, Christ said: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." My friends, if the Savior thought that to be baptized was becoming in him, what right have you or I to think or fancy that it is unbecoming in us?

"Then he [John] suffered him." In telling that story further, I would tell you that Jesus, when he was baptized, came up out of the water, the heavens opened, and God’s Spirit descended in the form of a dove alighted upon him, and a voice from the eternal worlds said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In further telling about that wonderful life, I would tell how he was taken into yonder mountain height, where he wrestled with the archfiend of humanity, and at last wrested the power of authority and caused the angels looking out over the battlements of heaven to rejoice because of the victory won.

I would tell of his wonderful deeds, of the miracles wrought by him—how he called about him a few of the humble fishermen and illiterates of earth and schooled them for about three years, and at last, when the greatest opposition had been aroused, false witnesses were brought one after another; how his enemies carried him from court to court until they stood in the presence of old Pontius Pilate, the governor, who, after three different trials, rendered a verdict of "not guilty." But that bloodthirsty crowd was hell-bent upon setting aside that judgment passed in his favor while he stood humiliated. O. don’t get it into your mind that Christ lost his balance! It doesn’t mean that Christ’s reasoning powers fled away, but that that judgment that Pontius Pilate declared in his favor was taken away, and in its stead there was the judgment of the multitude substituted in that they said: "Away with him! He is not fit to live upon earth."

I would tell you still further, as perhaps Philip did in riding along that day, how he was buried in a borrowed tomb; but by the power of God Almighty he burst the bars and came forth triumphant, and then led the disciples out and said unto them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The Bible says that when Philip preached unto him Jesus, as they went along on their way, they came to a certain water, and the officer said: "See, here is water; what cloth hinder me to be baptized ?" I want to ask you, my friends, how came the man to think of asking a question like that? He had never heard a gospel sermon in all of his life. He had never heard of the Savior nor of his commandments until this occasion. How did he come to ask: "What cloth hinder me to be baptized?" There is but one sensible answer, and that is this: He had heard Philip preach unto him Jesus.

Sometimes there are friends of mine that tell me they like to hear me speak, and often suggest to me: "Brother Hardeman, why don't you go out into the world and just preach Christ and say nothing about baptism—just hold up the Christ idea, preach Christ, and leave the other out?" Well, do you know that as much as I would like to do the will of my friends, I would be wonderfully handicapped by trying to heed a suggestion like that? Why, I could not even get Christ introduced into the world, because the very first announcement regarding his public career was that he was baptized at the hands of John. I would have to leave off the beginning place. And then, further, if I were to just simply preach Christ and leave out baptism, I could not tell you his valedictory unto the apostles, because the last thing that he ever said was: "Go, . . . teach all nations, baptizing them." I would have to cut short the story at both ends of the line.

Let me tell you in all candor, in all frankness, in the presence of God Almighty, before whom I must stand at the judgment day, the man that preaches Christ and leaves out baptism preaches a gospel other than that recorded in the New Testament. Talk about preaching Christ and leaving out baptism! Impossible thus to do. Talk about preaching Christ and leaving out faith! It is a mutilated gospel if you do that, and you are untrue unto the authority of God. Talk about believing the gospel and preaching Christ and never saying anything about baptism! "I would be ashamed to be afraid and afraid to be ashamed" not to tell the whole story—not to declare God's entire counsel. But as they went on their way the demand was made: "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said: "If thou believes" with all shine heart, thou mayest." Get the response. That man said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Having so done, he commanded the chariot to stand still. The Bible said (mark it): "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." My friends, we have an example to-night given by inspiration. Does it correspond with your conversion ? Was Jesus Christ proclaimed ? You say: "Yes." When you were converted, did you believe on the Lord ? You answer: "Yes." When you were converted, did both you and the preacher go down into the water? If not, you just put it down that your case was unlike this one; but if you did that, you can put your finger upon this passage in God's word and say: "This is exactly like I did."

But, again. Going down into the water is not baptism; that is getting ready for it. Coming up out of the water is not baptism; that is the return therefrom. But after they went down into the water and before they came up out of the water, there was an act that transpired that God calls "baptism."

"We are buried with him in baptism." Then what? They came up out of the water; the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.

Now I am ready to make to this splendid audience tonight this statement, and I do so conscious of the fact that Nashville represents the intelligence of our State, that you have the most enlightened citizenship, possibly, along Bible lines, of most of our cities in this land; but I am ready to make this statement (hear it): Under the commission of the Lord Jesus Christ no man ever rejoiced on account of sins forgiven until after he was baptized. Find it and get busy in the search. I repeat it After Christ Jesus gave the commission, until the book of Revelation was written, there is not a single case on record where any man ever rejoiced on account of sins forgiven until after he was baptized. Now, my friends, this is either so or it is not so; and (hear it) if you will show me that it is not true, I will make public acknowledgment of my mistake before an audience five time this big, if you will get it together; but I will be here a week or so longer, and I am not the least bit uneasy about anybody's finding the man. It is not there--absolutely not. But let us view this from another angle. As this eunuch went on his way rejoicing, suppose you had met him down the road; and there he was, with his face aglow, with the sunbeam of hope radiant in his every expression and in his very countenance, and you say: "Why, sir, what on earth seems to be the matter ?" Possibly he hadn't changed clothes, and the inquirer looks up and says: "Why, it has not been raining, has it?" "No." "Well, did you fall in the creek ?" "No." "Well, sir, explain yourself. Tell what has happened. I want to know."

Now, where would this officer begin to tell his experience? Would he commence by telling about the angel? O. no! The angel had a hand in his conversion, but the man knew nothing about it. Would he commence by telling him about the Spirit? The Spirit had a prominent part in the man's conversion, but he would not begin there. If I may repeat the story, it would be like unto this: He would commence in explanation and say: "I live in Ethiopia. I had been up to Jerusalem for to worship, not knowing that the system of Judaism had passed away and Christianity had been inaugurated. And as I was returning, reading along in the Bible, presently I met a man who asked me if I understood what I was reading. I told him I did not, and asked him to get up and sit with me, and he did so; and he commenced right at the very passage where I was reading, and he preached unto me Jesus. He preached and I listened. As we drove on down the road, we came unto a certain water, and I said: 'See, here is water; what cloth hinder me to be baptized?' And that man said if I believed with all my heart I could, and I told him that I believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; and he commanded the chariot to stand still, and both of us, both the preacher and I, went down into the water, and there he baptized me; and we came up out of the water, and he went somewhere, I don't know where; and I am on my way home, just as happy as can be." Now, do you think that I have misrepresented that eunuch's experience?

I am glad to say to you to-night, ladies and gentlemen, that in every essential feature thereof that corresponds unto that conversion upon which my hopes are founded. I heard the gospel, I believed it, I repented of all my sins "hitherto committed, I acknowledged the Christ in the same terms as he did, and then Brother R. P. Meeks and I went down into the water, both of us, and he baptized me. We came up out of the water, and I rejoiced because of the faith that I had in God, who said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I had done that. I believed God's statement. And as that man went on his way, it is interesting to mention a thought or two further just by way of suggestion. What was he? Yonder he goes down toward his home in Ethiopia. What

is he? Of what church was he a member? I bid you think on these things.

Now, there is another feature to which I want to call your attention. Had he been like some of us, he would doubtless have said: "Well, Philip, I must say that that is a good sermon. I never heard anything like it in my life. It looks like it has sense in it; I am impressed with it; and I will tell you. I live down in Ethiopia, and next year I will be back up to Jerusalem, and I am going to think about this; and if I happen to see any of your sort, I may accept that preaching." O. my friends, that is not the kind of a man he was! The man that is God-approved, that is not far from the hand that bestows the blessing, is the man that responds to his duty when he is convinced of its correctness. He never even stopped to think about what the folks back home would say. It is now. Now is the accepted time. I see the truth. What cloth hinder me from walking therein?

I come to you to-night, ladies and gentlemen, once more with this concrete illustration, taken from the pages of God’s word. I want to ask that you duplicate that man’s conversion in your own experience. Believe the gospel with all your heart. From all your sins be resolved to turn away. Confess the Christ as he did, and go down into the water, and there be buried as he was, arising to walk in newness of life, and be assured that God has forgiven your sins. If you will do that, it will make of you nothing under heaven except a Christian; that is all. It will make of you nothing in the world except a member of the body of Jesus Christ, the church of the living God.

It is a pleasure to extend unto you who have listened so patiently and so earnestly the gospel call again.

Chapter 12

1.09 - THE CONVERSION OF A MILITARY OFFICER

THE CONVERSION OF A MILITARY OFFICER

I must congratulate myself to-night for having the privilege of addressing such a fine audience as this assembled. One of the most encouraging things to me I have ever experienced is the close attention and the very earnest and intelligent hearing that you are giving while I try to present to you that which I believe to be the book of God.

I think that you will grant my earnestness, sincerity, and honesty, however much you may chance to differ with me regarding the subject-matter presented; for I assure you I have no motive in coming to your city but to preach the Bible as best I am able to read and learn the will of the Lord therefrom.

I want to say to you now, as in the beginning, that the gospel of the Son of God is universal in its application, including all races, classes, and conditions of humanity. The gospel of the Lord is intended to reach down to the lowest depths of degradation and despair and provide salvation unto the soul that is thus steeped in sin and bowed down under the evils of the earth. It is also intended for the very best man that the country affords, as viewed from a moral point of consideration.

Last night’s study was the conversion of a prominent official in the country known as Ethiopia. I am glad to call your attention to-night to another very prominent man, known throughout the country in which he lived and against whom very few things could have been filed as a criticism or objection. I want to repeat to you the story in brief, not in detail, as found in the tenth chapter of the book of Acts, that you may get a general idea of the case under consideration. The record says there was a man in Caesarea called "Cornelius," a centurion of the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always. He saw in a vision, evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of the Lord coming in to him, and saying: "Cornelius ;" and when he looked upon him, he was afraid, and said: "What is it, Lord?" The response was made in these words: "Thy prayers and shine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

Now, after having received such intelligence, Cornelius called unto him two of the servants and a devout soldier that waited on him continually and repeated what the angel had announced. He then sent them down to the seacoast, a distance of thirty miles, to inquire for Peter. While they were coming, Peter had gone upon the housetop to pray; and there, while praying, he fell into a trance, and this is what he saw: The heavens opened and a certain vessel descending unto him like a great sheet, knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air. Accompanying the vision, there was a voice unto Peter, saying: "Arise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said: "Not so,

Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice answered: "What God bath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Now, this was done three times. The vessel was received up again into heaven. And while Peter was thinking what that meant, behold, three men were down at the gate hallooing: "Hello! Is this where Simon, the tanner, lives?" While this discussion was going on, the Holy Spirit said unto Peter: "Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." On the morrow they started back toward Caesarea, and during the time Cornelius was busy getting ready for the meeting. He had gone out and gathered his friends and family, so that when Peter came he found that many had come together. HE said to Cornelius at the very start: 'fir am treading on dangerous ground, for I know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come into one of another nation; but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore, I am come unto thee as soon as thou hast sent for me." Then Cornelius repeated the story. "Thou hast well done that thou hast come. Now, we are all present here before God to hear whatsoever things are commanded thee of God." Now, Peter began and preached unto them the story of the cross. As he began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word, and they began to speak with other tongues and magnify God. Then said Peter: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." This is practically Acts 10:1-48. I have gone into detail to get that matter before you in its concrete form that you might appreciate all things the better that I may say regarding it. In the study of this man's conversion I do not know better how to proceed than after a sort of an inquiry raised on last evening. First of all, I want to find out who this man is of whom the record is thus given; next, what was done for him, and what was said to him, and what he said, and what he did, thus tracing the line from the very first announcement unto the very last, when we find him standing as a child of God, his sins forgiven. Now, if we can do that successfully to-night, I think perhaps we may be able to appreciate the plan of salvation as never before.

Unto a great many people that fail to handle aright, it occurs to me, the word of God, the conversion of Cornelius adds confusion and perplexity unto an otherwise simple story; but I think we ought to concede at once that in the conversions of the Bible there cannot be inconsistency or discrepancy regarding any two thereof. Now, be it remembered that circumstances connected with different men's conversions have differed on various occasions; but the items of obedience to the gospel of the cross must once and forevermore remain the same. If, therefore, we can eliminate all the circumstances and show the difference between them and the acts of obedience, it will greatly clarify the whole matter. Who was Cornelius? The record says there was a man of Caesarea called "Cornelius." Now, be it remembered that this story is in the land of Palestine, fortyseven miles northwest from Jerusalem. Cesarea was the political capital of that part of the country, to which various officers were dispatched from headquarters at Rome. Cornelius was a military man. The record tells us he was a "centurion," corresponding in our modern military machinery to a captain. Therefore he was called a "centurion of the Italian band." In addition to that, there was a rather strange feature mentioned. The record says that he was a devout man, and I think that it is not amiss to say that this is not generally true of the military officers throughout our land or any other land. To say the least of it, it is not generally true of captains, colonels, or officials of the army

and navy that they are known far and wide as devout men—sincere, worshiping, prayerful men. But here is one that was a devout man—one that feared God; and not only himself, but he was not indifferent to the rearing and training and impressions of his family, even including his soldiers and servants, because the record says he was a devout man—one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and who prayed to God always. And, in addition to that, this man saw an angel of God coming unto him about the ninth hour (that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon), and said unto him, "Thy prayers and shine alms are come up for a memorial before God"—in memory of a promise made nineteen hundred years before unto Abraham, when he said, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed ;" hence, as a memorial of the world-wide promise that is now for the first time about to find its fulfillment: "Thy prayers and shine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

Now, I doubt not but that some of this audience are wondering: "Why did a man like that need anything further?" As a matter of fact, the story thus far repeated, the character of Cornelius thus outlined, would put to shame many of us that go about under the appellation of a member of the church or a professed follower of the Lord. The Bible says also that he was a just man—one of good report among all the people. Now, you ask: "Does that man need to be converted?" Indeed so. I want to make this declaration: that because a man is good, upright, honest, just, prayerful, does not argue that he is a child of God; and I wish all of you people that are really relying upon your uprightness of character, upon your sobriety of life, upon the fact of your devotion to the members of your family and your relationship to your fellows—mark it, you are no better nor can you present a finer record than did Cornelius. Stand up by the side of him and let your portrait be made, and I will obligate myself to show that Cornelius will stand above any of the citizenship of this or any other city in the borders of our beloved State.

He was a good man, a moral man, a just man, a prayerful man, a devout man, a philanthropic man—one that looked after not only himself, but the rest of his household, including the servants and the soldiers; and yet he needed to be converted unto God. No man has ever yet been saved on account of his intrinsic worth or inherent value; and if any one is ever saved, it will be by virtue of the fact that he has been washed in that fountain filled with the precious blood of Christ. On account of my goodness I cannot merit nor buy nor place Heaven under obligation to save my soul at last. Above and beyond all of my deeds and my doings, I must render obedience to the will of God. It is by Christ that the world must be saved; and hence Cornelius, notwithstanding the superior type of man that he was, stood in need of salvation. Therefore the angel said: "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

Now, may I raise this inquiry? Why did not the angel announce the terms of salvation and save a journey of sixty miles, round trip? Why didn't the angel, while in direct contact with Cornelius, tell him words whereby he could be saved, and not postpone the same for seventy and two hours ? Well, there is a reason for that, of course. I learned in the case of the eunuch that there was the interference of an angel; but instead of the angel having gone to the man to be converted to tell him the plan of salvation, in that case the angel went to the preacher. But to-night the angel comes to the man to be converted; but you note there is a specific purpose for so doing. The angel said: "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Angel, why

not you tell ? Mark it! When Jesus Christ gave the commission, he had delivered the gospel, God's power to save, into the hands of earthen vessels; and from that hour until this neither an angel nor the Spirit nor Jesus Christ himself direct has ever dared to tell men and women what to do, but always they have directed the inquirer and the man to be converted to some man on earth unto whom the gospel of the Son of God had been committed. Therefore, the purpose of the angel and the purpose of miracle No. 1 was to inform this man to be converted where the preacher was from whom the information could be had. So he bade Cornelius good-by, and possibly went to tell some other honest man where he could find out what he had to do to be saved. But be it remembered, further, that Peter, the preacher of the occasion, likewise needs to have his vision cleared; for as yet it had never been announced that the middle wall of partition had been broken down. As yet the Jews did not understand that the gospel was world-wide and intended for the Gentiles. They had been so prejudiced and so biased that they had refrained from preaching the gospel unto one of a foreign nation; and so, in order to fit Peter for the occasion, while these men are coming down to Joppa, a trip of thirty miles, God appears unto Peter on the housetop in a vision. There was a great sheet let down from heaven, in which were all manner of four-footed beasts and fowls of the air and creeping things, and there was a voice that said: "Arise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter answered: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." While he thus thought on what the vision signified, these men were standing at the gate, asking if Simon Peter was there. Then it was that the Spirit unveiled the matter, and said: "Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." Hence, miracle No. 2. The vision was for none other purpose than to convince him that he ought to go and preach the gospel unto the Gentiles. It was to convince the apostle Peter that no longer should he be bound by racial ties and limited by former practice; but, as a matter of fact, the gospel was to go unto all the world and be preached to every creature. He had never had such an understanding before in his career. But as a matter of precaution, while Peter thus started with these messengers, he took six Jewish brethren with him to be witnesses in case something unusual or out of the ordinary should happen, for as yet a little skepticism dwelt in the mind of Peter as to the course that he should pursue. Thus they went on their way back to the house of Cornelius; and the record says that as they went thus to the house, Cornelius came out and was ready to fall down and to worship Peter; but Peter said unto him: "O. no, Cornelius; don't do that! Stand up, for I also am a man." And as he went in, he found that many were come together. Now, to understand the matter still further, he said: "Gentlemen, you know that it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew, like unto me, to come unto one of another nation, or even keep company therewith; and but for the fact that God bath shown me on the housetop that I must call no man common or unclean, I would not be here." Cornelius said: "Peter, thou hast well said. Now, therefore, are we all present before God to hear whatsoever things are commanded thee of God." With that kind of an introduction, Peter opened his mouth and began the proclamation of the gospel of Christ. He said: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised

up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Go back to the very first and come down the line of prophetic declaration, and unto Jesus Christ they all testified that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins. But there is another thing going on at the same time. As Peter thus began and spoke, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit fell on them as it did on the Jews at the very beginning. Now, mark you, Cornelius is to be saved by hearing the words that Peter spoke unto him. But let it be understood that he received the Holy Spirit before the words were proclaimed; wherefore a great many people jump at the conclusion that before a man can be saved he must be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Many honest, upright, and quite intelligent people believe a statement like unto that. Hence, it is worthy of consideration as to just why the Holy Spirit came on this occasion. Let me ask the same class of people: If you expect to have a Holy Ghost baptism preparatory to your soul's salvation, why not go a step further and expect an angel to come and to announce a message unto you as it did to him? One of them is no more important or significant than the other. One of them is no more miraculous than the other is, nor is the salvation of the soul of Cornelius any more important than that of any other man. Now, why was the Holy Ghost thus given? I think that it is well worth our while to ask some specific questions with reference to a matter of that sort. Was it in order that Cornelius might be begotten preparatory to the new birth, without which, said the Savior, no man can enter the kingdom of heaven? Well, if that is it, God knows I want it and all of us ought to yearn for it; but I do not find that the Bible declares anywhere that men are begotten by the Holy Spirit directly, but it does declare in 1 Corinthians 4:15 : "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Hence, it is not by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But some one says: "Brother Hardeman, he had to have the Holy Ghost baptism in order to give him faith, because without faith no man can be saved." Now, if that be the way of it, I have no disposition on earth to be antagonistic thereto; but I remember that Peter talked about this very point in Acts 16:7 : "Men and brethren, . . . God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

Now, Peter said that, instead of the baptism of the Holy Ghost being to produce faith, faith came by hearing words spoken by his mouth. Others suggest, perhaps, that they must have the Holy Spirit in order that their sins might be remitted—that they might be washed and made whiter than snow. But that is not true, for the simple reason that Peter said on the day of Pentecost, `'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," and the gift of the Holy Ghost would follow. Was it in order that Cornelius might be saved? O. no! For James (James 1:21) said: "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." My friends, take the matter home. For what purpose was the Holy Spirit sent? If you shall answer that it was for any such thing as those mentioned above, I obligate myself to turn to the word of God and put my finger upon the very book, chapter, and verse that shows that thing is done in some other way.

Now, the fact is this: The reception of the Holy Spirit in its miraculous form does not prove that the possessor thereof is a child of God. Other people than Christians have had the Spirit in its miraculous manifestations. I remember that Balaam's ass spoke by the Spirit of God, but that does not prove that he was God's child or a leader of the church. I remember that old Caiaphas, speaking by the Spirit of the Lord, prophesied that one should die for the sins of the people. Certainly no church would claim him as a member. But there is a specific reason why the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the house of Cornelius why he was able to speak in tongues and magnify God.

You learn, my friends, the use of things by seeing what is done with them and what purpose may be served. Suppose I had never seen an automobile. I get in by the side of the chauffeur, and I am wondering what a couple of levers are there for. I see them, but I understand not the purpose. If I will just be quiet for a few minutes and begin to see what he does with them, I will arrive at a pretty fair conclusion as to their purpose and intent. I see him pull one back, and the car begins to move out; and then he shifts forward to the right, and a little further, and then back again; and without ever asking a single question, but jut seeing what is done therewith, I catch on to the purpose of the same. When he stops the car, I see him take hold of the other lever and pull it back. Then the thing is locked. You don't have to tell me the last was a check or a brake.

Now, let us follow with the same attention, after the same fashion, and find out just what was the use of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the occasion that is referred to.

After the conversion of Cornelius was over, which happened like all other men's (for when Peter preached the gospel unto him, the record says he commanded him to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus) after that, when Peter, together with the Jews, had gone back to Jerusalem, he was called in question regarding his visit among the Gentiles.

When, therefore, Peter arose before his brethren assembled at Jerusalem, the record says, in the first part of Acts 11:1-30, that he commenced at the beginning and explained the matter unto them by order. Then what? He said unto them: "Brethren, when I saw that God gave unto them the like gift as he did unto us in the beginning, and unto us who believed on the Lord, what was I, that I could withstand God?" Then the Jews held their peace and glorified Jehovah, saying: "Truly, then, bath God granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life." Why did the Jews concede that? Because of the fact that they saw a like demonstration made unto the Gentiles as was made unto them some eight or ten years before. What evidence did they have that they were an acceptable people to the Lord ? They had heard them speak in tongues and magnify God. And what are tongues for? What has that to do in substantiation of the fact ? In 1 Corinthians 14:22 Paul said: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign." A sign unto whom? Not unto the believer, but unto the unbeliever. Hence, where any man has ever in all the Bible spoken in tongues, it was not for the benefit of those already believers, but it was for the benefit of the unbeliever. Thus it was at Pentecost; thus it was at the house of Cornelius. On the first occasion the Bible says that when the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The unbelievers constituted that thronging mass that gathered on that memorable occasion. But at the house of Cornelius, who are the unbelievers? The six Jewish brethren that accompanied Peter on that eventful trip. What is the evidence to remove that prejudice and that bias? Just, Lord, grant unto them the same things that you did unto us, and then we will have no

more to say. And from that hour unto this, no Jew that accepts the gospel of Christ ever has doubted that the Gentiles likewise are privileged to the enjoyment of the provisions of the gospel plan of salvation.

Now, then, eliminate miracle No. 1, the angel to Corny lies, the purpose of which was to get him and the preacher in direct contact. Eliminate miracle No. 2, the vision of Peter on the housetop, the purpose of which was to convince him that he ought to arise and go unto a foreign nation. Eliminate the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the purpose of which was to convince the Jewish world that the Gentiles were acceptable, and Cornelius' conversion stands out exactly like that of every other man that has been converted, from the reign of the authority of Christ until this good hour.

What happened? Cornelius heard the gospel; Cornelius believed the gospel; Cornelius repented of his sins; Cornelius was baptized. Hence, he fulfilled the items stipulated in that world-wide commission, the great rule and the law of pardon announced unto sinful man.

I think there are many people all through this country that are good, upright, honest, moral, of good report, just, fair, and square, and yet deceived on the ground that God will save them because of their goodness.

I, therefore, repeat the proposition made at the start. No man has ever yet been or ever will be saved on account of his goodness. That is not the terms of salvation. But the items of acceptability demand that good men do God's will. There are people, doubtless, in this splendid audience to-night that all they need to do is to recognize the fact that they must do God's will in order to become citizens of the kingdom of God, that they must be baptized, as the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the taught of all nations. After we have obeyed his commandments, God Almighty will wipe out every sin and initiate us into the grandeurs and glories of his family upon the earth and at last into the paradise of heaven beyond. And now, my friends, in conclusion of this talk to-night, if there be those in this good company that are willing to follow in the footsteps of Cornelius, do the things commanded by God, do the things that he did—that is, hear, believe, and obey the gospel—it will make of you a child of God, a member of heaven's family, while on earth you dwell.

Let me insist upon this fact: that if you wait for the coming of an angel, eternity will find you still unprepared. Angels no longer come, for we have God's will completed and his word revealed.

If you wait to-night for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you will die absolutely disappointed, for there have never been but two cases in the world's history—one of them at Pentecost and the other at the household of Cornelius. They had their specific purpose, which has been fulfilled and passed away; and we are saved to-night upon obedience to God's will, and not by the appearing of an angel, not by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not by wonderful, miraculous performances, but by humble, loving, trusting, penitent obedience unto the authority of God Almighty and of his Son, Jesus Christ. And now, while we sing a song, I am glad once more to bid you come and give these brethren your hand, give God your heart, and give the world your better services, and start out toward "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

1.10 - GOD'S IMMUTABLE LAWS

GOD’S IMMUTABLE LAWS

I want to speak to you this noon on the immutability of God’s law. I preface this address by suggesting that in the make-up of every man there are two natures that might be properly called the "created nature" and the "breathed into" nature; for in Genesis 2:7 it is said that God created man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. It is right, therefore, to talk about God’s being the Creator of our bodies and the Giver and Father of our Spirit?. When these two natures are blended together, we call such "life;" but in the course of time, when these two natures are separated the one from the other, we style it "death." Hence, Solomon said (Ecclesiastes 12:7): "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

These statements lead up to the conclusion that we are citizens of two worlds. That we are linked with the natural world, no one can doubt; that we are likewise made to partake of the Divine nature is equally obvious unto those who are really thoughtful. For the government and control of man in this dual nature two systems are necessary. One of them is adapted to our material relationships; the other, to our spiritual relationships. These two laws, while not antagonistic to each other, operate in entirely different fields. Paul said, in Romans 8:7 : "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." My animal nature, passions, and lusts are not subject to God’s spiritual law any more than that of any other animal. So, then, the law that governs man’s animal nature is wholly impotent with regard to his spirituality, and vice versa. In the natural things with which I have to do and in my material relationships I do not especially need the Bible.

*For the outline and matter of this sermon I am very largely indebted to Brother E. C. Fuqua, of Los Angeles, Cal. This I say thoughtfully. I derive no special benefits direct from it. An infant born into the world soon learns the first law of self-preservation, and it does not have to go to the Bible to get it. We soon become acquainted with the laws governing material things with which we have to do. All of our advancement, our progress and scientific development, is but the discovery of the natural law governing those things. This very largely explains why, in every age of the world and in every country, scientists and inventors have either been irreligious or the rankest skeptics of earth. They have gained the mastery over the material laws of the universe. They understand the workings of these laws and have lost sight of the fact that there is another part of man’s nature that is not subject to the law governing material things.

I submit to you that from our experience we have learned this: that when we disregard any of the laws of the universe in which we live, our purposes and plans are always defeated. It is a law, for instance, of electricity that there must be double wires on which the current is to run if lights are made possible. If any man would try to wire this building with a single wire, his effort would be a failure. Why? Simply because nature’s law demands to the contrary, and no man has the power to change or alter it in the least.

It is a law that by atmospheric pressure water will rise to a height of about thirty feet. The different kinds of pumps used in this country are made with due regard to this law, and any effort to change or disregard it results in failure.

It is a law of a chemical element called "phosphorus" that if it be subjected to the air, spontaneous combustion will result. Hence, to prevent this, it must be kept under water.

According to another law, metallic sodium must be kept under some kind of an oil to keep it from igniting.

Now, we understand those things and are governed in strict accord therewith. I submit to you, further, that in the law of the material world God is no respecter of persons. The rich and the poor are brought to defeat just alike when they violate the law governing material affairs. There may be the basest criminal on earth, prompted by suicidal intent; and then right by him there may be an innocent babe. If both get hold of a bottle of poison and drink it, death is the result. The fact that one is a criminal and the other a spotless babe does not affect the immutability of God’s natural law. We ought to learn some lessons from these simple examples. If the wealthiest man in all our land and the most learned that has ever lived were to violate one of nature’s laws, the penalty therefor would be as certain to follow as the night follows the day. Ignorance of this natural law renders no excuse, nor does it save the violator from the penalty. When we come face to face with some law of the universe and transgress it and the penalty is meted out, we never think of putting up the excuse that we did not know certain results would follow. They came just the same. The fact that the penalty is always meted out is evidence beyond question that the Executor of these laws still lives and sees to it day by day that every transgression and disobedience receives the punishment therefor. So long as I live upon the earth I must adjust myself to the laws of nature. I cannot go contrary with impunity. Suffering will come upon me and punishment will be inflicted so long as I remain out of line with God’s law. I may fail to plant a crop during the spring, and for a short time feel no effects therefrom; but when the cold, bleak, dreary days of winter rush upon me, my suffering begins, and will continue until I decide to fall in line with nature’s laws for the support of my physical being. No doubt but that many of the ailments of our being are due to the fact that some sort of our machinery fails to function in harmony with the laws governing our bodies. Suffering will continue until an adjustment is made.

All things are held together by virtue of the immutability and unchangeableness of nature’s wonderful law. Suppose that electricity should leave the wires in the city of Nashville and spread out into space; wreck and ruin would be the result. Every apparatus in this city would be rendered useless. It would be dangerous to pass along the streets and avenues. But as it is, I am not afraid to walk about your city. Why? Because I believe that the great electrical current will run true to God’s law and will stay confined to the wires.

Suppose that gravitation should cease Do you not know that everything upon the earth would at once be plunged into the fathomless depths of unbounded space? The world would stop and cease to rotate. Everything on the face of the earth next to the sun would soon become red hot, while everything on the opposite side would freeze to immense depths. As a result, every particle and every phase of life that now moves would be destroyed. But these things will not happen, for God has given unto us a perfect law, carrying with it the absolute assurance unto all those who have studied such matters. The astronomer can sit down to-day and figure out exactly, even to the

ten-thousandth part of a second, just when there will be an eclipse a hundred years hence. He can tell what will come to pass with respect to the heavenly bodies in the year 2000 just as well as he can tell what will happen one month from today. How can these things be? Not that he is a prophet, but because of two things first, the immutability of nature's law, and, second, the fact that "figures do not He." Now, to put these two things together—God's law, absolutely perfect, unchangeable, immutable, eternal, and the further fact that "figures do not He"—and men can make the calculations that prove true. That is a wonderful benediction, a rich provision of high Heaven unto mortal man while upon the earth we dwell. God's laws are absolutely dependable. You need not be afraid that there will ever be an exception.

Step out into the line of mechanics; and if you get the right philosophy and understand nature's law, you can make a machine that will operate, and it is not a matter of experiment. It is not a question of whether a thing will work or not; if you have confided in and conformed unto God's material laws, that thing is as certain to prove a success as the heavens are above us today. My friends, but for that, life would be fraught with dangers on every hand. The apothecary in your drug store to-day can compound and fill a prescription that will fit a man up in Canada of whom he never heard, and the same thing will be applicable to a man in Europe. Now, why? It will produce the same effect upon one man as the other; and, therefore, the apothecary is not afraid; he knows the immutability, the unchangeableness, of the laws of God in the material world wherein we live.

Now, another thing. It is the Law of the material world that like begets like. We never have an exception to that. For instance, there is a book written by Mr. Alexander Patterson, the name of which is "The Other Side of Evolution." In that he declares that from the historic rocks there have been found more than a hundred species of vertebrate animals, about fifty of which are still in existence. And during all the ages that have characterized the fossilized state there has never been a single exception to the fact that everything has brought forth after its kind and after its fashion.

We act upon that principle. Some of you ladies, perhaps, have already seen about planting your gardens. You want to have some butter beans after a while, and you don't think about planting squash seed. Why don't you? Because you have confidence in God's law that if you plant butter beans you expect to reap them. If you want potatoes, you would not think about planting pop corn; and if you want tomatoes you would not plant muskmelon seed. Why not? Because of the immutability of God's law. It is owing to what you want as to the kind of seed you ought to plant anywhere. If you want to make Mormons, for instance, of course you would not plant Republican seed; if you want Democrats, you would not plant the seed of Bolshevists; and so on through life's affairs.

Now, I want to state another principle. All I expect to do to-day is to get this principle before you: that in the natural world all life must be confined to the law governing the same; and outside of that law, which knows no exception, life does not exist and cannot be enjoyed. When God, by miraculous power, created the animals of earth, he definitely fixed and specifically located the life of each, either in the air or in the water. If any species thereof ever enjoys that life, it must get into that sphere where such is located and there remain. An animal with lungs and nostrils cannot live in a vacuum; an animal with gills cannot live outside of water. Why? God's immutable law has so decreed, and no exceptions can exist. In conclusion, if there are any of you who know God's

spiritual law and have a disposition to obey it, will you do so now while we stand and sing?

I am sure that all of us who are privileged to view this entire audience are appreciative of the fact that it is a splendid gathering for Saturday night's meeting. It was considered questionable as to whether or not we should undertake to have a Saturday service; but this one, together with last Saturday's demonstrates to me more and more your anxiety about the things presented at this place of worship. I am especially impressed with the thought that there is nothing here to attract you except the plain preaching of the old gospel story; that there is nothing practiced in these services but that every religious man might endorse and have neither right nor reason to be offended because of the injection into the service of anything not mentioned in the word of God.

I want to talk to you to-night about God's immutable laws. In doing so, it comes as a challenge to our faith and also to our intelligence respecting Jehovah and his doings with man.

I am quite conscious that in the presentation of this thought I will of necessity have to review some of the things mentioned yesterday; but perhaps it will only serve to kindle further study and make us more appreciative of the book of God. I said to you then, and want to get before you to-night, that man is a combination of two natures, one of them belonging to the material world, of which it can be well said that God was its Creator; the other, that which was breathed into man by his Creator; and that these two things our bodies and our spirit~constitute what we call "man." As long as they stay together on the earth, we call that "life;" and when these two elements separate, we style it "death ;" and the Bible declares that each one goes back to the place from whence it came.

Now, in the government of humanity there are two laws, one of them pertaining to that part of man that belongs to this world, the material part; the other law, quite separate and distinct, belonging to an entirely different field and has to do with that part of man that belongs to the eternal world. Paul said in Romans 8:7 that "the carnal mind"— that is, the fleshly man—"is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And the reverse of that is equally true. My spiritual nature is not subject to the physical law, neither indeed can it be.

Now, we will agree and run smoothly just in proportion to our acceptance of these principles. First, do you believe that God has a natural law governing the material world? And do you believe that the same God of nature is the God of revelation? If so, I am ready to proceed to further investigation. Of course, if some one believes that God is a God of one and not a God of the other, I should have to proceed with that man upon an entirely different line; but I am assuming and presuming that a large per cent, if not all, of the audience grants the existence of Jehovah and believes confidently that the same God who made the heavens and the earth, who gave those fundamental laws governing material things, likewise is the God of the Bible, the author of the book of inspiration.

Now, holding that in mind, we can move along parallel lines with profit and benefit to every person who will study these laws. Of these two matters, in which do you think God is most interested? Which one is the most nearly perfect ? Does God have greater consideration and greater exactness regarding those laws pertaining to the welfare of our material being or those with reference to our eternal destiny? In other words, what part of man does God look upon with the greatest interest—that part created of the dust of the earth or that which is akin to him? Is he more interested in the body which he framed than in the spirit he has given us?

Now, as I have said, these two laws with which we have to do are quite distinct the one from the other. In the natural world I do not need God. I derive direct no especial help therefrom. I have learned to adjust myself unto nature's laws and to be governed and guided thereby. All the material progress, the advanced civilization of which we boast, has been but the discovery of those natural laws and the applying of them to the various concerns of our material relationships.

Now, I must say, on the other hand, that God's spiritual law has not a thing to do with the material things of earth— not that Jehovah could not have so related them; it was that he did not see fit to do it. God could have answered numbers of questions about which man is concerned.

It would have been quite easy for the Lord Jesus Christ to have told us whether or not Saturn, Uranus, or Neptune were inhabited. He could have told us about the conditions of the interior of the earth. There are a thousand and one problems in the material world he might have solved. But the book of revelations is addressed to that part of man known as his spiritual being. Now, I said to you further in regard to natural law: The man that disregards and disrespects it always meets with defeat, and no man that ever lived has proved an exception thereto. You can use some of the most common illustrations of life; and if you or I profit thereby, we will observe the law governing the same. This is just as true with reference to spiritual matters. Disregard of God's spiritual law has likewise universally brought defeat, though, perhaps, unintended on the part of him who violates it. You can commence with the first pair in paradise, and descend the stream of human generations for sixty centuries, and not one single exception can be found.

Grandfather Adam perhaps thought that in violating God's law no penalty would follow; but he was wonderfully mistaken, and, as a result, the death sentence was passed upon him and his posterity. When Cain undertook to worship God other than by faith, undertook to substitute for the thing which God commanded, defeat, disgrace, and punishment were the result. When Abraham and Sarah reached that period in life where it ceased to be with her after the manner of women, God promised a son through whom the nations of the earth were to be blessed. She was so anxious to have God's promise fulfilled that she and Abraham formed a committee on "ways and means" by which the promise could be fulfilled and the end accomplished. The plan adopted was for her to sacrifice her own natural affections and allow her husband to go in unto another woman. Now, I have no censure to offer. I think their motives were pure, their intentions were good; but it seemed to them that God had made a mistake—that his plan would not work. So they undertook to supplement and legislate in order that the Lord's promise might come true. But what was the result? After Ishmael was born, God said to Abraham: "Not in Ishmael. He is not the one; and notwithstanding you violated the law with the purest of motives, yet you have met with defeat, for in a child of whom Sarah is to be the mother that promise must come to pass."

Well, that is true all down the line never an exception to it anywhere. But both in the natural world and in the spiritual realm God is no respecter of persons. Sometimes we wonder why it is, in the material world, that some of the best people of the earth are taken and borne aloft to their heavenly home; we sometimes wonder why it is that God took one and left the other. I think we ought not to raise this question. I think it is a lack of faith on our part if we do and a failure to understand God's immutable law. I do not think Jehovah wants me to die to-night; and were I, by some happening or other, thus to have my life snapped out, I do not believe he willed it. But if I violate any law and upset the machinery of my being, unless I can have it adjusted and put back in

harmony, the chances are that, according to the immutability of God’s law, death will come upon me.

Let anybody—an innocent babe go out and take hold of a live electric wire. What is the result? Do you think God will kill it as an act of vengeance? O. no. But, according to his unchangeable law, that helpless, pure, innocent babe will die as a result just as quickly as the most hardened criminal in your State penitentiary. Why? Because that is God’s law about it; and when you violate it, the penalty is yours, and God is no respecter of persons.

Just so in the spiritual realm. Peter said when he went to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-35): "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." There is no respect of persons with Jehovah. The best man on earth from a moral point of view that fails to conform to God’s law will die and be damned just as quickly as the open violator of all laws of the land. Why? Because salvation, physical as well as eternal, is based on conformity to God’s law. I cannot live in this world a physical life in disobedience to the laws of nature, and I cannot live in the spiritual realm in violation of God’s spiritual law, and I ought to learn that.

Now, I submit to you another proposition: God Almighty (mark it), in either nature or in grace, has never inflicted a single penalty upon any soul that has ever lived except when that soul was in disobedience, direct or indirect, to God’s law. Now, you may turn to the Bible and commence with the first chapter of Genesis and read through the entire sixty-six books thereof. I repeat: No man was ever condemned by God except in violation and in disregard of God’s law. Now, I can reverse that and with equal correctness say this: No man has ever been blessed of Jehovah except as a result of his obedience unto God’s law. They are just as dependable, as reliable, as absolute in the spiritual realm as they are in the material and physical world. Did you ever stop to think of the dependability of God’s laws? But for that fact I would be afraid to gather in a building like this to-night for fear of collapse or some great tragedy occurring. But for the reliability of God’s laws I would be afraid to walk along the streets, lest the electric current might leave the line and dash off, causing death and destruction in its path. But for the law’s being dependable I would be afraid to get in a car and start on a trip across the country. But I know one thing: that if, for instance, the automobile is properly adjusted according to God’s law, and the machinery thereof kept intact, and if a supply of gasoline is furnished, I know that it will run and you can rely upon it just as long as it in harmony with the laws governing machinery. If Mr. Henry Ford did not believe absolutely and without any reservation in the dependability of the laws of ’God in the material world, he would not think about wanting Muscle Shoals or spending one dime for the same. His confidence in the certainty of God’s law is absolute.

Now, why can we not have the same respect and the same faith and the same confidence in God’s spiritual law? And let me say: That is the faith that it takes to save the soul. That is the faith that marches out under the bending blue and says: "Lord, speak, and I will hear; command, and I will obey." The power of the State of Tennessee is reflected in the laws thereof. Our State is no stronger, no more powerful, than are the laws back of it; and to despise the law of Tennessee is to despise the State itself; for the only way that this State can function with respect to its citizenship and its sister States round about is by virtue of the law and the characteristic dignity thereof. Just in proportion to our regard for the law of our State is our respect for the State itself. Let our people

pass out and become anarchists. Let us despise the laws that are made up at the Capitol. Let us repudiate them, and what is the result? The State receives a black mark upon it. Let your officials, be they whosoever they may, fail to enforce or respect the laws themselves, and shame and disgrace are upon our fair name. Just so with respect to God. God's power is manifest in his law, and the man that respects God's law respects the God that made the law, and the man that disrespects God's law is disrespectful to Jehovah himself. Hence, Solomon well said (hear it): "The man that turneth away his ear from hearing God's law, even that man's prayer shall be an abomination unto God."

I knots there are people that make much ado regarding prayer. I want to say to you, not to be misunderstood, that there is not a man on earth that believes more in prayer than I do; and yet I know that any kind of a prayer offered by a soul that does not respect and bow in subjection to God's law is not a prayer acceptable unto High Heaven. Listen at the words again: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination."

Now, just to be plain about it, you can bow down upon your knees and pray for a hundred years, and the world may think that is an exhibition of religion; but unless you submit to God's laws, your prayers are but a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal.

James says that to stumble in one point even is to be guilty of rebelling in the whole. If I have a disposition to-night not to respect just one single point of the law of my State, I stand in rebellion unto the powers that be. Just so, if I stand to-night refusing, stubbornly failing, to render obedience unto every part and phase of God's law, the Bible says that I stand guilty of having violated the whole.

Let me try to illustrate that in plain terms. A father bids his son to erect a house on a certain part of his farm. He then says: "Put up a barn one hundred and fifty feet to the north and dig a well twenty-five feet east of the house." The boy erects the home and builds the barn as indicated, but either refuses to dig the well at all or locates it other than commanded. Now, I want to say that this boy has not obeyed his father in a single item. He built the home at the appointed place, not because his father so ordered, but because it suited him. So with the barn. Why not dig the well? Simply because it is not according to the boy's own fancy. He failed in one point and evidenced a spirit of disrespect and disregard. The obedient girl does what her mother says, regardless of her own opinion. I do not have in mind a concrete example. But let me suggest another thought in passing along. I want to say to you that it is a fixed and immutable law, both in nature and in grace, that produces like—that everything shall bring forth after its kind. God repeated that law nine times over in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, and in all the world those who have labored hardest to set aside the word of God have never been able to show us a single specimen unlike that from which it came. We have never found any kind of an animal or creature in the process of transition from one species to the other, but God's law has evermore been vindicated. From an egg the proud American eagle will come forth and soar above the clouds; but, in turn, she will lay another egg, from which will be hatched another eagle of the same kind. Thus it ever is according to God's law.

Now, in the natural law, if you want turnips, you had better sow turnip seed. Everybody knows that. If you want watermelons, you had better plant watermelon seed. If you want a crop of alfalfa, you should not sow German millet. Why? Because of the immutability of God's law.

Apply this principle to other things. If you want to make Socialists, what kind of seeds do you think you ought to sow? If you desire a crop of Republicans, sow the seed of genuine, old-fashioned Republicanism; and if it makes anything, it will make after its kind. If you want to make Odd Fellows, don't sow the seeds of Pythianism. You can no more make an Odd Fellow by sowing Knights of Pythias seed that you can get squash by sowing cabbage seed. Do you want to make anarchists? Then what? Sow the seed of anarchism.

Now, then, in a more serious strain. God Almighty has decreed that if you want to make Christians there is only one kind of seed to sow. Let it be understood once for all, because it is the truth, that the seed of the kingdom, the seed of the gospel, will never make you anything else except a child of God. And if you produce any other kind of crop, there must be some other kind of seed sown in the heart; otherwise God might step down from his throne and announce that he has made a failure in his everlasting and unchanging laws. My chief ambition and supreme purpose is this: I want to make of all men everywhere Christians, disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would like to make of all men Just simply members of the church of the Bible. May I say it? If I had my way, there would be but one church on this earth, and that would be the church that was bought by the blood of the Son of God, the church that is filled with his Spirit, the church that is guided by his counsel, the church that is ultimately and at last to be crowned with his matchless glory. If I had my way about it, there would be but one creed, but one discipline, but one confession of faith, but one church directory, but one church manual; and that would be God's book, the Bible, the word, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Then I could offer to every man everywhere a platform on which all of us could unitedly stand without the sacrifice of a single principle. I want to announce to you one more time that if I stand contending for one single thing unauthorized by the book of God, all you have to do is to let me know that, and I am ready to quit at the very first opportunity. If, on the other hand, there be anything demanded in God's word that I do not preach and practice, I want to introduce it before the rising of to-morrow's sun.

Now, let me call attention to this statement: I said to you that all life is circumscribed and bounded by law. It is illustrated, for instance, by the life of a fish. God made fish life in the very morning of creation. Now, query: Where did God locate the life that a fish is to enjoy? Not in the Sahara desert, not upon Church Street, not upon Capitol Hill. God located fish life down in Cumberland River, or in water; and if any fish expects to continue in the full enjoyment of that life, it must stay in water, because its life is located there. Now, what would you think of a great big yellow cat about two feet long, lifted out of Cumberland River, that began to soliloquize after this fashion? "Look here. I don't think a fish has to stay in the creek in order to enjoy life. I think there are just as good fish out of the creek as there are in the creek, and I believe that I will just stay upon dry land and flop about, and I will get along just about as well as those fish down in the creek." Why, you would turn and say to him: "You foolish fish, trying to violate God's law! You can't do that."

Land animals have a life that all of them appreciate and enjoy. Where is it? In the atmosphere, out of water; and if they enjoy that kind of life, they must live in the atmosphere that envelops the earth. What would you think about a sheep, for instance, that would say: "I think you can live just as well in a vacuum as you can out in the air?" Well, I think we would question its judgment, to say the least of it.

Now make the application which already you see. I ask you, my friends, in all candor, God Almighty being the author of spiritual and eternal life, where did God locate it? There are just two places. It is either in the devil's kingdom or it is in God's kingdom. Which one do you say? Why, that thing is settled. God located spiritual, eternal life in the family of God, in heaven's family, in the church of the First-born; and yet there are numbers of characters that talk about it in this manner: "O. I don't think you have to become a member of God's church in order to enjoy spiritual life. I think there are just as good folks on the outside as there are on the inside." Well, now, if that be true, you have rendered mutable that which God has declared unchangeable; and I am ready to say to you, without fear of successful contradiction from any source, that spiritual life, that eternal life, is found only in the family and in the kingdom of God, and not in the kingdom of the devil; and if you and I ever become beneficiaries thereof, we will do so by conforming to God's law, and that is by getting into that family and that kingdom wherein that life is located. But I submit to you this final thought. Some one may say: "I thought we were saved by grace, and not by law." Well, that is a great statement. The first part of it is absolutely true. We are saved by grace, and at the same time we are saved by law. By what law? By the law of faith. Listen as I repeat that statement (Ephesians 2:8): "By grace are ye saved through faith." That is the law by which we are saved by grace, a law that acts through the system that we call "faith." Does anybody expect to be saved without faith? Certainly not, for Paul said (Hebrews 11:6) that without faith it is impossible to please God. But let us examine just a moment. In Romans 5:21 we find this statement: that grace reigns, runs, or rules through righteousness. Where is grace to be found ? O. it is abun dant! It is absolutely free, and it reigns through righteousness. Now, what is righteousness ? From David's statement in Psalms 119:172, "all thy [God's] commandments are righteousness." Therefore, grace reigns through the commandments of God Almighty. Let me illustrate: Water, so necessary to the human family, is absolutely free and positively abundant, but it runs in channels. I cannot go out here in some field and sit there pining and weeping away my time, begging for water, and expect God to bring it and give it to me in spite of myself; but I know this: that water has its channel in which to run, either in our streams or under the surface of the earth; and if I will dig down deep enough, I will find the channel and nature's beverage absolutely free. This is God's law, and I must conform to it if the blessings are mine.

God has ordained that grace, by which men are saved, shall run through the commandments of God. Therefore the man that is saved by grace must conform to God's commandments, for that is the law by which men are saved, if saved at all.

God commands all men to believe and repent. That is God's law. And when I thus do, I am but yielding to and obeying the law of God; and, as a result, I can say truly that I was saved by grace through faith. Hence, by submission to Heaven's will, unchangeable, immutable, the promise of the "sweet by and by" is mine. But another thought. The first of everything in this wide, wide world, in a material sense, was wrought by a miracle. After that, God inaugurated the law to govern the reproduction thereof. The first bird that ever flew through the air was created a full-grown bird from the start. The first hen on this earth was never a pullet, but was a full-grown hen from the beginning. After that, all other chickens came by law—were hatched and developed and passed into maturity. Father Adam never had the privilege of being a boy. Eve was never a blushing maid with golden curls. Their creation was by a miracle; ours, by law.

Just so in God’s spiritual law. When it came forth from Zion and the word of the law from Jerusalem, you need not be surprised that, attending its announcement, there was a miraculous demonstration. And, hence, on that memorable Pentecost, when the law was first inaugurated and given to the Jewish world, it was introduced by a miracle. But from that time until now, in the conversion of a Jew, no miracle has ever come to pass. How are they now converted? By obedience to God’s law.

Likewise when the gospel first went to the Gentile world, you may well be prepared for miracles. Why? It is according to Heaven’s order that the first—the beginning, the origin—is characterized by a miracle. After that, the miracle is withdrawn and law takes control. Hence, from the conversion of Cornelius on down the line there has never been a single miracle in the conversion of any Gentile. How is it done? Paul answers (Romans 8:2): "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus bath made me free from the law of sin and death." "Paul, how once were you?" "I once stood chief of sinners. I once stood with my hands stained in the blood of my fellows." "How stand you now?" "I am free from condemnation." "How came you, Paul, thus to be free?" "By the law of the Spirit." God’s law—not by the American Government, not by Tennessee’s law, but by the Holy Spirit’s law. "Does his Spirit have a law ?" "Indeed so." "What is its purpose ?" "Its purpose is to free men from sin and the bondage thereof." Hence, the man to-night that bows in obedience to God’s authority, that submits unto Heaven’s will, is the one that, like Paul, stands free, justified, uncondemned by God and by the heavenly authorities.

I am trying to persuade you men and women who listen so kindly from time to time to believe God’s law, to repent of all your sins, to obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered, that you may be made free from sin and become servants of righteousness and of the Lord Jesus Christ. May I say, therefore, in the language of the song selected: "Why do you wait longer?" While the opportunity is once more yours, I beg that you rise in the strength of your powers, in the magnanimity of your soul, and say: "As for me, I will accept God’s law this night. I will live in accordance therewith and stand upon the glad plains of eternal judgment, not in violation of Heaven’s authority nor of Jehovah’s law." I beg you to come.

Chapter 14

1.11 - GOD'S FOOLISHNESS VS. MAN'S WISDOM

GOD’S FOOLISHNESS VS. MAN’S WISDOM The subject about which I want to talk to you this evening is based upon 1 Corinthians 1:25, and it may be announced, "The Foolishness and Weakness of God Contrasted with the Wisdom and Strength of Man." Paul says: "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." This was addressed unto the church at Corinth, a city of about four hundred thousand population, in the southern part of the Grecian Peninsula, marking the outward post of Paul’s greatest missionary labors, and in which he, after continued effort, succeeded in establishing the church which he styled the "church of God."

I think in this, ladies and gentlemen, there is a principle announced to-night that may be of general and universal help in the understanding and appreciation of God’s method and manner of presenting the scheme of redemption. I can appreciate fairly well the ambitions that men have to try to reason out a scheme of redemption; and when in all of their wisdom they get a theory well fixed in mind, I can understand very largely how difficult it is to convince them to the contrary and to present in its stead the truth of the gospel. The Corinthians rather prided themselves on their wisdom, their knowledge, and their philosophy. They thought that the things that could not be understood by them and reasoned out from the premises toward a conclusion that would be logically true were, of course, unworthy of respect; hence, Paul said unto them: "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Then he said: "The foolishness of God, that which you so consider, is wiser than all the wisdom of men; and the very weakness of God is stronger than the towering strength of man. For God has chosen the foolish things of the earth to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the strong and mighty, the purpose being that no flesh should glory in his presence, and that we might fulfill the scripture that is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." The gospel plan of salvation, the scheme of redemption, is not based upon premises laid down by man from which a logical conclusion may be reached. It is none too early I to say that very frequently in God’s dealings with humanity there is absolutely no logical connection between the thing done and that for which it is done. No power of man’s wisdom has ever been able to understand a connection or to see a just reason between the hundreds of things the Lord has bidden man to do and the things to be accomplished thereby.

I am positively certain that the Israelites never did see a connection between the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb on their doors and their escape from the vengeance of the death angel. Why, there is no connection in that—absolutely none. I am sure that Abraham never did understand, never did see the point, logically speaking, based on human judgment, as to why God demanded of him the peculiar things of which we have a record.

Now, perhaps, that is further emphasized by Isaiah 55:8-9, where God says: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And unless we can get it in our minds at the very outset that Christianity and the scheme of salvation is a matter of faith, rather than a matter of sight and of logical and argumentative conclusions, I think we will be handicapped and hindered and blinded and deluded in our effort to work out by human wisdom and human skill anything by which we will be able to save our souls at last.

Now, I have in mind just a few illustrations of the text to-night that I think will illustrate the very principles an pounced; and I call your attention, first of all, therefore, unto the story of Naaman, the record of which is found in 2 Kings 5:1-27; and as I recite very briefly just a few things connected with him, I want you to understand and appreciate, if possible, the philosophy and lesson God intended us to learn therefrom. Let it be understood that the record of such wonderful events was written for our learning and our admonition. There is always a principle or line of thought connected therewith that is applicable unto us in the gospel age. Now, beginning the story: "Naaman . . . was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: . . . but he was a leper." Now I think I can appreciate Captain Naaman, as he stood honored by his official position and a great man in the country wherein he chanced to live an honorable man and by whom honorable deeds had been wrought; but the record says "he was a leper." That is to say, there was a disease that had fastened itself upon him, that knew no earthly cute, that had baffled the skill of all the scientific, learned, and medical men of the age in which he lived. It was but a question of time until this disease should have worn himself away, until rottenness and decay would have been the result.

Throughout the entire Bible that disease is held up as typical of our sins, on the ground that there is no earthly remedy, no power known to man himself, that can rid us of our sins and wash us and make us whiter than the snow.

Now, Naaman’s company had gone out and had captured a little Hebrew maiden and made her a servant unto Naaman’s wife. After being in his home, she had learned something of the family and that Naaman was afflicted with this disease; so she chanced to make this statement: "Would God my lord [that is, Captain Naaman] were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Then it was that some went in and told Naaman. Like drowning men grabbing at a straw, they said: "Possibly there may be some hope of recovery." And so the king of Syria wrote a letter and directed it to the King of Israel. Of course he misunderstood of whom the little maid spoke. He sent a great reward of silver and gold and raiment. When the king of Israel received the letter, he went into a rage and rent his clothes and said: "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man cloth send unto me? . . . He seeketh a quarrel against me." Therefore he turned and was filled with wrath. Then it was that Elisha, quite cool, and calm, and deliberate, a prophet of God, hearing that, said: "Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariot unto the door of the house of Elisha; and Elisha sent a messenger (he did not go himself, but sent a messenger), who told Naaman to go down to the river Jordan and dip himself seven times therein and that he should be made clean. When Naaman heard that admonition, it was quite contrary to his fancy or to a theory or conception, and possibly belittling to his dignity. A man of his position, of his rank and of his standing, might naturally have expected something else; but the prophet simply sent the message:

"Go down, Naaman, unto the river Jordan and dip yourself seven times, and thy flesh will come again, and you shall be cleansed." But this was quite contrary to Naaman's conception, and he turned away and said: "Behold"—now note—"Behold, I thought"—not proposing to be governed at first by what that man had acid, but anxious that things would be announced according to his preconceived thought; so he said: "I thought that the man would surely come out And speak to me, and call upon the name of his God, and strike his hand upon me, and the leprosy would be healed." Now, Naaman had that thing all "cut and dried" and figured out. He had the story in his mind, and before he ever heard the glad tidings by which he was to be saved he had largely become prejudiced and biased on the ground that "I have a theory, and this is the way I am looking for the matter to be brought about ;" and so he is ready to turn away and forsake the demand. But after a little reflection further, he reasoned after this fashion: "Why, up here around Damascus there are the rivers of Abana and Pharpar. Why can't I dip in them and be cleansed?" Now, will you watch the situation? If I had been there and Naaman had said, "Hardeman, why can't I dip in the cool, clear streams around Damascus rather than go down to the river Jordan?" I am frank to say to you that I would have said: "Naaman, I cannot answer." It looks to me like that would do just as well, and I have never been able to understand the difference. In the first place, I do not see what good it will do; but if there is dipping to be done, instead of going way off to the river Jordan, why not dip in the waters of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, to be cleansed ?

Human judgment is lost. Human reason says: "I do not understand." I cannot analyze and draw a logical conclusion either for or against. So Naaman was about to give the matter up, and then it was that the servant said: "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Human nature, ladies and gentlemen, has been just about the same all down the line. If, in the matter of becoming cleansed of leprosy, Naaman could have had a big "to do" respecting it or attracted considerable attention and some mysterious removing been characteristic thereof, his servants understood, he would be delighted to be a participant therein, and they said: "How much rather, then, go and dip and be clean?"

Now, may I stop to ask even of the physicians of the city of Nashville: What do you think about prescribing that kind of a remedy? Suppose some man marches up to your office with some skin disease and says: "Doctor, there is something or other the matter with me. I have something like leprosy. Naturally, I am a little worried about it. I do not understand it and want you to tell me what to do." I do not believe there is a physician in Nashville that would say: "My dear air, you just go down here to the foot of Broadway and dip in the Cumberland River seven times, and all will be well." Why, as a matter of fact, I doubt not but that if one of your doctors were to give advice of that kind, we would ring up our Central Hospital for the Insane and ask if there was room for another. A doctor would be silly to give advice like that. In the eyes of man that is foolish. Paul said, though, be it remembered, that the very foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man. Man has never been able to cure leprosy, and God's remedy seemed exceedingly foolish, and yet I want you to watch the sequel. When by and by Naaman looked upon his person and saw there was no hope, I can see him as he walks down to the Jordan and looks upon the rolling waters thereof and wonders what on earth that has to do with it. "I do not believe there is any virtue in the water, and yet I am a dying man, and all hope has been abandoned. I will try." And he marches down therein and dips himself once, and possibly pulls up his sleeve to see if any of it has gone away. Not a

particle—absolutely none; but he says: "I will try twice, and thrice, and four times, Ed five times, and six times, and now surely some of it has faded." But not a particle had been removed. I just want to ask this audience: Suppose Naaman had stopped there with the sixth dip, what think you about the results? I am persuaded to answer for you. With one heart and one accord we say: "No cleansing from leprosy." Why ? Because God had not promised it. There was absolutely no assurance that thus would he be cleansed. But the record says that he went down and dipped himself seven times, according to the saying of the man of God; and as he came up out of the water, behold, his flesh was like the flesh of a little child, and he was cleansed.

Now, what did it? The most simple thing imaginable that which, from any kind of human reasoning, would be considered foolish; and yet Paul said: "It is wiser than all of men's remedies."

Well, I think that is demonstrated. Now, do I need to stop and take your time by asking: Did the waters of the river Jordan wash away the leprosy? Do you think that the virtue inhered in the water? I presume nobody believes in a thing like that. The virtue was in God Almighty, but it was not granted until the man did what the Lord told him in the absolute; and when he obeyed by dipping the seventh time, he received the blessing and went about rejoicing, as well might he, on account of the fact that his flesh was as in the days of his youth.

Now, I think that illustrates the very text of to-night. God's foolishness has proven wiser and better, more efficacious, than all the skill and all the learning and all the wisdom of the whole world combined.

Well, I call your attention to another simple story. After the death of Moses, when Joshua led the hosts of Israel across the river Jordan and pitched their tents at Gilgal as headquarters and started to drive out the enemy in three separate and distinct campaigns that he launched, the first city he coveted and desired was the city of Jericho, a city that was surrounded. None went in and none passed out but by permission. Now, watch carefully as I tell the story, based upon Josh. 6. The record says that God spoke unto Joshua, saying: "Joshua, behold, I have given unto thee the city of Jericho." Now, watch the expression, "I have given it unto you." "Now, Joshua, arrange your men after this fashion: Put your armed men in front; right after them put seven priests with rams' horns, then the ark, then the rearward. That is the order in which you are to arrange them, and you march around this city once a day for six days and back into camp. On the seventh day march around it seven times. After that, let the priests give a long blast with the rams' horns; then let all the people shout, and down will fall the walls of the city."

Well, in the first place, I want to picture Joshua as first having said this: "Lord, did you not say you were going to give me this city? Now, if I have to work for it, that knocks out its being a gift, and that will put it on the ground of being of works; but it is not of works, lest any man boast. Therefore, I can do nothing except let you give it to me. I with Jut sit down here and wait till you turn the keys over." My friends, as a matter of fact, because it is a gift, that certainly does not prohibit a man's doing what the Lord bids him to do with respect to the same. But I want to ask any of your military men—you soldiers, captains, colonels, or officers of whatsoever kind: What do you think about that kind of remedy or that kind of a way of securing a city in the hands of the enemy? Was that ever tried by any military men of earth? No, sir. Did General Foch ever think about a suggestion of that kind to capture a German city—just have the American boys march around it, blow rams' horns, and shout? That is absolutely foolish. I do not think there is any sense in such tactics.

I stood to-day and gazed upon our Capitol Building. I believe if every man, woman, and child in the city of Nashville were to march around the Capitol for a thousand days, and then blow all the rams' horns in this country, and everybody break loose and give a tremendous shout, I do not think it would in the least affect the gigantic walls thereof. There is no sense in that. It is trifling, weak, foolish. But remember the text: "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." I want to see if this thing will work and where the power is. Now, if Joshua had had some few sticks of dynamite and planted them well under the walls and had got off and touched the fuse and blown the whole thing up, of course we could understand that. I would say: "Now, Joshua, that has sense in it." I can see that. But what is the logical connection between blowing a ram's horn and tearing down a brick wall ? I plead my absolute inability to understand one single point of connection. What is the connection between marching around and tearing down a stone wall? What is the connection between giving a shout and the walls coming down? If Joshua had been like a great many of us, he would have said: "Well, look here. I cannot see any sense in that. It does not appeal to me to nor intelligence. That may do for some folks! but I know there is nothing to it." Well, that is what Paul said. You count it foolish, and that is what the Greeks did back there.

They said preaching the cross of Christ was foolish; but how does it work?

Joshua went straight forward—not by human wisdom, not by human reason; but he set out after the aforesaid order and marched around the city once a day and back into camp at night. I guess some of that crowd looked about and said: "We ought to see some mortar breaking out by now." Thus he did for six days, and still that wall stood there in its power and strength, bidding defiance unto all marching. Not a stone moved. On the seventh day the Bible says Joshua had his crowd out early, about the dawn of the day; and thus they marched around it once, twice, and three times, four, five, and six times, and not a single crack in the wall as yet. Not a brick has moved.

Suppose he had stopped? What think you about the results ? Absolutely nothing would have come therefrom. Upon what does it all now depend? Upon one time more around, blowing the trumpets, and the shout of the people. Finally, in anxiety, Joshua marched around the seventh time; and then he said unto the priests: "Give a long blast." And thus they did, but not a stone as yet turned loose. Let me ask you now: Suppose they had just quit and had refused to shout? I think I can speak the truth in saying that God would not have given unto Joshua the city of Jericho. But when finally he bade all the people to shout and thus they did, the Bible says down came the walls of Jericho, and they walked in. Was it foolishness with men? Absolutely. Did it look silly? Was it a weak thing? Indeed so. And yet what about it? It beat all the battering rams and the mighty guns that the world has ever seen, It worked, and down the walls came. What is the philosophy? God's hand was in it all. The power and the virtue were not in the footsteps around the city, nor yet in the trumpet that was sounded, nor yet in the shout of the people, but were inherent in God Almighty, who, according to an eternal principle, never bestows a blessing until man does what he tells him.

Well, let's try another. The Bible is just full of them.

After the people of Israel had left Mount Sinai, and also Kadesh-barnea, from whence the spies had been sent out, they started out from old Mount Hor, and the people began to complain and to murmur against God and Moses. "Why," they said, "have you brought us out here into the wilderness? There is no bread, there is no water, and we loathe this light bread upon which we

have been living. Let us go back into the land of Egypt." And then it was that the Lord caused fiery serpents to come out and to bite the hosts of Israel until numbers of them died. Well, of course, they began to be wonderfully penitent; and they took the matter unto the Lord and to Moses in prayer, and said: "Moses, intercede for us, lest we die." Well, there they are, every man back in his tent, filled with poison, his body swollen, and with death staring him in the face.

Now, what is the remedy? O. if I had been there or if some of us had been present and they had called upon us for a remedy, I would have said: "Well, sir, I don't know whether it can be had or not; but if you just had a full quart, bottled in bond, and could just fill up on it, I believe that would remove the poison." Some of my brethren would say: "Hardeman, you are talking sense now. That has some sense to it. I have tried it." Why, my friends, if that had been true, we would have been wholly convinced that national prohibition should never be adopted.

Suppose some good mother present had said: "Gentlemen, I think I know what is good for this. If you can spare somebody that is able to get out upon the hillside yonder, along the old fence row, and if you can find some mullein leaves, we will make a good, strong ooze, and then apply it unto the parts affected, just as hot as it can be borne, and that will reduce the swelling." Now, that has some sense to it. That is our remedy. We have tried poultices and things of that kind, and such is according to human judgment. But if they had done that and success had followed their efforts, they would have attributed the whole matter to their own good sense and judgment.

"Now, Lord, what do you have to suggest?" Why, the Lord said: "Moses, I will tell you what to do. You take a piece of brass, and beat it into the likeness of a serpent, and put it on a pole out in the midst of the camp, and it shall come to pass that every soul that looks upon that shall live."

Now, physicians and doctors, I challenge your intelligence again. What think you of the remedy? What does any man of learning to-night think about that kind of remedy for snake bite? I am frank to say to you that I don't believe there is enough brass in Tennessee or anywhere else to take away the poison or effect a cure. With all the power of logic, with all the power of human wisdom and of human reasoning, there is absolutely no connection between a piece of brass and the removing of their affliction. No man can get the connection. How is the remedy? It is weak; it is silly, foolish. Paul, what did you say? "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God bath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

Moses, make your serpent. Well, he did so, and put it on a pole, and set it up in the midst of the camp. And what is the suggestion now? Every soul that looks upon it shall live. O. but here is a man away back over in the corner of the camp suffering so badly, so filled with pain, that he says: "I cannot bear to be moved. I believe, Moses, that it will work, and just let me be cured by my faith without doing anything. Faith, and faith only, is my hope. I do not care to look." O. no! There was no cure; for in addition to the man's faith, there had to be the act of looking.

Let me announce to you that no man was ever blessed on account of his faith until that faith was rendered expressive in some act of obedience. I care not if it be but the putting forth of the hand and touching the border of His garment, if it be but the turning of the eyes unto the serpent of brass upon the pole, it is the expression of the faith in the act of obeying God's command; and when they looked, they lived; for it was faith plus action, it was faith plus obedience, and the

blessing came always as the result. No man can find an exception to that principle. Go where you will in all the Bible, from first to last, and there is this general, broad, sweeping principle that runs through the book of God. Where was the virtue? Not in the piece of brass. They did not so understand it. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord;" for God has ordained just such things that are trifling, small, trivial, silly, and insignificant, "that no flesh should glory in his presence." God proposes to have the honor and the authority and the power, but he bestows the blessing when men do what he bids them.

Now, just one or two things in the New Testament, and I think the lesson is before you for the evening. In John 9:1-41 we have an account of a young man born blind, who never had been privileged to look out upon the beauties and the light of God's day. He had lived in the world and had walked in darkness all of his years, until finally the great Physician, the Healer of all ailments, met up with him, and this is the remedy he used for restoring the sight to the blind. Now, what is it? He just simply spat upon the ground, made an ointment of the clay, and anointed this young man's eyes, and said: "Now, sir, go down to the pool of Siloam and wash, and all will be well." Mr. Physician, what do you think about the remedy ?

We have a school for the blind in Nashville. How would it do to go out there to-morrow and try that? Some doctor says: "You would not get me into a thing of that kind. I am not going to be made a laughing-stock." Why, of course it won't work. You know there is no virtue in it. Nobody would undertake it. It looks silly; it looks foolish. That is what Paul arid in the text: "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

After this young man, with his eyes anointed, not walking by sight, but walking by faith, went down to the designated place and washed, he came back seeing and rejoicing on account of the sight that was granted unto him.

What did it? Not the clay, not the ointment, not the water of the pool of Siloam. There was no virtue in them, and blindness did not flow out upon the bosom of that pool.

God bestowed the blessing, and the point of practical import is: When did God do it? Answer: After the young man obeyed him. Had he stopped to walk by sight and to understand the philosophy and the "Why?" and "wherefores," he would have died blind to the beauties of God's world. My friends, in the gospel plan of salvation the principle likewise prevails. When all the sons and daughters of Adam, a lost and ruined and wretched race, were groping their way in darkness, God Almighty provided a scheme of redemption. What was it? The suffering, the dying, the sacrifice of his only begotten Son. Numbers of people in the world think that is silly. They talk about how ridiculous it is. I have had a letter since I have been in your city saying that I had gone crazy over the Christ idea, that no such person as the Son of God ever lived; and the man said he was sorry to see a young man of what he termed my intelligence lose his head, believing in the Christ as the Son of God. And many people likewise so consider it. The scheme of redemption offered through the service and sacrifice of the immaculate Child of Mary is considered a silly thing, belittling to the intelligence and to the wisdom of men. No power, no virtue, no beauty attaches thereto, they think; and to others like those to whom Paul wrote here even the preaching of the gospel is considered foolishness. That is the way some of them think about it. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

Well, what else? I come now to the very climax of the thought—that about which so many people are worried. In the gospel plan of salvation there is a command to be baptized. Who is it that does not know that? I am sure that there is nobody in the city of Nashville accountable unto God and unto Christ that fails to understand that the New Testament authorizes baptism, authorizes people to be baptized. But how does the world look upon it? "Why," they say, "it is foolish to think about such. It is absolutely silly. There is nothing to it. You know there is no virtue, no power, and no cleansing effect in the waters of baptism." You say: "I don't see any sense in it." Well, I just want to join you. You see as much in it as I do. I never have seen any logical connection nor any reason why it is that being baptized has anything under heaven to do with the washing away of sin. I don't believe there is a logician in any of your universities who can take the statement, "be baptized," and from it reach the conclusion that remission of sins follows. I do not think that any logical connection is there. What virtue is there in the water in a baptistery or pool? I think not any. What good does it do? I cannot see a particle to save my life. What change is there in it? Well, I can see this, just from a human point, if you will let me say it. I can see that folks go in dry and come out wet. I can understand that much about it. But what is the logical connection between the act and the result, between baptism and the remission of sins ?

I want to say, if you are going to walk by sight and by reason, I can understand why the world rebels; and unto that kind of a man baptism is not the thing he needs. That sort of a character needs faith in God's word, confidence in Jehovah's statements, trust in the Father's promise. He does not need to be baptized. He is not prepared. But when he believes what God says, when he looks not to the water nor yet to the act for the blessing, but looks beyond that and centers his faith not in the act or ordinance or thing done, but in the Christ that is back of it, there is the man that is ready to obey God; and that kind of a heart never halts, never stumbles, never rebels, but is prepared to take God at his word, to believe what he says, to do what he requires, to trust him for the promise. If it be foolish, my friends, it is wiser than the schemes of men.

It looked silly to Naaman, but it was wiser than all of his philosophies, and it wrought the desired effect.

Forgiveness of sins lies with God himself and with Christ Jesus our Lord. When does God bestow that blessing? When does God forgive sin, AFTER I bow like Naaman, like Joshua, like the Israelites, like the blind man—after I do what the Lord tells me. And when I have a change of heart sufficient to lead me to do God's commandments, then pardon, which always takes place in heaven and not on earth, is mine to share, and the promises are mine in which to rejoice. And so I would have you learn from this lesson to-night not to walk by sight nor by human reason nor wisdom, but to walk by faith and trust and confidence in God Almighty and his truth.

If there are those of you therefore, that are willing to look to him for pardon and for blessing—that have a disposition of heart and mind to obey, to bow in subjection to his will, and to do his bidding, and then to trust him for the promise made you are the ones that are always invited; you are prepared to serve God and to become a disciple, a Christian, a child of the heavenly King.

Now, we are going to stand again and join in the singing of the hymn selected; and while we thus sing, I bid you respond to his will.

1.12 - WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

I have for study to-night the most important question that was ever announced to mortal man, subsidiary and secondary to which every other one imaginable must stand.

What must I do to be saved ?

I am, indeed, conscious of the wonderful responsibility that rests upon me just now in the putting of that query and in the effort to answer the same. I know that impressions will be made, and God forbid that I should give an uncertain sound or fail from any consideration whatever to tell just what the Holy Spirit has revealed in answer thereto.

I believe that you are interested in a question of this kind. We have learned that if it were possible for us to gain the whole world and lose our own souls, a failure would characterize our passage through life; and I hope, therefore, with that seriousness, that solemnity, and that prayerfulness that should prevail, we may learn the truth and obey it from the heart.

Before I go into detail, I suggest to you that there are many things that possibly might enter in some way or other into a discussion of this kind. There are various things in the Bible to which salvation is attributed. Confusion is on every hand because of our failure to appreciate this fact. For instance, no one who understands the Bible would deny that we are saved by love, that we are saved by mercy, that we are saved by God’s goodness, by the life, the death, the blood, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now, all of those things enter into salvation. I would make a very fatal mistake in my reasoning if I were to take out any of those items, isolate it from all the others, and claim salvation upon one of those things alone. I think just such a misconception has characterized many an honest, earnest man’s endeavor and led him blindly into confusion and at last possibly into disappointment in the presence of God. In this physical life we live and have our being and are saved by different elements. I live by breathing; I live by eating; I live by sleeping; I live by drinking and exercise. It would not do for you to take out either one of these and declare that we live by this alone, and yet it does seem like, in the face of all illustrations to the contrary, there is a disposition to reason after this fashion. May I suggest to you, therefore, the question direct: "What must I do to be saved ?" I want to emphasize every word and every syllable and every letter that goes to make up that superior and sublime query: "WHAT must I do?"

I think the very first word in it implies that certainly there is something. What is it? But note the next. It is not a question of, "What may I do?" or, "What can I do?" or, "What could I do?" but the strongest word in our language is brought to bear to make the impression—"What MUST I do ?"

If God Almighty indorses the declaration that man must do something, I see no way possible that any man can devise whereby he can set aside such a positive and sacred obligation. So it is: "What must I do?" Is there a person in this presence now that thinks or feels like he is an exception

to that obligation, that the force of such is not binding upon him? If so, I am persuaded to think he is walking in darkness and delusion hovers about him. But note again. It is not: "What must my grandmother do?" It is not a question of: "What must my father do to be saved?" That never was asked nor never was answered. But this question is individual and personal: "What must I (N. B. Hardeman) do to be saved?" Many people upon the earth are convicted of the truth and see the beauty and simplicity thereof, but refuse to accept it on the ground that: "If I were to do it, that would mean that somebody else had gone to hell." Well, if somebody else has gone to hell, can you help it? If they have not, perchance you can render them a service and benefit.

Instead of the query pertaining to party No. 2, or those spoken of, it is in the first person. "Lord, what must I, individually and personally, do to be saved ?" If every other man on earth were to be lost, that doesn't argue that I have to be; on the other hand, if every other man and woman on the earth were to be saved, that doesn't prove that I would be saved. It is not a question of what the church with which I am affiliated believes or does; it is not a question of what kind of a mother I had; it is not a question of how somebody else sought the way of the Lord. It is purely a question of: "What must I do?" I wish I could impart, indeed, the force and seriousness of that to you. In the next place, it is a question of what I must DO. There never was such a question as this asked: "Lord, what must I get in order to be saved?" That is not in the Bible. Nobody ever did that back in Bible times. But it is a question of: "What must I DO?" I want to tell you, the opinion of quite a few to the contrary notwithstanding, that the religion of the Bible is a religion of doing. It is a religion of activity. It is a religion of practice. It is a life of service unto man. You take the "do" out of the Bible and from the obligation resting upon man, and you have robbed that religion that is pure and undefiled of the very foundation upon which God intended it should forever rest.

But, further, this is not a question of what I must do to save myself, but "What must I do TO BE saved ?" It is both active and passive. I must do something, and at the same time I must be saved, if ever saved at all. Therefore man's part is, "I must do ;" God's part is "to save" and to extend the favor of mercy and forgiveness. Now, that is the question before us at the present. But various answers are frequently given.

If there is a first-class Universalist in our midst, his answer would be: "Pass on through life, pay no attention unto anything of that kind necessarily, and, in the final round-up of the affairs of men, all will be restored to a state of holiness and happiness."

If there be a Calvinist present, his answer would be about the same as the Universalist's, except "as to the final number embraced in the ultimate salvation."

If there be a moralist present, he, doubtless, would say: "Why, you have to do nothing except treat your fellow man right, to live a good, clean, upright life. This business of bowing in submission to Prince Immanuel is unnecessary. Upon your own good deeds and correct living you shall be saved." But bear it in mind that no man ever was or ever will be saved on account of his goodness. Now, that man, unfortunately, forgets that Jesus says: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." That man has forgotten that the Savior said: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Therefore, morality, while good as far as it goes, is weighed in the balance and found wanting because it stops short of the duty I owe to the God of my being.

"What must I do to be saved?" That question, under the commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, has been asked practically three times in the book of Acts of Apostles. The answers are given thereto; and, strange as it may occur to you upon first announcement, allow me to say that each time it was asked a different answer was given. Does that cause you to be skeptical? Just because the question was asked three times and each time a different answer was given, are you disposed to turn away and say that you have no respect for answers that vary ?

Well, let's call attention to that. The first time the question is asked, or at least the first one that I present to-night, is in Acts 16:1-40. The query was put by a jailer of the Philippians in the country of Macedonia, into which some gospel preachers had come. That man said to Paul and Silas: "What must I do to be saved ?" The answer was: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt he saved, and thy house." Well, the same thing was asked those at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), when they said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now, the answer is not like the first one. This time the same Holy Spirit says: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Now, that is a different answer from the first. The third time, Saul of Tarsus, stricken down on the public highway leading to Damascus, face to face with the Lord, said: "What shall I do, Lord?" The answer was: "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee." Following out that story, the final response was: "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Now, that is what the Bible says about it in Acts 16:1-40, Acts 2:1-47, Acts 9:1-43, and Acts 22:1-30. Well, let me try to illustrate and show you the beauty and the harmony in each answer thus given. Suppose that down here on Broad Street I walk up to a man who is a stranger, and I say: "Sir, I want to go to Centennial Park. How far is it?" Well, note where we are, just down here at the foot of the avenue, and I say: "How far is it to Centennial Park?" He says: "Three miles, and it is west." Well, all right. I march on down the street; and when I have gone about a mile, I meet another man, and I say: "How far is it to Centennial Park?" His answer is: "Two miles." I begin to get suspicious of you Nashvillians, and I say: "What kind of folks are you? I asked the same question to the second man, and he answered me differently. The other man I asked said it was three miles, and you say it is but two." "Yes, sir." Well, all right. I pass on another mile, and meet a third man, and I ask the same question: "Sir, how far is it to Centennial Park?" He says: "One mile." Then, absolutely disgusted and discouraged, I give up the whole thing and suggest that it is impossible to find out.

Now, is that the idea? Why, every one of these men answered exactly right. And if all of them had said it was three miles, just like the first man, two of their answers would have been wrong. What is the common sense in that? Simply this very plain proposition: They answered me according to where I was standing at the time the query was put. When I asked the first man how far it was to Centennial Park, he correctly said, "From where you are it is three miles;" but when I saw man No. 2, he understood, of course, that I did not mean from back yonder, but from here. How far ? His answer was: "Two miles." And when I went further and met still another and put the same thing, that man understood that I wanted to know from here on, so he answered: "One mile." Of course nobody in Nashville, if I were to ask how far it was to Centennial Park, would say three miles, regardless of whether I was at the foot of the avenue down here, or over across the river, or within one hundred yards of it. Why, my friends, right upon the face of it, that does not stand to reason

and good judgment.

Now, I think if you will apply that same principle to this Bible question, you will be able to appreciate all the things that are said in response thereto.

Now, let’s study our first man. The Philippian jailer was a heathen in a heathen land, so far as religion was concerned. Paul and his company had but recently gone there in answer to the vision. They had gone out by the riverside and had spoken to the women who resorted thither, but of that the jailer knew nothing. By and by Paul caused a spirit of divination to come out of a maid; and, as a result, her masters took Paul and his companions and beat them, and treated them, as Paul said, "shamefully;" and finally these men of God were delivered unto the jailer, with a charge that he keep them securely. He was not content that they dwell in the main outer prison, but the record says he put them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. The jailer had never seen men like these in all his life. They were ministers of the gospel of Christ, while he was an unlearned heathen. When the evening shadows had gathered and the midnight hour approached, there was a great earthquake, such that the foundation of the old prison was shaken, the doors were opened, and every man’s bands were loosed. Then it was that the jailer became so excited that he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul, calmly and quietly, allayed the excitement, and said: "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." The jailer then called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said: "What must I do to be saved ?"

What kind of man do you have? A man starting, if you please, at the very beginning; a man who had never taken one single step, who had never traveled the road that leads to salvation one single mile; and, therefore, at the time he raised the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul answers: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

But, Paul, did you not raise the question yourself as to how can a man believe on him of whom he has not heard? "Yes, sir." And you told this man to believe? "Yes, sir." Well, what can he believe? And, hence, the next part of the story is in direct connection.

After having given that command about believing, the Bible says: "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Why that? In order that the man might have something to believe. They preached unto him God’s word; and in telling the word of the Lord to that man, Paul felt absolutely certain that it would lead him into further obedience As a result of having preached unto him the word of the Lord, the Bible says that the jailer took these prisoners that very night, the same hour, "and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." After the baptizing, "when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

Now, as a matter of fact, what did that man do in response to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" First, he heard the gospel proclaimed by the peerless apostle unto the Gentile world; second, he believed the gospel. Did he repent? The Bible does not mention that, and yet by necessary inference all of us must grant he did, for Paul would never have baptized a man who had not repented of his sins. In addition to having heard and having believed and repented, the Bible says that he was baptized "the same hour of the night."

I said to this audience the other evening, as you will remember, that under the reign of Christ there is not a case on record of where any man ever rejoiced on account of his sins being forgiven until after that man was baptized. Well. I want to make vou another statement. In the Bible mark you, wherever a man heard the gospel and believed it and obeyed it or had the disposition, you cannot find a single case where any one ever stopped to eat, drink, or sleep until he was baptized; and yet the world says it counts but little. Are such doings merely incidental and accidental, or were they not given to emphasize the importance of rendering obedience straightway to the word of God? Is the jailer's conversion in harmony with the commission, which said: "Go, . . . teach all nations?" The commission declared that the gospel was to be preached, and that is what Paul spoke unto him. The Bible, in the commission, declared: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mr. Jailer, what about you? "I heard and I believed; 1 was baptized." Then what ? "I rejoiced." How came you to rejoice? "Because I was then standing upon the promise of God Almighty."

Now, I call your attention to the Pentecostians, who, unlike the jailer at the time the question was asked, had already heard the gospel and had believed it, as is evidenced by the fact that they were pierced in their hearts, convicted of sin, and anxious to be rid of the consequences thereof. Hence, they said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter did not reply by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," for this they had already done; but like the man standing at the two-mile post, he told them the way from there on in these words: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." They that received his word were baptized, and the same day were added unto the church. Did the conversion of these and the conditions obeyed differ from those of the jailer? By comparison we find the following: All heard the gospel; all believed the gospel; all repented of their sins; and the Bible says specifically that all were baptized. Therefore, according to the language of Christ in the commission, all were saved and had right and reason to rejoice because of the forgiveness of sins, the reception of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of everlasting blessedness.

I next call your attention to Saul of Tarsus, a record of whose conversion is found in Acts 9:1-43, Acts 22:1-30, and Acts 26:1-32. What are the facts in reference to him? He had secured letters from the chief priests permitting him to go to Damascus to bring back men and women who called on the name of the Lord. As he drew near to the city, a light shone round about him above the brightness of the noonday sun, and a voice was heard, saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutes" thou me ?" To which Saul replied, saying: "Who art thou, Lord ?" The answer was: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutes"." Then Saul, trembling and astonished, said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" My friends, if there ever was a time on earth when Jesus Christ should give direct answer, this seems to be the occasion; but be it remembered that the gospel, God's power to save, had already been delivered unto earthen vessels, and hence the Savior's failure to respond direct. He only said this: "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Saul was led on by the hand of his companions, and abode in the city of Damascus, where for three days and three nights he neither did eat nor drink, but was in a patient, prayerful mood.

Now note: The Lord had appeared to Ananias, an earthen vessel, and had directed him to the very spot in which Paul was. When convinced of his duty, Ananias went and found the man in whose conversion heaven was interested, and who had been directed thither with the assurance that he would be told what he must do. Ananias did not tell him, as Paul told the jailer, to believe on the Lord; for this he had already done. Neither did he tell him, as did Peter the Pentecostians, to

repent. Why not? Because of the fact that already Saul had heard the story of the cross. Ananias saw that he was a penitent believer, and, like the man at the one-mile post, he simply told him the rest of the way in these words "Saul, seeing you are penitent and a believer, and since I have been ordered to direct you, let me ask that you 'arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' " This is what the Lord said must be done, for it is the only thing demanded of Saul at this time by Ananias.

Therefore the important question, "What must I do to be saved?" was answered on three different occasions with a view to the condition of the characters at the time it was put. When analyzed and understood, the answers thereto are absolutely one and the same. As a final summary, it is simply this: Hear the gospel of the Son of God, believe the gospel with all your heart, honestly and truly repent of all your sins, and walk down into the water, as did Philip and the treasurer, and there, upon a public confession of your faith in the crucified One, be buried for the remission of sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; arise therefrom to walk in newness of life, and then walk in it the remnant of your days. If this you will do and live faithful to that pledge and to that obligation assumed, by and by, when life's fitful dreams shall have passed and all things timely shall have faded away, God will send his angels to bear you up as on eagles' wings into his eternal paradise.

We sing the song again to-night; and if there are any here impressed by the story and have it in your hearts to obey the Lord, the opportunity is extended, and may God help you to come while you can.

1.13 - THE SAVIOR'S INVITATION

THE SAVIOR’S INVITATION

While looking over this large audience, I was just thinking by way of comparison: I live in one of the smallest counties of Tennessee. There are practically as many gathered in this auditorium to-night as there are in the entire county from whence I came; and by way, therefore, of comparison, I think of the wonderful, wonderful responsibility that rests upon me in trying to speak to you and trying to impress you with the thought that not only will last throughout the realm of time, but will carry its influence into the boundless beyond.

I am hoping and praying as I speak that nothing unsound or possibly detrimental may be announced. I want to talk to you about the Savior’s invitation. It is found in Matthew 11:28-30.

But, preparatory to that, there are some passages of scripture that may be of interest by way of further introduction. Let me call your attention before I read to the geography connected with these verses. About seventy miles north of the sea called the "Dead Sea" is the one known as "Galilee," "Tiberias," "Chinnereth," or "Gennesaret." On the shores thereof are three prominent cities. On the north is the city of Bethsaida; then just a little distance west is Chorazin; then, swinging down to the west, is the city of Capernaum, in which the Savior lived toward the latter part of his career; toward the southwest is the little town of Nazareth, in which the Savior’s early life was spent.

Now, commencing with Matthew 11:20, there are these words: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon [the Old Testament cities on the Phoenician coast], they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven [not that Capernaum was any higher topographically than the others, because they were all upon a plane; but in the way of privileges, advantages, and special favors this was said], shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Now to the text direct (verses 28-30): "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

I want to say to this audience that there is one lesson to be derived from the first part of this scripture that I believe ought to strike home, and that is this: that people are accountable unto God to-night not only for what they know, but for what they could find out. And if there is any lesson at all, it is this: there will be more consideration shown in the day of judgment for those cities that never had an opportunity to hear God’s message than for those that have had these privileges and rejected them. That leads me to state to you that Nashville, Tenn., is quite an unfavorable city from which to pass to the judgment unprepared. I would much rather take my start from the Congo

State, in Africa, than to go from Tennessee. I would much rather live and die in the South Sea Islands and risk favors at the hand of God in the day of judgment than to pass from this that you properly style, perhaps, the very "Athens of the South," and from a country in which Bibles are printed and distributed, a country where the gospel of Christ can be heard on every hand.

I would like to impress upon you the solemnity and seriousness of our passing from this enlightened, if not entirely Christian, land. We are accountable unto God Almighty for what we learn while tabernacling here below. Notwithstanding the fact that cities wherein Christ had wrought his mighty works, wherein he had been a citizen, had rejected him and his teachings and spurned his invitation, he graciously said to them: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I think that in this is an evidence of his superhumanity and his divinity. Our disposition, when we preach and beg and persuade and wear our lives out in an effort to benefit mankind, and be absolutely and flatly refused, is to say: "The back of my hand to you ;" "Go to it ;" "Suffer the consequences;" "I am done." But Christ understood the awfulness of their course much better than did they. He could doubtless say: "You know not what manner of people you are; and, notwithstanding your insult and the fact that you have rejected me, I still say with loving heart, beckoning hand, and tender voice: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" Remember, no king, no prophet, no priest, no bard, no seer that had ever lived had dared to offer such an invitation as this.

I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, does it seem egotistic and out of the realm of propriety for Jesus Christ to stand with extended arms and say to all the world: "Come unto me?" Why, it would be the very embodiment of a puffed up, unduly inflated spirit if I were to make a statement like that. Were I to come to the city of Nashville, "rocksurrounded and rock-founded," and say to her people, "Come unto me," there would be a thousand voices saying: "Sir, who are you? From whence came you? What right have you to say, 'Come?' And what assurance, if we accept your invitation, that any benefit will be derived therefrom?" But the man that said this had lived in a little, despised town. "He shall be called a Nazarene," because of the fact that the very name of the village in which he lived carried with it the stigma of reproach. But when he made this statement, he had already stood on "Jordan's stormy banks" and had been acknowledged as the Son of God, in whom Heaven was well pleased. Not only so, but he had gone out into the wilderness all alone to meet the archenemy of mankind—to be weighed in the balance. From this mighty conflict he had come forth triumphant and victorious. Well might the angelic host come and minister unto him. To have extended such an invitation and to have made such a promise without conscious ability to perform it would have been a mockery and a solemn trifling with the wants and woes of mankind, of which even his enemies admit Jesus was incapable.

I ask: Who is included in this invitation ? It is not addressed unto irresponsible idiots, it does not include innocent babes, it is not for the untaught heathen, it does not apply to the impenitent soul; but unto every one that is weary, that has labored, and is conscious of being heavily ladened, Christ said: "Come, rest."

There are some things right upon the surface that are implied in this invitation. First of all, it carries with it the implication that those invited are away. I would not think of inviting a man to come to me if he already were heart to heart and hand in hand and in perfect accord. The very fact that the invitation is announced implies that those for whom it was intended are aloof—separate and apart.

Therefore, the Savior said: "Come." But how came humanity away from the Christ? And why do they stand subjected to the need of an invitation of this kind? Strange as it is, you can hardly enter upon any kind of a discussion but that there are different and varied answers. A great many people would answer that the human family was born away from God and away from Christ; hence the doctrine of depravity and the miraculous operation of the Spirit. The doctrine of depravity suggests, as is found in some of the creeds, that "all men are conceived and born in sin." I want to say to you, frankly and emphatically, that I do not believe one single syllable of any such doctrine. And that is not all. The man does not live on the top side of God's green earth that can turn to the Bible and read such a statement therefrom. "O." says one, "does not the Bible say in Psalms 51:5 : 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me?'" Yes, I know that passage; but think of it just a moment. Does that prove that when a child is born upon the earth it has a heart as black as midnight darkness? I think not, but it is only indicative of the character of the mother and reflects not upon the child thus born.

Let me ask you: Does this total depravity come from the father or from the mother? If you say it comes from the father, then you have the~wrong scripture, for this verse does not say a word about the father. If you say, on the other hand, that depravity comes from the mother, then look what you have done! Jesus Christ himself was born of a woman; and if depravity is transmitted by the mother of whom we are born, then the Son of God had a streak of depravity in him.

Well, how came the world away? Without stopping to further that line of argument, which might be interesting to some, I repeat: How came it away? I want to answer in the language of Holy Writ (Isaiah 59:1-2): "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Every man, therefore, to-night who is accountable stands away from God, not because of the fact that was so born, but because of his own sins, his own transgressions, and his individual iniquities. Hence, the Savior said: "Come." But not only that. Since man is the one that has departed, he is the one that must return. As a matter of fact, I never spend much time in begging, pleading, and persuading God and Christ and the Holy Spirit to come into our midst to revive, to convict, and to convert. I think I understand the philosophy of the Christian religion with reference to these matters. God is willing, Christ is ready, the Holy Spirit is always beckoning and never turns away a single soul. Therefore man is the one upon whom the effort must be put forth. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," rather than God or Christ or the Spirit. So Come!

Now, may I draw a picture from the Bible as to what condition characterizes every sinner in this attitude? In Ephesians 2:12 Paul said of those people previous to their conversion: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." There stands the picture, drawn by inspiration, of the status of every man and every woman who has not accepted the gospel call—without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the promise, without God and without hope in this world. Our intellect cannot save us. Our wealth avails nothing. Our political preferment and prominence, prestige and power, amount absolutely to nothing. Our ancestry, though it be of the finest, has no effect. Unless we accept the Savior's invitation and respond unto Heaven's call, all is lost. As your friend, I want to say to you, calmly and yet earnestly, there is no heaven for any man that refuses thus to do. "O." some may say,

"that is mighty hard !" I cannot help it. I did not do it. The Savior thus declared.

Well, note further, we are away from God because of our own sins. We stand subjected unto the things thus mentioned. Not only that; Jesus said in John 8:24, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins ;" and in John 8:21 : "If you die in your sins, where I am, you cannot come." But this invitation implies another thing— namely, that those invited have the power, the liberty, and the ability to accept the call. What would you think of me if I were to hold out something attractive, wonderfully interesting, and especially desired by some child, and say, "Come unto me," when I knew that it was absolutely impossible? Let me present the picture after this fashion: Here is a little girl with golden curls, beautiful, just at the age to become exceedingly interesting and attractive; but there is a great iron stake driven down ten feet into the bosom of Mother Earth. The child is led up by the side of it. A chain of iron is wound about her feet and around her body until not a muscle can be moved. Knowing her condition, I step back here with a pretty little doll, one beautifully dressed, with golden slippers, that goes to sleep as you put it down, and I say to the child: "I know that you cannot come; but if you will, this doll shall be yours." You answer and say: "Sir, you hard-hearted, cold, and cruel soul, why tantalize and torment the child by offering that which you know it cannot accept?" That is not as hard a picture as sometimes is painted of an alien sinner. The world would have me to believe that he is bound in the clutches of depravity—that he has ears, but he cannot hear; he has eyes, but he cannot see; he has limbs, but he cannot walk; he has a tongue, but he cannot talk. He is as dead as Lazarus ever was. And yet they picture Christ as saying to that poor sinner: "I know you cannot move. I understand you are helpless; but if you will come unto me, I will give you rest." Let me say that I could not respect a Christ of that kind. Such an one is not the God of the Bible nor the Christ that died for sinners upon the earth. When he said, therefore, "Come unto me, all ye that labor," it implies that man has the power and the ability to accept the call. In John 5:39-40 there is this statement of Jesus unto the Jews: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Now note: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." He did not say that they could not. The Lord never intimated that it was beyond their power, but he said the reason that you have not life is because you Will not; and I say to you tonight, based upon the same declaration of God’s word, if any man accountable to God is lost at the last day, it will be no fault of God nor of Christ nor of the Spirit, but it will be because of the fact that he will not accept the Savior’s invitation.

I think one of the saddest scenes pictured in all the Bible is revealed in Matthew 23:37. It is said of the Savior during the passion period of his life. Bidding farewell to the city of Jerusalem, he went across the valley of Jehosophat, on beyond the garden of Gethsemane, and climbed the heights of the Mount of Olives, from whose summit he looked back and gave the expression: "O. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !" Thus is the Savior’s lamentation and regret: "Jerusalem, weep not for me; weep for yourselves. I would have tenderly gathered you together, I would have hovered you under my wing, I would have protected and sheltered you; but you would not."

There is the truth. If at last on the left hand we are placed and he says, "Depart into everlasting fire," and we ask, "Why?" the answer is: "Because you would not." There is the trouble. God provided, Christ died for us, the Holy Spirit has made it known, and gospel preachers throughout

the ages have warned us and beckoned us. Yet we are lost. Why ? Because we would not.

So, I say, this invitation implies not only that those invited are away, but that they have the power and the liberty to accept the Savior's call. But next, and last for the present, it implies that their condition will be benefitted if they will but respond to the call. I could not fancy nor imagine the spotless Son of God inviting suffering, sighing, sinful humanity to come unto him unless he meant it for their good and for their profit. Are you weary? Are you heavy laden? Are you careworn? Have you burdens? If so, Christ says: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest. I will remove all of those." That is: "I will forgive your sins; and the man that cometh unto me, howsoever burdened he may have been, I will in no wise cast him aside. I will take your burdens myself, and bear them gently away, and give you rest therefrom." But that is not all. I think his promise not only implies rest from sin, from the worry and anxiety that sin necessarily brings with it and which attaches thereto, but it extends far beyond that. Outstripping the confines of time and launching out into the depths of the boundless beyond, that promise contemplates the final rest that remains for the people of God.

I would like to call your attention to the sweetness, the beauty and the attractiveness of that rest. Unto the man who has risen in the early morn with the voice of the birds, who has toiled during the day in an honorable occupation, and who, as the evening shadows gather and twilight comes stealing across the path, wends his way back to a humble home, conscious of a day's work well done, rest is, indeed, sweet. When the business man, upon whom responsibilities and cares have been placed, has finished his task, when his work has been checked up and all things made correctly to balance, he rejoices to be free from toil and from obligations no longer his.

I think I know the sweetness of that rest which comes to those who spend their time in preaching the gospel of the Son of God. I know the pleasure that attaches thereto and the joy that necessarily comes as a result of having told the story. I can appreciate the rest that comes after the meeting has closed and after labors have been expended. When, care-worn and bowed down by a sense of responsibility both to men and God, and when finally the benediction has been said, he can look back, conscious that he has not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, and then return to those who love him best, I think there is a joy and sweetness that but few can appreciate. When that old mariner out on the bosom of the ocean, storm-tossed and tempest-driven, approaches the other shore and sees the light in the distant land, he is filled with joy and pleasure that others cannot understand. When the armistice of the last war was signed and our own boys in far-away France set sail for their homes, sweethearts, kindred, and friends, there was a thrill that filled the soul; and when they at last laid aside their uniform of khaki and the cares no longer theirs, they entered into the fullness of that rest for which they had sighed. As an encouragement to those of us that are trying to deny ourselves, that are trying to crucify the lusts of the flesh and to mortify the deeds of the body, let me say that after a while, when our forms shall have bended low, when our cheeks have been furrowed by the finger of time, when hoary hairs bedeck our brows, when we shuffle off all that is mortal and the Captain of our salvation bids us to stand on the quiet plains of a never-ending eternity, we shall enter into that rest that passeth understanding and appreciate in all its fullness what the Savior meant when he said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden."

I come, therefore, at the close of this talk to-night, to ask again: Are there any of you in this audience who will accept the Savior's earnest call? You have listened patiently to this effort of

mine. Won’t you believe in him with all your heart? Won’t you from your sins turn away? Won’t you publicly confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God ? Won’t you walk down into the water and in the name of the sacred three be buried with the Lord, to rise and walk in newness of life, and then walk it until by and by God shall see fit to touch you with the finger of his love and bid you come home? If such there are, while together we stand and sing, the invitation is gladly tendered.

1.14 - REPENTANCE

REPENTANCE

I have for study at this hour the subject of repentance. To show its importance and the emphasis given by Holy Writ, I present a number of passages of scripture bearing upon this subject. In Matthew 3:1-17 we have a record of how John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." After Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, he went into Galilee and began to preach and to say: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In Matthew 10:1-42 and Luke 10:1-42 the twelve and seventy were instructed to emphasize the same thing. When the Savior gave the world-wide commission in Luke 24:46-47, he said: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Then in Acts 2:38 Peter said unto those that were cut to the heart and had cried out, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In Acts 3:19, at the close of a sermon on Solomon's porch of the temple, Peter said: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." When Paul stood on Mars' Hill (Acts 17:30), he said to those Athenians: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Then in 2 Peter 3:9 : "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Now, with these simple statements before you, I certainly need not stop longer to impress upon you the absolute necessity and the superlative importance of repentance as it has to do with the gospel plan of salvation. I close this part by quoting from our Savior (Luke 13:3) "I tell you Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

One of the hardest things for men and women to do is to repent of their sins. It is comparatively easy in this country for a man to believe the gospel. In fact, it requires more effort to set aside the testimony that produces faith than it does to accept the word of the Lord and believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. It is also comparatively easy to get men to be baptized when they have believed the gospel and repented of their sins. Repentance is a direct challenge to man's will power; and so few of us are willing to bow in subjection, to acknowledge our wrongs, and to resolve by the grace of God to turn away from the same. When I decide that I have sinned against God and against heaven and reach the conclusion that I expect to turn away from such deeds and to live as I ought to live, all things else are easy to do. I am not at all discouraged when men fail to repent of their sins, for I remember that in the days of our Lord, woe was pronounced upon the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and even Capernaum, the city in which he lived, because they would not repent of their sins. If a man die without having so done, there is no promise for him in all of God's book, for the time has never been since man's first

creation that God did not call upon him to repent of his sins. But may I ask just here: "What does repentance mean ?" First, it is a duty imposed upon all mankind. It is a plain command of God. It is universal in its application, and no man can refuse it and escape the responsibility that must come upon him. Repentance is not simply sorrow, even though it be of a godly sort. I would not say that the element of sorrow has no connection with repentance, but a man may be sorry for a thing and yet not necessarily repent thereof. When the Pentecostians heard the gospel, when they believed that they had crucified the Son of God, they were filled with sorrow and anxiety as conviction was brought home to them, and they cried out in agony: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Notwithstanding the fact that they were filled with sorrow and regret, Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." On the other hand, repentance is not simply and solely a reformation of life, for a man might thus determine to do without any regard for Jehovah or with no purpose whatever to do God's will. Let me call your attention to Matthew 21:28-29, where it is said a certain man had two sons, and he said unto one: "Go work to-day in my vineyard." He answered and said, "I will not ;" but afterwards he repented and went. Now, if you can learn just what that boy did, Jesus said that is repentance. I have an idea that when the boy first refused and reflected over the matter and realized that he had disobeyed his father, he became conscious of the fact that he was in the wrong; that he had sinned against his father, who was responsible for his existence; and when he came to himself, he acknowledged that wrong and faced about in the opposite direction. He moved; he acted; he responded unto duty's demand and sought to do his father's will. Christ styled such an act repentance. When the prodigal son received his part of the father's estate, he went out and wasted his substance in riotous living. By and by he had spent all, and found himself at last feeding the swine and eating the very husks with which they were fed. He is no longer dressed as in days gone by. But now, perhaps, clad in dirty, filthy clothes, he gave some heed to sober and sane reflections. The Bible says he "came to himself." Then he said: "Back in my father's house there is plenty and to spare." And when cool, calm, and deliberate judgment had triumphed, he said: "I will arise and go to my father." Friends, that is repentance. That is what repentance means. It is the change of will, of deeds, and of life.

I want you to notice another line of thought that we may see just what repentance is. In Matthew 12:41 the Savior said: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas." Why condemn this generation? Because they repented. Who repented? The Ninevites. When ? At the preaching of Jonah. Whatever, therefore, those Ninevites did back there, Christ says that is repentance. I simply turn to Jonah 3: 10, and find this statement: "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Those Ninevites repented. They turned from their evil way and faced about toward a course absolutely contrary. From these scriptures I want to frame a definition of repentance, which is this: Repentance is a change of a man's will power. It is brought about by godly sorrow and results in a reformation of life.

Repentance carries with it evidences which the world cannot question. I give some examples of those who have really repented of their sins. The Thessalonians showed their sincerity in that they

turned "from idols to serve the living and true God." Hence, they repented. Those of whom we read in Acts 19:19 evidenced their repentance by bringing their books, valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver, and burning them before all men. The Philippian jailer indicated his repentance by washing the stripes of the apostles, accepting their teaching, and setting meat before them. The Corinthians, unto whom Paul wrote words of criticism, showed their repentance in that they turned from their corrupt practices—their low, vile manner of life in which they had hitherto been engaged.

Men are moved by motives. The fear of punishment, on the one hand, and the hope of reward, on the other, are the strongest incentives to our action in the more serious concerns of life. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:10 that "godly sorrow worketh repentance." It is that which lies behind. It is the element that urges and insists and demands of us to move forward in obedience to Heaven's call. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 Paul said: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." A wonderful statement of Jehovah, urging men to yield to Heaven's requirement! All of the threats of the Bible the evidences of God's wrath, God's vengeance, and God's indignation heaped upon humanity— are intended to move us to repent of our sins. On the other hand, Paul declared in Romans 2:4 that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." God's goodness is seen even in the temporal world about us. What poor soul is there among us so ungrateful and so unthoughtful that he cannot feast upon the good things of this material world? Where is the man that can be surrounded by all the splendors and the glories that characterize our passing along the pathway of time and not recognize that the Power from whence all these blessings flow has lavishly bestowed upon us the good things of this world in order that we may be persuaded to do his will? God sends the sunshine and the showers, the springtime and the harvest with its ripened, golden grain. He bids us to behold his goodness on every hand, but the greatest exhibition was his matchless love in the gift of his only begotten Son. That Son lived one-third of a century among men. He lived and moved among his fellows that he might lift them to higher heights and to holier realms. His life was purely one of service and sacrifice. But, due to no crime of his own, he was led as a sheep to the slaughter and was crucified outside the city's gate, where he died a felon's death for a lost and ruined and recreant race. It does seem that every man who knows this story would be moved to accept the gospel, to repent of his sins, and to obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered. But let me suggest to you that the motives God has intended to move men have seemingly failed, and with these a large host are not content. In their demands they insist that God perform some startling or unheard-of miracle in order to cause men to repent. If it were true that repentance is an act on the part of God toward men, then it would follow, on the ground that Jehovah is no respecter of persons, that he must use that same miraculous power upon every man; and, hence, universal salvation would result. Otherwise God would be partial, unjust and unfair. If the Lord works a miracle and causes this man over here to repent, then, I repeat, he is under obligation to work a similar miracle in order to reach every man upon the face of the earth. This miraculous conception is no new thing, for I have read in Holy Writ of a man's insisting that God do this very thing. Do you recall the story of the rich man and Lazarus—how both of them died, and the former was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment ? Then he saw Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, and cried out unto Father Abraham, saying: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." When he was assured that this could not be done, he then said: "Father Abraham, send Lazarus back into yonder world, where I have five brothers, and let him testify unto them, lest they also

come to this place of torment." But Abraham replied: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." But the rich man said: "Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." He knew they had the law and the prophets, but for these he had never had respect; and he imagined that if God would perform a miracle, surely his brothers would repent. As I have read that scripture, I have tried to picture just what would have happened had God yielded to his request. Suppose Lazarus had come back to this earth in body and had gone to the rich man's brethren and said unto them: "Gentlemen, I have come to tell you that I once lived upon the earth; that I was a very poor man, a beggar, and afflicted; that I used to go to your brother's home and beg the crumbs that fell from his table; and finally your brother and I both died and passed into the Hadean world. He and Father Abraham have carried on a conversation, and at his request I have been sent back to tell you that your brother is in hell, tormented wonderfully. I have returned to warn you, lest you follow in his steps and experience a similar fate." I verily believe that had Lazarus come back to earth and spoken as I have indicated, he would have been rejected and his very message spurned. The brothers would doubtless have condemned him and pictured him as "a man clad in tattered garments' fit company for the dogs, and yet with presumption enough to tell us that our brother is in hell. We believe no such thing, for our brother was a very respectable and influential man. He lived in a palace. He fared sumptuously every day. He wore fine clothes, and all the world paid him honor and respect. Surely a man of his prominence, of his influence, and of his wealth, could not be in hell." Lazarus would have been treading on dangerous ground to have made such a report as the rich man suggested. It is dangerous ever for a preacher to announce that some prominent man has gone to hell. Of course, if he does not amount to anything here on earth, if he has never been elected constable, road overseer, or a member of the Tennessee Legislature, it is all right; but when you begin to talk about some prominent man, some high-toned gentleman, who moves about in the finest circles of society, who dresses in the latest fashion, dwells in a palace, and fares sumptuously every day, you are treading on very dangerous ground indeed.

I am certain that Abraham told the truth about it when he said: "If such men will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." This is none other than a clear-cut statement on the part of Jehovah that there is no such thing as direct or miraculous power in the conversion of human beings. God's law had been announced, and the man who will not hear that has no hope of salvation. But you and I this day not only have Moses and the prophets, but Christ and the apostles; and if a man will not repent from having heard the same, he would not do so though one should rise from the dead.

Sometimes the question is raised as to how long a man ought to repent. How long does it take him to fulfill this requirement? I think I can answer that correctly by stating that it takes just long enough for him to get the consent of his mind, of his will power, that he is tired of sin and of his former ways, and that now he firmly resolves and coolly decides to turn from his evil way and face about toward the "city which bath foundations." Whatever time is required, therefore, to make this decision, is the answer to that query. The longest time of which we have any record was the case of Saul of Tarsus, due to the fact that three days and three nights passed before Ananias reached the character to be converted. We read in the Bible of where three thousand repented in one day; again, of the Philippian jailer, who heard the gospel, repented of his sins, and was baptized the same hour of the night. It is possible for all those in this splendid audience who believe the gospel

with all the heart to repent of their sins this very hour and to further their obedience to the gospel of Christ. Remember that the Savior said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish ;" and that you may escape that condemnation, I insist that you accept the gospel call and be saved while time and opportunity are yours.

1.15 - BAPTISM

BAPTISM

Until this audience began to gather I had wondered whether or not the people would be interested in the old subject of baptism that has been discussed, debated, and argued for these hundreds of years. But I interpret your presence as an absolute manifestation of the interest that you have in this old theme. It is a Bible subject which every one recognizes must be answered, and the problems connected therewith must be solved by each individual. Just let me say to-night that while hundreds and thousands have lived and passed off the scene of action, every man and woman that has ever gone into the presence of God must give an account for the record made in his journey and for his disposition of this subject. The importance of a theme like this can be no better expressed than by stating to you this fact—namely, that out of all the churches throughout the length and breadth of the land, no man can become a member of any of them, except the Quakers, without he subject himself to what that church is pleased to call "baptism." For that reason, therefore, if you ever expect to become united with any religious body and to be affiliated with any movement of that sort, this question must by you be settled in some way or other, and you cannot escape the responsibility by saying that it was settled for you by your parents when you were an infant, because it is left with you to determine as to whether or not you are going to be contented and satisfied with the act that took place concerning which you had no knowledge, no choice, or no decision.

I wish that I knew how to-night, in the very best way possible, to present this matter to you in its simplicity and in its genuineness that would carry with it real conviction and likewise the proper solution thereof. I want to serve notice now that I do not intend to argue the question. I am not tonight trying to convince you by any power of logic or reason as to what you ought to do in order to be scripturally baptized; but I have in mind just to present to you the plain, simple statement of God’s word, with practically no comments whatever, summing up just what is learned therefrom and holding it out to you as best I can, appealing to your intelligence as to the safety of your course, and then trying to get you to follow that which you believe to be taught in Holy Writ.

It has sometimes been said that before a person can understand what God teaches on the question of baptism, he has to be quite a scholar—that he must be familiar with some of the ancient and dead languages; and numbers of people excuse themselves from the responsibility on the ground that they know nothing of these languages, and, therefore, are helpless in the matter. I want to say to you candidly that I do not believe that a man has to know one word of Greek, not a particle of Hebrew, not one syllable of Latin, French, Spanish, or anything else other than our simple mother tongue, in order to understand God’s teaching along this line.

I once read of an old gentleman, in some book, who had this suggestion. He said: "Sir, if I were troubled as to what it takes to constitute a valid act of baptism, I would cut loose from all things else and take the New Testament in hand, and in a quiet manner I would commence with the first chapter of Matthew and read very carefully, noting that word ’baptism’ or some of the family

thereof every time I found it; and then at the close I would try to decide, with God alone as my teacher, just what was the act commanded by him and to which I must submit."

Now, that has always struck me as being a very sensible and easy method of procedure, and, with that thought in mind, I want to make one other suggestion before I pass to the direct investigation. It is much easier to teach a man that is absolutely unacquainted with a thing—that has never formed any opinion or conception—than it is to eliminate wrong things that have entered into his mind. A partisan—a biased and prejudiced man—is wonderfully hard to set right, even though you present the truth as clear as the noonday sun.

Now, I ask of this audience, all of you, including your humble servant, let's do our best, at the beginning of this little talk, to get out of our minds any knowledge, any opinion, or any decision whatever of a partisan nature that we may have had respecting what it takes to constitute scriptural baptism. If possible, let's imagine that, in all of our days, we have never heard that word called, that it is a brand-new thing unto us, and that to it we are perfect and rank strangers; and, therefore, to-night, being careful not to be influenced by anything that will be an opinion on the subject, let's try to find for ourselves just what God says and draw conclusions based directly thereon.

If it is possible for us to do that, I think our survey of the Bible thought tonight will be helpful and profitable. Now, I do not mean in announcing to you that I propose to go through the entire New Testament, studying just what may be said regarding it, that I shall keep you here for a late hour; but with these scriptures readily and easily called to mind, I car soon glance over this matter and get therefrom the thought intended. Let it be understood, first, that baptism is strictly a New Testament subject, not being one time mentioned in the Old.

Commencing, therefore, with Matthew 1:1-25, we meet not a single time this word about which we are interested. Pass on to Matthew 2:1-23 and read it through, and we have not come across this word in it. But when you open the Bible at Matthew 3:1-17, you do not read far until you find a record of John the Baptist, having come preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying unto the people: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized [now, that is the word for the first time "baptized"] of him in the river Jordan. confessing their sins." (A. Well, I have no idea on earth what that word means. Under the promise stated, that is the first time I ever saw it; and what have I learned about it? I have learned that there was a disposition on the part of the people of Jerusalem and Judea and the region round about that when John was preaching they went out unto him and were all baptized of him (whatever that may mean) in the river Jordan, and that they confessed their sins.

Now, what was the act that took place? I do not know, nor can any man living tell from that statement just what happened, and we have to learn that yet. But one thing I have learned from that—viz., that whatever the act may be it took place in the river Jordan. Now, how do I know that? Because it is there in the Bible, and is what the Bible said, and not Hardeman's opinion nor theory nor comment. That is exactly what God's word said about it. That is what I believe and what I know thus far.

Well, again, the Book says that "they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins"—that is, they acknowledged their sinfulness. They did not profess that their sins had been forgiven already, but in the confession and acknowledgment of their sins they were baptized (whatever that means and whatever that word stands for) in the river Jordan. Thus two points are learned; and as I pass on to Matthew 3:11, John said: "I indeed baptize you with water; . . . but he that cometh after me . . . shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Now, what have you learned about that ? No man that ever lived can read that verse and determine what the act was that is incorporated in that term, but here is what you do learn: that the element John used was not buttermilk, nor cider, nor any liquid of that sort. Water was the element. Of course you might gather that from the fact that he baptized in the Jordan River; but we started out to take it for what it says, not to interpolate nor inject any other word than that of God. It happened in the river Jordan. The people were confessing their sins. Water was the element with which or in which they were baptized. But read right on, beginning with Matthew 3:13 : "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." There is our word again. Now, that does not tell what happened. That just simply tells that Jesus came and demanded the act, and after the baptizing he came up out of the water. Now, brethren, do not jump at the conclusion that you know he was immersed. You don’t know anything of the kind. That did not say so, and let’s not be too radical or too quick to decide such matters, but just let God lead us. Gathering up, we have:

1. That baptism was in the river Jordan.

2. Persons that confessed their sins.

3. That water was the element.

4. After the baptism, the Savior came up out of the water. That is it. No opinion about that. No comment; no theory.

Now, I pass to Matthew 28:1-20, where we learn more in verse 19. The Savior said when he appeared to the twelve: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now, what have we learned ? Well, two or three things that I never had before. One of them is this: that it is to be a universal matter, unto all nations, and that it is to be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With the conscious knowledge that it is done in the name of these and connected therewith, it must be rather a serious, solemn matter. Our interest, therefore, must be aroused to find out more and more respecting the same. In Mark 1:4-5, John preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Well, I had not learned about that. Now, what do we have? That it is "the baptism of repentance," belonging to and growing out of repentance, and that it is "for the remission of sins." But some one would ask: "What does ’for’ mean ?" That is not the point to-night. I am telling you just what the Bible says, not what it ought to have said. Now, where are we?

1. It happened in the river Jordan.

2. It occurred to those acknowledging their sins.

3. Water was the element.

4. After the baptism, Christ came up out of the water.

5. Teaching precedes it.

6. That it is universal.

7. That it is done in the name of the Father, the and the Holy Spirit; that it not only is a baptism of repentance, but it is "for the remission of sins." What constitutes the act ? I have not learned. You could not tell from a single one of those scriptures just what baptism is. And so let us pass on to Mark 16:15-16, where the Savior is reported in this connection to have said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized [there is our word again] shall be saved." What have I learned about it ? That faith precedes it and that salvation follows it. Now let no man say: "I don't believe that." Let's not advertise our infidelity and skepticism too quickly. We are discussing what the Lord said about it, and not what he ought to have said. It is not theology or denominational opinion, but we are just talking about what it did say. Nobody can question that the Savior said: "He that believeth [so faith must precede the baptism, whatever that act may be, and as yet I do not know] and is baptized shall be saved." Now, I know that is what he said, and you know it; and knowing, we should accept what God says about it, and, I think, we should be cement therewith.

We pass over that, and I come to Luke 3:21, which is parallel with scriptures noted—nothing new especially to learn. So I pass on to John 3:23, where the record says John "was baptizing in Tenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." And some of my brethren say: "Well, that settles it." O. no; it does not! How much is "much water?" Do you know, brethren, that that is a relative term? A pitcherful of water is "much" compared with a thimbleful; a barrel is "much" compared with a quart.

Coming now to Acts 2:38, we find that Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In this we learn not only that repentance precedes, but that the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit follow. But the precise act of what baptism is, is not here defined. In chapter 8 of the same book we learn that "when they [the Samaritans] believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Toward the close of the chapter we have the case of Philip and the Eunuch, of whom it is said: "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." I must admit that this looks quite suspicious, but I would not conclude therefrom that immersion was necessarily the act performed. We have started out to learn from the Bible definitely just what the act implies. Going on through the book of Acts, we have the baptism of Saul, Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, and others; but no new fact or item is learned. Now, I pass to Romans 6:1-23, with all of these things that we have learned about baptism, and I commence to read from verse 1. Paul says: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid [which means, "No, indeed"]. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

There are two new thoughts that come to us in this letter that we read to the church of God at Rome. What are they? (1) Baptized into Jesus Christ, (2) baptized into his death. There is where his blood was shed—in the death of Christ. I must come in contact, therefore, with the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, or else there is no remission of my sins.

Now, Paul said, and I take it that he knew more about it than any of us, that we are "baptized into his death." But what is the act? Well, I haven't learned. But watch Romans 6:4 : "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." My friends, do you know that that settles the question and throws light upon all those passages hitherto read?

Paul, what is the definite, the specific act in being baptized? Answer in the language of Holy Writ and of inspiration: "We are buried." In what act? "In the act of baptism." There is a burial. Who said that? A greater than I, one that could not make a mistake God's spirit, guiding into all truth.

Well, I can understand now some other passages hitherto unknown. I can appreciate why it is that he went down into the water, because there could not be a burial without it. I can appreciate the relative term as to "much water," at least sufficient to constitute a burial. I can understand why it happened in the river Jordan or some place equivalent "hereunto.

"Well," some one says, "that is strange, because when we bury folks in Tennessee, that is the end of them. That is not the way you do in the act of baptism." My friends, if there were nothing further on the subject, in order to fulfill Holy Writ's demands, as a matter of fact, we would have to bury them and leave them so. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." What kind of burial? "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Baptism, therefore, not only contemplates, and the specific act not only embraces, the act of burial, but connected therewith is the act of a resurrection, all of which throws light upon the fact that it is a form of the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ and typifies his burial and his resurrection. In Colossians 2:12 Paul said: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him." Thus you have the thought.

Now, will you help me gather these statements lust from the word of God? Here they are: (1) This thing that we call "baptism," about which we are trying to find out just from God's word, happened in the river Jordan. Mark you, no comment. I am not arguing as to what the language means; I am just telling this splendid company of intelligent people what the Bible says. (2) It was in the river Jordan. (3) People acknowledged or confessed their sins. (4) Water is the element used. (5) It is a baptism that is preceded by teaching. (6) It is preceded by faith. (7) It is preceded by repentance. (8) It is done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (9) The reception of the Holy Spirit and salvation are promised afterwards. (10) In the act preparatory thereunto there is a going down into the water. (11) Then, after the act, there is a coming up out of the water. (12) And the act, definite and specific itself, is a burial, followed by a resurrection. And that, to every man that knows such is in the Bible and believes it, ought to settle the question, and to settle it once and for all.

I have never been to the Holy Land. If I should ever chance to go, I am sure I would be glad to visit the traditional spot where the Savior was crucified and the tomb in which his body lay while he himself went to the Hadean world. And after having done that, I would like to go and view the place

along the river where Jesus came from Galilee and was baptized of John. I cannot place myself or be placed in the same sepulcher as was he and have the stone rolled before it; but I can duplicate that by walking down into the water and have it parted and the waves leap over my brow until for the time I am buried and hidden and secluded, as was my Savior, and then by the strong arm of a servant of God be raised, characteristic of the triumphant resurrection of the Son of God from the dead. Thus I can in form represent the very foundation upon which the Christian doctrine and the hope of everlasting bliss stand—viz., the death of Christ for our sins, his burial, and his glorious resurrection.

I want to submit to you that the tomb and the burial always stand as the mark between the two lives that men live. At the close of this earthly life we take our friends out to the silent city and there bury them. There is the monument; there is the mound. What does it indicate? The end of the physical life, the beginning of the life beyond. Just so is the life of a sinner. With his hands stained perhaps in the blood of his fellows, with crime, with vice, with wickedness and evil on every side, he leaves the life of sinful indulgence and all physical gratification; and when with the whole heart he believes in God's Son, when with a firm resolve he turns away from his sins, when he walks down into the water and there is buried and raised, the old life is ended. All now is blotted out, and, with the heart purified by faith, the life purified by repentance, and the state or relationship changed by baptism, he rises to walk in the new life under the leadership of Christ Jesus our Lord. And, hence, the burial indicates the close of the old life, and resurrection, the beginning of the new life in Christ.

Let me submit to you, therefore, that if a man to-night wants really to follow the teaching of God's word, irrespective of all opinions and theories and ideas of men, if he will walk in the light of these passages thus repeated, do exactly as contemplated therein, there will never come the shadow of a doubt with reference to his having done the will of the Lord Jesus Christ while here upon earth he dwells.

But, before I close, there might be some interest in two or three other statements. Some one says: "Now, Brother Hardeman, I would just like to know a little about a verse or two that mention sprinkling—for instance, Isaiah 52:15, where the prophet said, respecting the Christ, whose form and whose outline and whose character had been pictured: 'So shall he sprinkle many nations.'" Suffice it to say for the present that with every scholar and every commentary and every translation of the Bible, in the margin and in the text of many, the word "sprinkle" is changed unto the word "astonish" or "startle" or "made to wonder at." Hence, the passage refers not in the least unto any sort of an act of obedience to God or unto Christ. But I have had people remind me of the fact that the prophet predicted that "clean water" should be sprinkled upon the people and they should be cleansed from all their filthiness and from their idols. Well, I happen to know that passage—Ezekiel 36:25. I want to talk to you about it just for a moment. In the year 587 B.C. the people of Israel were carried away into Babylonian captivity, there to stay for fiftyone years, seventy in all. This began back in 606 B.C., and the first nineteen years of the captivity were spent at Jerusalem under Babylonian dominion. When they were thus carried away into the far distant land, Ezekiel, being one of the number, raised his voice and made this prediction: that by and by the time will come when God will gather his people, the Jews, out from among the heathen, and he will bring them back into their own land. This pointed down to the time in 536 B.C., when, under the decree of Cyrus and under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and others, they would

come back and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Now, in view of the fact that they had mixed and mingled with the defilement and the corruption and the idolatry of a foreign world they will be rendered impure. God said, through Ezekiel, that when he had thus brought them back, "then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

Now, some good people, blinded and deluded beyond the shadow of a doubt, fancy that perchance that refers to baptism. Well, if it did, it would be the strongest passage in the Bible as to the design of the act. Note: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you." And what will happen? "And ye shall be clean." When? After the sprinkling. But that does not fit modern theology. It has the person cleansed before the sprinkling. What happens? "I will take away the stony heart, I will give you a new spirit, and I will give you a new heart." When? After the baptizing or after the sprinkling. But as a matter of fact, that refers no more unto the act of baptism than it does to the coming primary election—absolutely not. It took place about fifty years after the prophet has thus proclaimed it.

I want, cautiously and carefully, not beside myself the least bit, perfectly cool and calm, perfectly deliberate, to state unto this magnificent audience this one thing. I want you to get it and then begin your search. Hear it: Water, and nothing but water, like this down here in the Cumberland River, like that you draw from your hydrant, like that you get out of the pool and in the streams—water, and nothing but water, was never sprinkled upon any person, people, place, or thing by God’s authority since time began. I know that this statement is the truth. Water, as we find it and use it, was never sprinkled upon anything for any purpose in all the wide, wide world.

"Why," some one says, "Brother Hardeman, art thou beside thyself ?" O. no ! What was the clean water spoken of by Ezekiel? If you will go back home and turn to Numbers 19:1-22, you will find exactly the characteristic thereof. A red heifer was burned, together with her flesh, her skin, her dung, her all, into which cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet had been put; and when the ashes thereof had accumulated and had been gathered up, it is called in God’s book "the water of cleansing," "the water of separation," "the water of purification;" and it was the law of Moses that every time they had come in contact, for instance, with a dead body, or every time they had come in contact with or touched a man that had been an attendant in a sick room, that man was by the Jews considered unclean. Thus in the Babylonian captivity they had been corrupted and defiled, and hence Ezekiel said: "When I bring you back to your own land, I will cleanse you from all the defilement of the Babylonian world." How, Ezekiel, will you do it? "I will sprinkle this water of separation, the water of purification, this clean water, upon you; and, as a result, you shall be cleansed."

Let me state to vou this: As said in the outset. this is a question that has been discussed and agitated and argued all over the land, and do you know one thing—that the act of immersion has never been debated or in question ? Where is the man that would take the negative of the proposition that the Bible teaches that immersion in water, to a scriptural subject, is baptism? Do you know that none will deny that? That is not the thing that has been in doubt. The question has been as to whether or not something else will do as well. It is a question of whether or not you can substitute. All the world that believes in baptism at all, and that means everybody, except the

Quakers—all of them suggest that immersion is the genuine article.

You have heard the old illustration, but it illustrates, and I want to close this thought with its presentation. Suppose I owed some man ten dollars, and I admit the obligation and the indebtedness and say: "Sir, after so long a time I am ready to settle my account, and I have here three ten-dollar bills [I said this is just illustrative; I don't have anything of the kind; but here are, say, three ten dollar bills], and I want to pay you and get a receipt in full of all demands. But before I make the offer and the tender, frankness and candor demand of me to say that here is a ten-dollar bill that you may have in payment for that debt. Numbers of people will accept it and say that they would just as soon have it as any ten-dollar bill on earth; but the truth demands that I say that occasionally you will come across a man that will cry 'counterfeit,' and he won't have it, and demand something else. But you can take it if you want to. All right. Now, here is a second ten-dollar bill that numbers and numbers of people accept readily, that you will never have a question about with many people; but truth demands that I say to you in advance that you will meet up with men here and there that will not accept it, and it cannot be passed as legal tender. But you may have it if you will. Now, here is the other ten dollar bill that no man has ever questioned. It is good here and everywhere. Nobody ever doubts it or questions it."

I think I know humanity well enough to know that you would say, no matter whether you are a Democrat or a Republican: "I believe you can just give me that one about which there is no question, because I don't want to have to be bothered by some fellow's questioning or coming back on me about that ten-dollar bill. Just give me the real, genuine article, and that will settle it." Well, I think that is good judgment. My friends, will you make the application? There are three things to-night that you can have for baptism. You can accept sprinkling, and many people will tell you they would just as fief have it as anything else; but you will meet up with folks that are out of the asylum and not runaways that will tell you: "I cannot accept that; I think it is a substitute." But you may take it if you wish. A man has that right.

Then here is pouring, and a great many people would just as fief have that as anything else; but there are folks that even question that? Then what?

Friends, seriously, here is the act of going down into the water, of there being buried beneath the liquid wave, of rising to walk in newness of life. Now, you have the privilege of that; and let it be said that whether you go to Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, or anywhere in all the world, nobody will ever dare question the genuineness of the act.

Why not, in view of eternity, not as a theory, not as a partisan spirit—why not accept that about which there is no question? Why be disturbed and ever in doubt as to whether or not I have been scripturally baptized? It is a simple matter. Why not settle it once for all? Put that behind you, and, upon the authority of God's word, start out toward the practice of the principles of that religion that is pure and undefiled. Unto all the taught, therefore, of the audience, unto those that believe the gospel, unto those that repent of their sins and publicly confess their faith in the Christ, that will obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered, I bid you come while we sing the splendid hymn selected, "Why do you wait ?" Why not make settlement of the matter just now. while all is well?

These steps will induct you into the family of God. This process will make you a Christian, nothing else. It will make you a member of the church that you read about in the Bible; and if you are faithful unto death, by and by Heaven’s angels, unseen perchance, but real, will camp round about you and bear your spirit home to nestle in the bosom of the love of god while eternity rolls her endless ages on.

Chapter 19

1.16 - WHAT CHURCH TO JOIN?

WHAT CHURCH TO JOIN?

I cannot but be delighted at the presence of such a splendid company, manifesting thereby your continued and genuine interest, as I believe, in those matters that are here discussed from time to time. I am duly appreciative, I trust, of the interest that you thus show. The intelligent and courteous hearing that you give serves as a great inspiration unto me in trying to present what I believe to be the truth of the Bible.

I have for study to-night a matter about which the world has varied opinions, and I am not unconscious of the fact that, in the presentation of the theme, things may be stated contrary to what you have hitherto believed. All I ask of you is this: that you consider very carefully and thoughtfully, in harmony with the Scriptures, the things I shall say, weigh them well, and accept only that part thereof that you know to be taught in the word of God. Because we may differ regarding these matters, I pledge you that I shall think none the less of you; and wherever I chance to go contrary to your opinions, I do so with no disposition to wound your feelings or disrespectfully refer to you in any way whatsoever. I think it a compliment to all of us that we have our individuality and are willing to discuss and think together, and then to act upon the very best judgment possible.

I want to talk to you about the church of the Bible, and I believe that in the announcement of it I shall put it in this form: "What church ought a man to join ?"

I believe every person that is not an atheist nor infidel expects really before he dies and goes hence to become a member of some organization known as a church. I can hardly think of a man who claims to believe the Bible going through life resolved never to give the question of this kind favorable consideration. Why is it that such a small per cent of the human family are church members? I may not know the full answer thereto, but I believe the reason is that the world has not yet decided just what church a man ought to affiliate with and with which one he ought to be united.

Now, in this country of ours, according to the last statistics, I noticed, there are one hundred sixty and four organizations, claiming to be churches, beckoning and begging for membership. Now, we have a wonderful opportunity—if, indeed, you could call it such—in picking out from this number which one we ought to join; but numbers of men that are not biased nor prejudiced can hardly decide just which one to select. For instance, a man goes to this organization over here, and he finds plenty of good people in it. Nobody can question that many splendid things are taught; but, of course, some things he cannot indorse; and he passes to the next. There he finds equally good people, a great many good things therein taught, but some objectionable features. Thus he makes the rounds; and when he gets through, I think it would take a wiser than Solomon to analyze and discriminate and pick out just the one that really ought to enlist his deepest concern.

Now, will you think it strange of me to make this suggestion ? And I do not speak beside myself to-night or without having thought the matter out as to what to say; but what would you think if I were to advise you that have favored me so kindly to join all of the churches within reach? Just think on that for a moment. Where did the man get it into his head that he ought to join just one church? You cannot say that this is not the way we act, for I have found men universally to the contrary. There are various clubs and organizations of a social and business nature in the city of Nashville. Do you think it possible to find some one of your best citizens that is a member of more than one club at the same time? I do not think such would be hard to find. I almost guarantee, ladies, that you have husbands that are members of the Masonic Lodge, and also members of the Odd Fellows' Lodge, and also members of the Pythian Lodge, and then they join the Woodmen of the World.

Why, nobody thinks anything about it. Now, what made them do that? Well, the Masonic Fraternity, according to what information I have regarding it, represents certain principles which a man believes to be good. He goes and identifies himself therewith. Then he recognizes that the Odd Fellows' Lodge has some things in it that maybe the Masonic Lodge does not offer; and, notwithstanding the fact that he has already joined the Masons, he does not hesitate to go and join the Odd Fellows.

Well, as a matter of fact, upon the basis that both of these lodges are good, and I am not here to question that, would it not follow that the man who has joined both of them is better than the man who has never joined either or stopped with just one of them? If that result does not follow, I think I would make a motion to disband both of them. Then here is the Pythian Lodge that affords many things, really splendid things, that are not found in the others. Well, is not this man that joins both or all of them a better man than he who joins just one? Why, the former has all the latter has, and more besides. And so he joins so many lodges that his wife cannot have his company a single night in the week.

Well, now, why not do the churches that way? Here is a fine religious organization. Some of my friends are in it. There are many good things about it—things I like; let me go and join it. Over here is another one with equally as good people in it, friends just as dear as those in the former, and some things in this one that you cannot get in that— things that I like. Why not let me join this in addition? Would I not be a better man than if I stopped at just the first one? Where will you draw the line? I will tell you. As a matter of fact, if I were in the joining business, I would join some eight or ten or a dozen or maybe twenty of the religious institutions of the land; and I think in the justification thereof I could hold my own and maintain all consistency in so doing.

I do not hesitate to join any of the different insurance companies and take out a policy from this one. Notwithstanding that I have done that, it does not keep me from taking out another thousand dollars in a second company, and likewise in a third. That is the way we do about everything else on the earth except the church; and so I am going to suggest to you to-night, if you are going to join any church at all, I think honestly I would throw the gate open; I would join quite a number on the ground that there are good people in them and that they teach good things, and that you may get in one things you cannot get in the others. But you notice that my suggestion along that line was prefaced by a conditional clause. Now, get this: I never have mark it—I don't expect to to-night, and so long as God lets me live on earth I never expect to advise or ask any man to join

any church under the shining stars above us. Coming from a man that sometimes tries to preach, that may seem to you remarkably strange. I would say to you, ladies and gentlemen, I have never joined any single, solitary church in all my life. Now, are you thinking: "If I had known that, I would not have come to hear you preach." Do you think that I mean to say by that that I do not claim to be a member of the church? If so, you are wrong in that presumption. I want to make you this statement, just plainly and in a very practical manner: Do you, ladies and gentlemen, honestly and thoughtfully—do you know that neither God nor Christ nor the Holy Spirit nor any inspired man ever did ask or suggest or admonish anybody to join the church since Adam was created ? Well, some one says: "That is a radical statement." I know it is. In view of the way I was reared, it is a wonderfully radical statement. The question is: "Is it so?" That is the one point of interest to you now. Is that statement the fact in the case? Do you know right now, any of you, of a single passage of scripture in all the Bible to which you can turn and find the expression, "Join the church?" Where is it? It is not in Genesis, nor in Exodus, nor in Leviticus, nor in Numbers, nor in Joshua, nor in Judges, nor in Ruth, nor in Samuel, nor in First and Second Kings, nor throughout the entire thirtynine volumes or books of the Old Testament. Well, you cannot find it in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, nor in any book on down to Revelation. Where is it?

Now, watch the suggestion I am making. Do you know, of a single passage in all the Bible to which you can turn when you get back home and find anything ever said about joining a church? Why, my friends, where I was reared, on the western side of the Tennessee River, there were two expressions that were just as near and as sacred to me as a boy as any other two in all my vocabulary. Here they are: I was taught in early life that I ought to "get religion ;" and then, after that, my friends and those who really loved me and were interested in me said that, in addition to "getting religion," I ought to "join some church." Well, I took that as a matter of fact, and excused myself on the ground of my indifference and unconcernedness. But I have found out, and I now thoroughly believe, that in all the Bible neither one of these expressions is to be found. They originated in the minds of uninspired men. The Holy Spirit never directed the pen to make a declaration nor to record a statement like unto either of these. Now, these things being true, and my word for it until you have had time to search and investigate, I would not advise you to join any church. Just to be plain and frank about it, it is none of men’s business to be joining religious organizations—that is to say, the word of God does not authorize, command, or demand such an act on our part. But what is the church? Maybe that all the time I have been talking we are confused because we are not a unit in thought as to the matter just discussed. When I talk about the church, I am not talking about a material building that is more properly styled in the country, the "meetinghouse." I really think that is what it is. It was purely an accident that I first learned the truth about that. Back where I was reared we called them "meetinghouses." When I went to the little town in which I have lived since, some of my people said I ought not to style these buildings such, but that I must talk about the "church" up yonder at the corner of the streets; and I did, not knowing any better. I did just what they recommended, but I have gone back very largely unto my first habit along that line. I pass along in your city and look at the splendid houses, representative, as they are, of immense sums of money, beautiful, commodious, and attractive, and I do not think they are churches. I do not believe there is quite enough money in the city of Nashville and enough material in the great State of Tennessee out of which men can erect a church of God. The church is a building all right enough, but it is not made of material things. It is a building composed of men and women that have been born again, that have passed out of darkness into the light of

the Son of God. So let’s get it out of our minds that any of the fine structures that men can erect constitute a church, and it is strange that that idea has always been on the earth. When Paul went to the city of Athens and stood on Mars’ Hill, in condemnation of their manner of worship (Acts 17:24), he said: "Howbeit, the Most High God does not dwell in temples made by the hands of men." O. they had their splendid structures there, very fine buildings, representing immense sums of money, and Paul said: "Gentlemen, you are wrong about it. The God of Heaven, the God that made the earth and the sea and the things therein—that God does not dwell in temples made by men’s hands." And hence, let’s eliminate the idea that the church we read about in the Bible is any kind of a material building—of stone, brick, or marble. Well, what is the church? I want to suggest to you this as a definition thereof: The church of the Bible is that spiritual realm over which Jesus Christ reigns as head and in which the Holy Spirit dwells. It is the body of Christ, composed of members that have been born again, that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Hence, Paul said, in Ephesians 1:22-23, that God "hash put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." And, again, in Colossians 1:18, Paul said: "And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

So, then, the church of God, according to the direct statement of the word of God, is none other than the body of Christ. Jesus, the Christ, the head; Christian men and women as the members thereof; the Holy Spirit dwelling within, giving life, strength, vitality, and power "hereunto."

Now, I have in mind to suggest another thing for your consideration and study. My friends, the church of the Bible is used only in two senses—one of them a universal application, and the second in its reference to local assemblies. It has been said by some who have taken the time to count it that the word is found one hundred and ten times in the New Testament; that of the one hundred and ten times, eighteen times it refers to the redeemed in the aggregate to that body composed of all the Christian people everywhere—and ninety-two times referring to local congregations. I give you just a sample of these two ways. For instance, in Matthew 16:18 Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I think, in common with you, that he was referring unto that organization in its general sense, embracing and embodying all of the redeemed and all of the ransomed and saved of our earth. Again (Ephesians 5:25): "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Now, which one was that? What church was it that Christ loved, and which one was it for which he died ? The answer: The church of God in the universal sense. As but illustrative of the other, I have only to call your attention to Paul’s and others’ letters unto the church—for instance, the church at Rome, Corinth, Sardis, Pergamos, Philadelphia, Thyatira, Ephesus, etc.—not that they are different in theory, practice, or manner of worship, but purely in geography and location.

Well, this thought then follows, and ought to be of interest to every living soul (mark it): Is the church of the Bible a denomination? I would have you think candidly, unprejudiced and unbiased in mind, as you thus contemplate. I repeat it: Is the church about which you read in the Bible, the church for which Christ gave his blood, the church of which Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build my church"—is that a denomination? If so, which one? Out of the one hundred and sixty-four, which one is Christ talking about? Why, as a matter of fact, my friends, for fifteen hundred years

after the Son of God died a felon’s death on the cross there was not a denomination known in all the annals of history. Our denominationalism is of modern origin. It does not so much as belong to the study of ancient history, but to medieval and modern; and, as a matter of fact, I believe, in common with you, that when we read the Bible in the privacy of our homes and in the anxiety of our souls to learn God’s will—when we read about the church there, I doubt if any of us then have in mind that we are reading about some denomination. The fact is that out of the one hundred and sixty-four that are mentioned in our government records, there is not a shadow of a record of any of them in the word of God. Why, of course, when you go to find out how many denominations there are on the earth, you don’t need the Bible; you need the Federal Authorities’ Report; for you can take the Bible and memorize it from lid to lid, and you would be no wiser about denominations than at the beginning. Why? Because the Bible says not a word about them. Will you help me try to differentiate and distinguish between a denomination and this organization spoken of in the Bible? Now, a denomination—what is it? I think the follow ing will prove true: A denomination is a religious organization larger than any local church on earth and yet smaller than all the Christian people on earth. Think of the statement thus made. What is a denomination? It is a religious organization larger than a local church, smaller than the redeemed in the aggregate. Therefore it comes in between, separate and distinct from, the church of the Bible at both ends of the line. How is the church used? It is either a local congregation or it embraces all Christians. Now, a denomination stands between these, and, there-fore, it is a thing unheard of and unknown in the Bible; and I say that cautiously, respectfully, and yet firmly.

Well, then, does a man have to become a member of a denomination in order to be saved? Why, there is not a man on earth that would tell you he does. Get it! If I can, therefore, be saved from sin and be saved in heaven without becoming a member of a denomination, then what reason is there upon the earth for the existence of a thing that is admittedly nonessential to the salvation of the souls of men?

"Well," says one, "try the church in that line. Can a man be saved and not become a member of the church?"

Now, I appreciate the fact that there are those to the contrary; but let me say it: No man yet, under the banner of Christ, under the reign of Jesus Christ as King, has ever been saved except by virtue of the fact that he has become a member of the church of the Bible. Salvation is not in the devil’s territory. Salvation is not in the kingdom of His Satanic Majesty, but salvation is in God’s family, and there are just the two.

Now, I refer to a principle stated a few days ago with reference to God’s immutable law. I said that God located the life of a fish and put that location in water; and if a fish ever enjoys that kind of life, it must get into that realm where God saw fit to designate and locate it. Just so has God Almighty located the life of a Christian. Where has he located salvation ? Mark the idea. Just two places, just two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil. Where are God’s children? They are inside of God’s family. It is not complimentary for you to suggest that God has children outside of the family. That is not even complimentary to say regarding men. God’s children—Christians, the saved, the redeemed—are in the family of God, which is the church of God, "the pillar and ground of the truth."

Now, I have this to ask: Can a man become a member of the church of the Bible and yet not be a member of any denomination? You say: "Yes, for Jesus Christ certainly did not establish an institution and then leave it impossible for men to become identified therewith." Granting that statement, you have exactly the conception that is in the mind of your humble servant—namely, I want to stand a member of the church about which you read in the New Testament, and at the same time not a member of any denomination under high heaven. The Corinthians thus stood. Nobody had ever been to Corinth preaching the gospel except Paul, and he thus established the church by the proclamation of the gospel. The people accepted the simple terms thereof; and when he went away, he saw fit to write unto that same body, and here is the way he began (1 Corinthians 1:1): "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth." What denomination was it? Absolutely none. He said to them in 1 Corinthians 12:27: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The body is the church (Colossians 1:18) I want you to think of what that statement, or those statements, would imply for the world. There are numbers and numbers of professed Christians in the city of Nashville, a city known far and near for its schools and churches; and yet this city, like all others, is cursed—by what? By religious division, by controversy, by denominational rivalry, each denomination trying to out strip and to outshine every other denomination within the corporate limits. What would the teaching of the Bible do for Nashville? It would cause the people, all of us, to drop every kind of an organization under heaven of a religious nature except the one talked of and spoken of in the Bible. Well, what about it? Not a single, solitary man would have to give up or sacrifice a single principle or a matter of faith in so doing; and if you, as our capital city, unto which the State looks with pride and with pleasure, could present a solid phalanx and a combined front, the influence thereof would spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth. We would plant ourselves upon God’s Book, that and that alone. We would be members only of the church for which Christ died. We would have no discriminating terms; we would not be divided, but we would be joined together, heart to heart, hand in hand, while infidelity, skepticism, and all things antagonistic to the forward march of Christ would fly away like mist before the morning sunlight. We would have God’s word as the creed, as the discipline, as the confession of faith. We would talk about God’s church, not mine. I do not have a church and never expect to. Jesus Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build mine." If you have one, it is prima facie evidence that it is not the one spoken of in the Bible, because that one is not yours. And, hence, when you go around talking about "my church," you publicly—however, you may not intend to do it; but that is a public advertisement that yours is different from the one in the New Testament, because that is not yours. I beg to state to you that it is not mine; and, therefore, there can be no partisan spirit; there can be no littleness, nor narrowness, nor sectarian ties. Why, it is not ours. It belongs to Him who died and shed his blood for the purchase thereof. The church of the New Testament has different appellations by which it is known. When I speak of it Collectively, it is styled the "church of the first-born." Jesus Christ, then, being the first-born, it would be the equivalent of saying the "church of Christ." It is styled "house of God," "God’s building," "God’s temple." It is thus called in a collective sense. Further, referring to the different congregations, it is called the "churches of Christ." All of these names are Bible names, and none of them can be questioned nor correctly criticized. But when you put over the door some other name, then you advertise, as it occurs to me personally, a lack of due regard for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I can look back to-night more than twenty years and remember, I think very distinctly, the two statements that first attracted my attention toward Christianity. I heard a man preach, whose name would be very familiar to you all, who said this: "We propose to call Bible things by Bible names." As a schoolboy, I thought that sounded sensible. If it is a Bible institution, if it is a Bible thing, God has named it, then let’s continue to call Bible things by Bible names. The second statement that followed (and I can now see the man standing and announcing it) was this: "We propose to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where God’s word is silent. We propose to regard the authority of the Bible, and not to presume to go by its silence." I owe my first listening ear and receptive heart toward Christianity, so far as I recall, unto the emphasis and the force and weight of those two statements. For twenty years, therefore, I have been trying to tell that same thing, and have never found reason or right to change the announcement or the policy embraced therein.

"Has God an institution on earth?" "Yes, sir." "What is the name of it?" He didn’t call it the "Masonic Fraternity," with all due respect unto that body; he didn’t style it the "Democratic Organization," with equal deference to the feelings of all Democrats. What did God call it? He called it the "church of the first-born." He called it the "household of faith." He called it the "church of Christ," if you please. "On this rock I will build my church." He called it the "church of God." I am perfectly content to strike hands with any man that will say: "On that we stand together. We will not let some name unknown to the Bible come in to divide us."

Well, with reference to the individual. There are different names for them. Sometimes the Bible calls the individuals "saints ;" sometimes, "disciples ;" sometimes, "brethren;" sometimes, "Christians." It just depends on what particular phase you want to place the emphasis as to what we should be called. If you have reference to the fact that we are students and pupils, then it is right to speak of the members as "disciples," because that is what the word means; if you have reference to the purity and the sanctity thereof, then we ought to speak of each other as "saints." If you refer to our respective relationships one with another, then what? It is right to speak of us then as "brethren." But if you allude to our relationship unto our federal head, unto "Him from whom all blessings flow," then our proper name is "Christian"—a name which carries with it the honor and respect unto Him who is the Head over the body of which we are a part. But I stated to you at the beginning that I had never joined a church in all my life. I stated to you, further, that I have never asked other people to do so, and only in an accommodative manner do I ever talk about joining the church. Are you wondering how on earth that I came to be a member of it? Is it a fact that a man cannot be a member of a thing unless he joins it? Well, I think not. Bear with me just a minute. I am a member of the Dr. J. B. Hardeman family, of McNairy County, Tenn. I have been a member of it all these years. Nobody that knows my parents and that knows me, by virtue of the striking relationship and distinction, has ever questioned or challenged a statement of that kind. Wherever I go and say that I am a member of the Hardeman family, I have never found the man yet so unkind as to even question it or raise a doubt. Well, some one says: "I accept that as a fact." All right. I am a member of it. Let me tell you: I have been a member of that family for more than forty years. God being my helper, I speak the truth; I never did join it in my life. Now, there is one thing that never did happen at my father’s home. There were eight of us children. He never did pretend or presume to open the doors of the Hardeman family and let us children join. Maybe he should have done it, but he didn’t.

Now, I give the question back to you, to all of you—the Smiths and the Joneses: Did you ever join the Smith family? You say: "No, I don't believe I did." "Are you a member of it ?" "Yes, sir." "How came you to be a member ?"

Now, friends, the beauty about all of that is its absolute simplicity. Why, listen: I was born into the Hardeman family, and did not have to join it; and the very minute, the very second, the very ten-thousandth part of a second that I opened my eyes in physical birth, I was then and there a member of the Hardeman family, by virtue of the fact that I was born into it. Well, just the same way I claim to be a member of Christ's family. I claim to be a member of the household of faith, of the church of the first-born. I didn't join it. "How came you in it?" I was born into it. I was born of water and of the Spirit, as the Savior said; and the very ten-thousandth part of a d that I opened my eyes, having been born again—born from above, born of water and of the Spirit—that minute I was a member of the church of Christ, the pillar and ground of the truth. And with that, God would have me rest my case. No joining about it. It is a man's duty to hear the gospel and believe the gospel, to repent of all sins and publicly confess his faith in the Christ, to be buried with the Lord in baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that will make any man on earth that does it with an open, honest, earnest heart—it will make him a child of God and a member of the New Testament church at the very same time. I come, therefore, again, my time having been exhausted, to ask: Do you want to stand to-night a member of God's family? Do you want to be initiated into that splendid institution over which Christ reigns as head and has authority? If so, I beg of you that while we sing the song you submit to Heaven's terms, be born again, and God will translate you out of darkness into the light of the kingdom of God and of Christ. Let us together stand and sing, and won't you come while the opportunity is afforded?

1.17 - RECONCILIATION

RECONCILIATION

I want to discuss with you to-night the subject of reconciliation, a basis for which is found in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, where Paul said: "And all things are of God, who bath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and bath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In the announcement of a theme like this, I am sure that all present appreciate the importance of our being reconciled unto God. Before I further pass, I want to determine the definition or meaning of the term thus proposed.

"Reconciliation" is a compound word, composed of the little prefix R-E, "re," which simply means "again." The latter part of it, "conciliation," is from the word that means "to make friends." Hence, the word "reconciliation" means nothing more nor less than the making of friends again. But that implies, of course, that once the parties under consideration were united; that they were harmonious and in perfect accord; that something or other has come to pass that has alienated and separated them the one from the other. This being true, reconciliation may be possible and in order.

I want to try to illustrate that thought by two men who, perhaps, have formerly been friends and neighbors, who have walked together harmoniously along the pathway of life; but in the course of time something or other has come to pass, and friendship no longer exists, such as hitherto bound them together. They have been broken asunder, and they have become enemies and march in different directions the one from the other. Maybe the two gentlemen I thus presented are of equal standing with reference to their may be that one of them is quite the superior of the other; or it is possible that one of them is absolutely innocent of any wrong and the other wholly guilty. Now, instead of going into the courts and having a long-drawn-out lawsuit, sometimes men have coolness enough to decide upon the arbitration of their differences and the settling of the matter outside of the court by means of a mediator, or some one to act as a middleman, unto whom their respective cases may be told and his judgment and decision in the matter be made final.

Now, it is not every person that can serve in the capacity of a mediator. In the first place, if the parties concerned are of equal footing, it is rather easy to find a man suitable for the place; but if one be superior to the other, then the selection becomes more difficult; and if one party is wholly in error and the other innocent, I am not certain but that the task of selecting is even greater still.

So, then, as a matter of fact, there are some requisites and demands that must be characteristic of him who would serve in the capacity thus mentioned. In the first place, I submit to you that the mediator must not be a party to the difference under consideration. In the second place, such a person must be adapted to both parties. He must be able to march up and feel on equal footing

with the superior, and must be able to assimilate himself and stand on a parallel with the character that is the inferior.

Having these requisites, he is still not prepared. Suppose a man thus suggested be a kinsman of one and not related to the other. Let all things else be said of him in his favor, that one fact will disqualify him to act as mediator, for the man to whom he is not related would have a right and a reason to suggest that, however, things may be, by virtue of the fact that he is related to the other party, his verdict will very likely be biased. The demand or requisite No. 3 is that the party stand equal with reference to those of the controversy, equally related, both by blood and by association. But you have all of those requirements first, that he is not a party to the conflict or difference; second, he can approach both parties; third, he is equally related to both of them. There is another thing absolutely necessary for him to have, and that is, he must become acquainted with all of the facts and details that led up to the separation and alienation; for, unless a man know about those things, he is unprepared to render a verdict and give a decision characterized by anything like justice or fairness.

Now, with those things peculiarly true of the mediator, when he honestly and sincerely forms the very best judgment and renders a verdict, it is obligatory upon both parties to accept the same. For either to refuse this is but an insult to the mediator. He can do nothing further but turn away offended because of the fact that he has done his best; and when rejected, there remains nothing else to do but for the parties to fight it out the best they can and take whatever consequences may come. With that simple illustration before you, I want to introduce to you to-night the parties that are connected with this matter of reconciliation—namely, God and man. Thus they stand. It is a case, ladies and gentlemen, of a superior and an inferior. It is a case of an innocent party and a guilty party. It is a case that implies that once they were together, on good terms, associated harmoniously and of one accord; but as time rolled on, for some reason or other, the cords of friendship that hitherto bound them were broken. They are alienated and parted one from the other, and thus the matter stands.

Now, as a matter of fact, there needs to be a mediator— one to stand between and try to bring about a readjustment or reconciliation of the parties thus mentioned. But I submit to you that it is not amiss to ask about the responsibility connected with this situation. Is God to blame for the difference that has come about in the world? What did he do the result of which needs to be reconciled and made right to-night? On the other hand, what has man done? And I think I do not have to argue, but that all of us agree, that the human family, our original federal head, was wholly to blame, in that, with eyes wide open, not deceived, not blinded nor deluded, he deliberately walked across God’s law, knowingly so, and violated Heaven order and Jehovah’s command. And, as a result, in order that the law might be upheld and the dignity thereof preserved, the ties that hitherto bound were now severed. Hence, Isaiah (Isaiah 59:1-2) said: "Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Therefore the responsibility rests upon man; and I just submit to you that if there be a reconciliation brought about, it must be on the part of the character that is responsible for the separation. That leads me to make emphatic now and stress as much as I possibly can the idea

that the direction of reconciliation, that the trend and movement thereof, must be a movement on the part of man toward God, and not on the part of God toward man. Let me say to you that there is not a single passage bearing on the subject in all the Bible but that declares that the reconciliation is to be brought about on the part of man unto God, and never God to man. The very text of the evening is suggestive of that. Hear it again: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to-wit, that God was in Christ." What doing? "Reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and bath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

I would not stop to emphasize that but for the fact that there are those who have deliberately written down in their articles of faith, to which numbers of good people have subscribed, doctrines the reverse of that told in Holy Writ. For instance, one very popular statement in the creeds of uninspired men is that Jesus Christ was begotten of God, born of the Virgin Mary, lived upon the earth for about a third of a century, suffered, bled, and died. What for? Answer: "That he might reconcile his Father unto us."

I want to say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that two theories were never more opposite and antagonistic to each other than the statement found in the creeds and that found in the word of God. God says, "Reconcile men to God ;" the creed says: "Reconcile God to man ;" and it is left as a matter for our decision as to which one we want. Now, I never wrote either one of them; and should anybody want to find fault, he need not come to me; but either go to the Bible or the makers of the creeds. One thing I do know is that they are exactly opposite the one from the other; and as for me and mine, I will take what God said and discard the creeds of uninspired men. I cannot afford to do otherwise. Be it remembered, then, that the process of reconciliation is a movement on the part of man toward God. Remember that Jehovah has provided, the Christ has executed, the Holy Spirit has revealed, the church is anxious and inviting, all things are ready," and it depends now wholly upon whether or not man will submit to Heaven’s terms and be reconciled to God.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, not God; we persuade men, not Christ; we persuade men, not the Holy Spirit. Why ? Because God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Man wandered away and man must return, and hence the labor of gospel teachers is to persuade their fellows to be reconciled unto God.

Paul said: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God." But who can serve to-night as a mediator between God and man? Can humanity? Can some man? Well, look at the conditions. Weigh the matter and see. Man cannot serve as a mediator on the ground that he is a party to the difficulty. Can an angel? O. no! On the ground that an angel is not equal to God, and, therefore, cannot approach him on equal footing. An angel cannot descend to the level of man. Hence, that cannot be.

Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:5 : "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Now, I submit to you Jesus the Christ as the one character who proposes to become the mediator between us and Him from whom all blessings must forever flow. Question: Is Jesus Christ suited? Is he adapted? Does he possess the requisites? As stated at the beginning, how does he stand with reference to both parties? He is not a party to the difficulty, neither on Heaven’s side nor on man’s side. Thus he fulfills one of the requisites demanded.

How does Christ stand with reference to the possibility of approach unto both parties? In Php 2:5-9, Paul says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." As Jesus Christ is the equal of God, it would be no conceit whatsoever for him to stand on a perfect parallel and approach the Father, commensurate with Divine authority. On the other hand, Jesus Christ came down, assimilated himself with men to be on an equal footing with those who travel over the bosom of the earth.

What about kinship? Now, if Jesus Christ were wholly Divine, I think the world could well say: "Lord, although you may be honest, upright, and sincere, yet when you come to the plane of eternal judgment and there render the account, by virtue of the fact that you are akin to God and not akin to man, your judgment will be biased and necessarily prejudiced." Hence, I can appreciate the fact that Jesus Christ is not wholly Divine. On the other hand, if he were wholly human, I think it not amiss to suggest that Jehovah might not have justice rendered as a result of that relationship; and, therefore, Jesus Christ stands that unique character in the midst of the ages. He reaches up with one hand and says, "God is my Father;" and with the other he reaches down to man and says, "humanity is my mother." Hence, as before stated, he is related both to God and man. Why? That he might be the proper mediator. My friends, have you ever thought why it is that Jesus Christ is going to be the Judge of the world? Why not God judge humanity? The Bible says Christ will do it. "God Almighty has authorized the Son to execute judgment." Why? Because he is the Son of man; and, therefore, humanity will not be defeated by any bias or prejudice or lack of sympathy on the eternal day of judgment.

If Christ had always lived and associated with heavenly things and dwelt in the Father’s house of many mansions and then finally judged you and me, I would surely have this kind of a plea to make. I would say: "Lord, I appreciate your candor and your fairness; but I just want to tell you before you pronounce the sentence, ’Depart,’ that if you had had to live in yonder old world as I did and mix and mingle with all the allurements, attractions, and influences of earth, and had been subject to the trials and tribulations I have, I know you would have more mercy, more love, more grace, and more favor to grant unto me."

Jesus Christ said: "O. no! Before I came to be the mediator of the world, I lived, it is true, with God. I tasted the beauties, the grandeurs, and the glories of the eternal home. But that is not all. I bade all that good-by. I came to the earth to be in touch with all the infirmities of man. I know what it means to be tired, hungry, and weary. I know what it means to be persecuted and at last condemned and made to die a felon’s death. I understand all that. I have lived with you; therefore judgment at the last shall be tempered with mercy, because I am acquainted with the trials and tribulations and difficulties of mankind." Not only that; Jesus Christ knows all about the things that have transpired. Back in the very beginning of time, when God spoke the worlds into existence and set all in motion, Jesus Christ was present. In the beginning was the Word, and by him were all things created; and when finally Jehovah said, "Let us make man," Jesus the Christ was there. He saw the first pair pluck the forbidden fruit; he saw God’s law transgressed, and saw them march out condemned and doomed unto darkness and despair. He followed their path forty

centuries, while the Father was developing, evolving, unfolding a system of redemption, until by and by the climax was reached in the coming of Christ as the Son of God. He is, therefore, qualified to execute that judgment. But between man and God three things stand—first, the law; second, sin; and third, death. Jesus Christ came, the very embodiment of perfection itself, not as a violator of the law, but as a fulfiller; and when on the tree of the cross he expired, he bowed his head and said: "It is finished."

Paul says in Colossians 2:14 : "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." In its stead he has given unto us a better covenant, founded upon better promises. Hence, obstacle No. 1 has been removed.

There had been thousands of lambs offered upon Jewish altars, but they only atoned for sins temporarily. Jesus Christ, as the great sin offering of the world, was crucified outside the city's wall, and upon the cross he gave his life as a ransom for the sons and daughters of men; and thus sin is made possible to be atoned for by the wonderful death and the efficacious offering of the blood of the Son of God. Hence, obstacle No. 2 is overcome. But there is a third. Death stands between man and God. All of us are on our rapid march to the charnel house of death itself; and before friendship can be renewed, before the possibility of a reunion can be had, the last enmity between God and man must be overcome. When the Christ died, when he was buried in the new tomb and there lay for three days and three nights, and when on the morning of the third day Jesus our Lord, in the final triumphant victory, burst the bars of the tomb and came forth, he overcame death by demonstrating the possibility of a resurrection therefrom. Hence, he is ready to wend his way back to glory, to be seated at the right hand of God and sway the scepter of authority over all the united forces of earth as mediator between God and man. But you ask: "What effect did Christ's death, as the mediator, have upon the world?" There are different answers to that. Universalists and Calvinists suggest that it had all effect; that there is nothing else to be done; that "Jesus paid it all," and man is wholly passive and inactive with reference to the matter. On the other hand, I think it safe to say that the Unitarians would declare that it had no effect; that the death of the man called "Christ," said to be Divine as well as human, was of no effect whatever. The truth, as in most cases, lies, perhaps, between the two. God's will must be upheld, heaven's authority must be respected, the dignity of the sovereign government of God Almighty must be preserved; and yet mercy must be shown. When Jesus Christ died on the tree of the cross, God's law was respected, in that atonement was made for violation and for transgression thereof. At the same time there was mercy extended, needing only to be appropriated by every son and daughter of Adam's lost and dying race.

I have read the story of old Zaleucus, king of the Locrians, who lived about 500 years B.C. His government was severe, but just. In one of his decrees he ordered that any man in his sovereign kingdom who was guilty of adultery, should be punished by the loss of both eyes. That was an iron decree that went forth from what was considered a hard-hearted old king. Strange to say that, according to history, his own son was the first one to violate it and to subject himself to the penalty. Question: What, my friends, is the king to do? There stand the law and the authority and the responsibility. On the other hand, there stands the father, whose son is guilty. After much reflection, perhaps, history suggests this was the course pursued by the father: In order to maintain the authority of the law and at the same time to show a father's mercy and lenity, he

ordered that one of the eyes of the boy be plucked out, and then said: "Come and take one of mine." Thus the demands of the law were satisfied, and at the same time the love of a father was demonstrated. Then it was that Mercy and Truth met together and Righteousness and Peace embraced each other in the sublimity of the thought that the majesty of the government is maintained and his own character magnified in the eyes of his subjects.

God’s law must be respected. At the same time mercy and love are accorded and extended unto men, as shown in the gospel plan of salvation. Hence, Christ Jesus, our Lord, died the death of the cross, shed the last drop of blood in his body, that he might execute judgment upon the earth, touched and tendered, if you please, by the feelings and passions and weaknesses of mortal man. He comes at last to announce the terms of reconciliation and the final decision. What is the verdict from Him who is the mediator? Turning unto man, if I may thus picture it, he says: "Sir, as the mediator between you and God, I suggest this: That you believe in Him whom God had the right to select [because the innocent party thus has the preference]; that you repent of all your sins; that you be buried in the name of the sacred Three upon the confession of that faith. Now, sir, that is my decision. It is my honest verdict." Then he says to God: "You should forgive their sins, graciously grant unto them the Holy Spirit, and extend unto them the hope of eternal blessedness." God says: "Mediator, that is satisfactory to me. I will be glad thus to do. I will forgive their sins. I will grant unto them the Holy Spirit. I will give unto them the hope of everlasting bliss and all the glories of the eternal home beyond the sunset’s radiant glow." My friends, it is left wholly with you and with me as to whether or not we accept the Lord’s terms. If we do, we strike hands with God in Jesus Christ and there become reconciled unto him. If we will not, Christ can but turn away and say: "Sirs, that is my verdict, my decision; and if you refuse, you must subject yourselves unto the consequences that are certain to follow." So I come at the close again to-night, begging you in Christ’s stead, praying unto you to be reconciled unto God.

Accept the verdict and the terms laid down by the mediator, Christ Jesus our Lord, and God will stand upon his promises, for he is faithful; and if our part is faithfully carried out, he will love us and lead us and at last take us home to glory.

Now, while we stand and sing, will you not come?

1.18 - THE TERROR OF THE LORD

THE TERROR OF THE LORD

This, ladies and gentlemen, is an exceedingly fine audience on this, the third Saturday night of our meeting; and before I attempt to address you I want to make acknowledgment of my genuine appreciation for your having come. One of the most encouraging things at all is to see manifested on the part of intelligent men and women that disposition to hear, plainly put, what is conceived to be, at least by an honest heart, the word of God.

I want to talk to you quietly, if I may be able, from 1 Corinthians 5:11, where Paul said: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

I am quite certain that there is something wrong somewhere in our conception or consideration of those things that really are sacred, solemn, and serious. There are too many people in the world intelligent about all other matters, but are still indifferent toward Christianity. Somehow or other, the preachers of the country have not impressed upon humanity the solemnity of passing into the presence of the Lord. I do not know but that we may have a misconception, very largely, of Jehovah. Perhaps our indifference, our lack of response to the gospel call, our failure to blend ourselves in harmony with God’s will, is due to the fact that we overestimate God’s love, his goodness, and his mercy.

I know that, as a matter of fact, you can take too much for granted, you can extend your privileges too far on account of the fact that you misjudge the limitations of the other party’s extension of goodness and mercy; but in making that statement I would not have anybody think that I want to narrow, limit, or make finite either the love, mercy, or goodness of Jehovah.

I know that the Bible in John 3:16-17 says: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

I know that we read in the Bible that "God is love," and that we magnify the kindly attributes of Jehovah. Do you suppose that some people think that because of God’s matchless and wonderful love he will overlook our indifference, our simplemindedness, and just somehow or other, prompted by love Divine, in spite of our disobedience, will at last bear us home to glory and give us a blissful crown at his right hand ?

Perhaps you might rely too much upon that one attribute and characteristic. I have read in Holy Writ quite a bit of the mercy of God, and I know that he is a merciful character; that one of the paramount attributes of his nature is that of mercy, favor, and grace unto the children of men. Maybe, however, that in my unconcern and failure to respond to duty’s demand I am blind and deluded by the idea that out of God’s mercy, in spite of our failure to obey him, God will take me home at last. I may speak too much and rely too strongly upon God’s mercy, love, and goodness.

I remember that David said (and we ought to learn this passage) in Psalms 103:17-18 : "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting [note now] upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

Now, God's mercy "is from everlasting to everlasting," but "upon them that fear him"—not upon any others, but "upon them that fear him"—"and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

I want to say to you, my friends, to-night, that any character that can love can also hate. Any character that has the attribute of mercy also must have the antithetic quality and characteristic of vengeance, wrath, and anger. While you are relying upon God's goodness, mercy, and love, don't forget that God hates some things, that God's anger may be kindled, that God's wrath may be provoked; and hence Paul, in contemplation of the fact, said in our text: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord." Paul on various occasions emphasizes other attributes, but he said: "Gentlemen, I know God's terror as well as God's love. I know God's anger as well as his mercy. I know God's wrath as well as his goodness."

Now, when you come to balance the whole proposition, I want to say to you that the man that will walk the golden streets of that celestial city is not only the one that is the beneficiary of God's love, goodness, and mercy, but he is the one also that with love obeyed God's will, thereby enabling Jehovah to uphold the law of high Heaven and to command respect for the highest authority known to mortal man. My friends, there are two books in the world of which Jehovah is the equal author—the book of nature and the book styled the "Bible," or "Revelation." In both of these opposite traits of divinity have been pictured. Where is the man so blind that cannot look out upon the natural world and see the evidences of God's goodness on every hand? Why, the earth out of which we came and from which we get our support is kind and good to mortal man. I look beyond the realm thereof and unto the bending blue of heaven's expanse and recognize that the worlds that float about to-night are but the handiwork of highest heaven evidencing God's goodness to mankind. I look upon the surface of Mother Earth and see it at this time of the year clad in its velvet carpet of green. I have watched even to-day the budding and bursting forth of the fruitage of the earth, the beautiful, sweet-scented flowers, and the atmosphere made vocal with the voice of birds. What for? To brighten and cheer humanity on their rapid march from time to eternity. I have looked out upon the splendid hillsides of this most beautiful section of our State and watched the cattle grazing upon the blue grass there. I have watched the sheep likewise feasting upon the goodness of God. In digging down beneath the surface of Mother Earth we find an unlimited supply of mineral wealth and other resources that may be used for the benefit of mankind. All these things are evidences of God's goodness as revealed in the book of nature. I have seen men to-day turning up the surface of Mother Earth, plowing to make it ready for the seed to be put into the bosom thereof, and by and by the grain shall be cast; and then the ripened fruit will be ours upon which to feast during the coming fall and cold, bleak days of next winter. Wonderful world in which we live, evidences of God's goodness on every hand ! And yet I must not depend altogether on that.

I have seen, in passing by, some storm houses some places of refuge. Why, the man that built those was not ignorant of the phenomena of nature. He not only recognized that God in the natural

world is a character of goodness and mercy, but there are evidences of his terror likewise about us. I have read of the old cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum that were buried by a great volcanic eruption. I have read of the great earthquakes which have sunk beneath the surface of the earth men and women, boys and girls, infants and sucklings—all. I have read of the terrific floods that have rushed down and baptized entire cities and swept them from the face of the earth. I have heard the thunder's roar and have seen the lightning's flash uproot mighty trees and rend into splinters the giants and monarchs of the forest. What about all of it? It is but the evidence of God's terror as turned loose in the natural world.

I can appreciate the sunshine and the showers, but am not unmindful of the gathering storm and the oncoming cyclone, the rapid approach of the terrible hurricane that is likely to sweep us away unless we are able to hold ourselves safely behind the sheltering rock. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord."

Well, in the Bible, God's other book, I learn of his wonderful goodness. No man can read the story of the creation but that he is filled with appreciation and genuine gratitude because of the fact that God has made such a beautiful world, that he decorated and adorned it with a master's touch. Finally, from the very dust of the earth man was created and made to bear the impress of divinity upon his brow and the very stamp of God's image upon his heart. For him who was thus honored Jehovah said, "I will make for thee a helpmeet for life;" and then the fitting climax of handiwork—"a radiant gem, a jewel rare," the brightest, fairest, dearest and best—was brought into existence for the comfort, happiness, and joy of man. What about all that? It was God's wonderful goodness unto humanity, and throughout the sixty centuries of history there are evidences on every hand of the extended favors and continued mercies granted and proposed for our acceptance. But the greatest exhibition of the love of Heaven was manifested, not through the Old Testament regime, not by the sacrifices on Jewish altars, not by the offering of he lambs and bullocks and heifers that characterized their service, but in the giving of Him who was to be the great sacrifice of the world. The Son of God left the realms of bliss above and came to earth to suffer, sorrow, and sigh. He came to teach the way of life and to be an example in whose footsteps all should follow. All this is an exhibition of the mighty love and mercy of God. At last, his work on earth being finished, he yielded to the demands of a bloodthirsty mob and was crucified upon that rugged cross for the salvation of the race. He was buried in a borrowed tomb, but by the power of Jehovah Divine he burst its bars and came forth on the third morning, thus gaining the victory triumphant over the powers of the Hadean world. He brought life and immortality to light. When the facts of the gospel had come to pass and the great commission was announced, he sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth; and thus again his goodness, mercy, and love were manifested to all the world.

Paul, the peerless apostle, would not minimize that. He would not have you depend less upon God's goodness, upon his love, and upon his mercy; yet in the text to-night Paul said: "Brethren, I know the terror of the Lord. I know God's vengeance. I am acquainted with his wrath and with the fact that his anger may be kindled. In view of God's terror, wrath, and vengeance, I persuade my fellows. I am not pleading with God or Jehovah. I am not persuading Christ. I am not persuading the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit hath revealed in completeness the scheme of redemption. Instead of all that, I persuade men." Do you think that Paul was persuading in his own behalf? Do you think his pleadings indicated his inferiority? Was it for lack of something else to do? Was such action on

his part a recognition of his inability to measure arms with any other man of his day? Certainly, certainly not. He was without a peer in intellect and in education, in birth and possibilities. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he bath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Notwithstanding all this, Paul knew God’s attributes and Heaven’s characteristics. He, therefore, consecrated and dedicated his life to the persuading of men to be and to become what they ought to be.

Commencing with the very first pair in paradise and continuing on down the stream of human generations, the terror of God is seen on every side. Grandfather Adam disobeyed God’s law, refused to submit to Heaven’s authority, and though he stood created in God’s image as our federal head, God said: "Adam, my terror must be exhibited. In asmuch as you have disobeyed one commandment,,you will have to pass outside of this beautiful paradise." Man must learn respect for order, for law, and for supreme authority. Why? It is for our good and for our ultimate happiness. All and each of- us must learn the lesson of submission, of subjection, and of obedience. When Cain rose up in the heat of passion and slew his brother Abel, a mark of God’s terror and wrath came upon him. A visitation of God’s wrath came upon the antedeluvians because they refused to respect God’s word as spoked through Noah. God demonstrated his terror in that he sent—not the great Johnstown (Pa.) flood, nor that of Galveston, Texas, but he sent a great world-wide flood that swept all beings from the earth in whose nostrils was the breath of life. What was that? It was but an exhibition of the terror of God Almighty. When old Achan laid his hand upon the gold and silver of Jericho, and thus willfully violated the law, God said unto Joshua: "Stone that man. Get rid of him. He must not continue. Israel cannot succeed. Their backs will be turned to the enemy unless you rid yourself of such." The result was that Achan was stoned with stones until he was pronounced dead, as an evidence of God’s terror, vengeance, and wrath. When the Israelites, who carried the sacred ark of the covenant to engage with the Philistines in battle, met with defeat because of the lack of faith in God, the Philistines wrested the ark and carried it down toward the seacoast unto Ashdod. As a result, God’s wrath fell upon the Philistines, and they became anxious to get rid of this holy article found in their midst. They made a new cart on which to move it. This was a thing unknown for such a purpose. They tied to this cart two kine; and when all was ready, they started, lowing as they passed along down the way, and at last they came to the town of Beth-shemesh. The Israelites took charge of the ark of God and offered the kine for a sacrifice. David, being king of the nation, called a conference of the leaders thereof, and said: "Sirs, shall we send down now for the ark, or shall we not?" And with one voice they all said: "Send and fetch it." Now watch. David surely understood what God’s law was regarding the handling of the ark; but, not content to do what God had told him, not satisfied with remaining faithful and loyal unto the old book, David said: "These Philistines have gotten up a pretty good

scheme. Instead of carrying the ark on the poles, on the shoulders of the Israelites, the Philistines have showed me a new plan." So he likewise made him a cart, hitched oxen thereto, and told his two nephews, Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab: "Go down to the house of Abinadab, and there bring the ark up on this cart." As they came on the way, in disobedience every step to the will and to the word of God, what happened ? They had come to Nachon's threshing floor, and the Bible says one of the oxen stumbled and the cart shook. Uzzah put forth his hand to stay the ark, but because he did so the record says that God slew him. He died by the ark as a testimony to passers-by that every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward.

Then what? David was wonderfully disturbed. There has been a breach made upon Uzzah. So the ark was turned aside in the house of Obed-edom, and there it stayed for three months. After coming to himself and seeing the folly of man's wisdom and ways, he said: "Brethren, I understand why God killed my nephew. It was because we did not bring the ark as he had directed. I know now what to do." Well, what is it, David? "Let's just cut loose from man-made machinery and quit trying to pattern after the ungodly Philistines. You Levites go and bring the ark on your shoulders, as the Lord has said. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for we sought him not after the due order." And the record says that David got busy to do so after the due order. My friends, it is a dangerous proposition to vary from the old landmarks. You may put it down as "old fogy;" you may say it is "antiquated;" you may call it a "back number" all you please; but hear it: when the everlasting terror, vengeance, and wrath of God Almighty shall come to pass, I have an idea that those only will stand accepted in God's presence who have stuck to the old landmarks and followed in due order. When a breach is made upon us, some one will say: "It is because we patterned after the Philistines. We have tried to have us a cart on which to carry the ark instead of carrying it as God directed." The "pole fashion" may be out of date, but our hope of reaching heaven at last depends upon it.

It is not in man that lives and that moves to direct his own steps. I am traveling toward that city. I am but a stranger and a pilgrim upon the earth. I have never been over the way. It is not mine to outline it. I trust that evermore I shall have that spirit of humility and submission to our Lord to say: "Speak, I will hear; command, I will obey." I propose not to be wise above that "which is written," for I know God's terror, God's wrath, and God's vengeance unto the children of men. But I call your attention to this fact: Just before Paul made the statement of our text to-night he had this to say in 2 Corinthians 5:10 : "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

I have heard the story that Daniel Webster was once asked while a member of the United States Senate: "Mr. Webster, what is the most solemn, sacred, serious thought that you have ever entertained?" With just a moment's reflection, Mr. Webster said, in substance: "The most serious proposition that ever challenged my attention is the thought that I must appear before the God of my being and give an account for the deeds that I do while in the body, whether they be good or bad."

Friends, have you treated this matter lightly, or have you really studied the proposition ? Are you passing through life like a bubble, in frivolity, in fun, and in foolishness? Are you upon the surface, lightly tripping away, headed for eternity unprepared? Or have you halted and seriously

considered whither you are going?

Paul says: "I know that men must give an account. I know God’s terror. And to keep my fellows from being subjected unto the consequences of a disobedient career, I persuade them all of my days."

I have called your attention to that wonderfully varied, checkered, and dangerous career through which the apostle passed—the trials that he withstood, the journeys that he made, and the difficulties that beset him in his extended journeys into the foreign land. He carried the gospel of salvation, the tidings of joy, and the beacon light of God to guide the footsteps of his fellows unto the halcyon fields of eternal bliss. As he returned from one of these eventful tours, he said to his brethren at Ephesus: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. . . . I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Why, Paul? "I know the terror of the Lord. I know God’s attributes. I know Heaven’s vengeance. I know that God will recompense. I know that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for God will judge his people; and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where O. where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" But Paul said: "Brethren, I persuade men." To what intent? I answer that by a concrete example. When he stood in the presence of King Agrippa, presumably to make a speech in his own behalf, he forgot himself and his own interests. He rehearsed his own conversion and turned to the preaching of Jesus Christ to a descendant of old Herod the Great. In the final climax of this address I learn what Paul persuaded men to do when he said: "King Agrippa, believes" thou the prophets? I know that thou believes"." And the old king, trembling, said: "Paul, almost thou persuades" me to be a Christian."

What was Paul persuading men to do? Not to vote for him nor to advance his personal interests; but he was spending his time in persuading men to become and to be Christians. And I think it honorable to-night, I rather magnify my opportunity, to follow in the steps of this matchless man of God. He persuaded men to become Christians—not to pretend nor appear, but to be. There is a difference, friends, between appearing and being. Almost thou hast persuaded me to be a genuine, a real, and a true Christian.

I would to God to-night that all those who love to wear his name and who love to sit under the sound of the glad gospel of Christ were really Christians—not just simply "big-meeting folks," not simply Christians while the fever is on and the excitement up, but every day in the year— on Monday, when there is no preaching, as well as on Sunday when the multitude is assembled and the gospel proclaimed. There are too many people all over the country that are professors only. When the king said, "Almost thou persuades" me to be a Christian," Paul replied: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." My friends, that is the philosophy and that is the principle. Why? That the world may escape the terror and the vengeance of Jehovah.

We are rushing toward the judgment. After a while the rains will come, the floods will descend, and the winds will blow and beat upon our tabernacle. I wonder if it will stand.

"Hearing and doing, we build on the rock; Hearing alone, we build on the sand.

Both will be tried by the storm and the flood. Only the rock the trials will stand."

Now, having talked long enough this Saturday night, I am glad to extend you the gospel call again. I appeal to you to-night, my friends, not only to appreciate God's love and mercy, and goodness, but likewise respect his wrath, his anger, and his terror. Though God's mercy is extended, his dignity and authority must be upheld and his law and order respected.

Hence, I am saved to-night, if saved at all, by the mercy of God, and at the same time by respect for his word and reverence for his truth.

If you would enjoy the goodness and mercy of God and escape his terror, you must yield in submission to his will. All who are willing to do so are invited to come.

1.19 - REFORMERS AND RESTORERS

REFORMERS AND RESTORERS

I think, ladies and gentlemen, that I have never seen a finer interest displayed on the part of the public to hear the truth, or at least what I believe to be the truth, than you have manifested by your presence to-night, especially in view of the fact that it is raining and storming; and your having come even through the rain makes me regret very much that our services are so rapidly drawing to a close.

I want to say that I have especially appreciated your presence, and, above that, the very courteous and inspiring attention that you have given to every effort that I have made. God has, I think, bountifully blessed us all, and unto him be all the praise.

I want to talk to you in a general manner about reformers and restorers along religious lines. Time forbids anything like a detailed account of the history that has characterized the church; and even if I were well prepared thus to present it, I could not do so on an occasion limited as this one necessarily is. All scholars practically of note and merit agree that the day of Pentecost was the birthday of the church of Christ. It was then that the material prepared by John the Baptist was builded together, and thus the nucleus wars formed. Under the guidance of inspiration and by the power of the gospel, believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. It may seem strange to say that in a space of thirty years, the gospel, starting out from Jerusalem under the very simple machinery that characterized its efforts, spread abroad unto earth’s remotest parts, until the apostle declared that the gospel in which the Colossians had been rooted and grounded was preached unto every creature under heaven. He also stated that their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world. Their work began in Jerusalem, and it spread throughout Judea, the immediate country, then to Samaria, then to Galilee, then to Asia Minor, and at last across the Aegean Sea, over sweeping the country of Europe and passing on to earth’s remotest parts. But before the close of the first century the disposition of humanity, in its opposition to submitting to the authority of the word, had begun to manifest itself, and a series of the bitterest sort of persecutions had their origin. Not many centuries had passed until there was formed an ecclesiasticism, the object and purport of which was to direct the religious machinery, not according to the word of God, but according to human intelligence, personal feeling, and opinion. This grew and multiplied until by and by a regular hierarchy was formed upon the earth. Seeking step by step and order by order to weave itself into the political affairs of the world, it finally succeeded in blending the powers of church and state. The Pope became the highest authority on the earth. Second to him was the king or the ruler of the country. Unto these all powers were granted, and unto these every person was amenable. But during the time that is incorporated in what I have possibly suggested there was begun what is known in history as the "Dark Ages," lasting for a period of about twelve hundred years and bringing the world down to the beginning of the sixteenth century. At this time people began to open their eyes and cast aside delusions under which they had been, and to exercise more thoughtfulness, greater intelligence,

and greater freedom in all matters. This marks the beginning of that period in history that has to do with what we style the Reformation. It is the period of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and others that towered above their fellows, each one having a special line of thought that he wanted to emphasize and get before the world.

Martin Luther, of Saxony, is the acknowledged leader and head of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. When about nineteen years of age, he became a monk in an Augustine convent. Here he found an old Bible, the study of which soon convinced him that the religion of his day was wholly foreign to that taught by the God of heaven. He was led to see the corruption and hypocrisy of those directing religious affairs. and he set himself to the task of bringing a change or reformation along these lines. Menaced by the thunders of Rome, he fearlessly proclaimed what he believed to be the truth in the face of all that men or devils could devise to intimidate and destroy him. In the presence of the Pope and under the maledictions of Rome, he said: "I am free by the grace of God, and bulls neither console nor alarm me. My strength and my consolation are in the place where neither men nor devils can reach them."

Since Christ stood before Pilate, since Peter stood before the Sanhedrin, since Paul stood before Agrippa, one of the greatest moral spectacles which this old earth has ever witnessed was Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms. In the presence of emperors, kings, and potentates—all the power and pomp of civil authorities, reinforced by the ecclesiastical omnipotence of Rome he stood, with the demand made upon him to retract his religion or forfeit his life! His answer will ring down the corridors of time until it mingles with the funeral notes of the last trumpet that proclaims the end of the world: "Since your serene majesty and your high mightiness require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the councils, because it is as clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, . . . I cannot and will not retract; for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience." He concluded by saying: "Here I stand. I can do no otherwise. May God help me! Amen !"

He saw the church in alliance with the state, clad in the robes of earthly splendor, purchased in exchange for her virtue. With a courage all must admire he undertook to reform an institution that had sunk to the lowest depths of corruption and had made merchandise of the salvation of the souls of men.

It was Luther who taught justification by faith in contrast to the cold and ritualistic theory of Rome. It was he who unchained the Bible and tore it loose from the ecclesiastical powers that held it from the people. He gave it back to the world and championed their right to read and learn for themselves God’s will and way. Of such as was he Mr. Whittier has well said:

"Let, then, O God thy servant dare Thy truth in al; its power to tell; Unmask the priestly thieves and tear The Bible from the grasp of hell!"

Following close after Luther came John Calvin, of France, emphasizing as no one had ever done the sovereignty, majesty, and dignity of Jehovah. His platform consisted of five planks, as follows: Predestination, Irresistible Grace, Original Sin, Particular Redemption, and the Perseverance of the Saints. By his power and earnestness he made a profound impression upon the world and

caused his name to be perpetuated as a great reformer. In connection with Luther and Calvin there is another not known especially as a reformer, but rather as the founder of the Church of England. When Henry VIII. came to the throne, he was married to his brother's wife Catherine, of Spain. Unto them several children were born; but all had died in infancy, save one daughter, the "Bloody Mary" of later time. He was lamenting the fact that he had no son to succeed him, when he became attached to Anne Boleyn, the queen's maid of honor. He, therefore, decided to secure a divorce from his wife and marry this girl of nineteen summers. The matter was presented to the cardinal, who at first favored the scheme; but when the final test came, the Pope and the court decided to the contrary. Whereupon the friends of Henry declared him to be the supreme head on earth of the Church of England. In 1533 he married Anne Boleyn; and when the Pope heard of it, he ordered the king to put her away and to take back Catherine. Parliament met the next year and declared Henry VIII. the sole head of the church, and made denial thereof an act of treason.

Thus began the Episcopal Church, which owes its origin to the fact that a man wanted to get rid of his legal wife in order to marry another, both against the law of the land and of God.

Time rolled on. Another century sped by, and the beginning of the eighteenth found the religion of the world cold, formal, and ritualistic.

About this time John Wesley, of illustrious parentage, came prominently into view. Of him it was said: "He breathed into the nostrils of English-speaking Protestantism, and it became a living soul." With three other young men, he formed an organization or a society the object of which was to emphasize purity of heart and a reality of religion. He stirred the sentiments of his hearers and kindled a zeal that spread throughout the land.

Paul encountered the hate of Judaism; Luther, of Romanism; and Wesley met in nearly every form short of death the malice of the Established Church.

Despite the ridicule, contempt, disparagements, and degrading persecutions heaped upon him by the Established Church, of which he was a regularly ordained minister, this grand man forward marched with an unfaltering step to the accomplishment of the great mission he felt God had committed to his hands. So I have presented to you in this general way those who were styled "the reformers" on the pages of history. I would not be guilty of causing any reflection or any kind of jeer or sneer at a man of the type thus outlined and delineated. I bow in recognition of the nobility of purpose and splendid achievement of John Calvin, who announced the supreme sovereignty of God Almighty. All of us ought to join in a hearty "Amen." Martin Luther marched out and unchained the Bible from the pulpit and gave it back to the people and announced a system of justification by the faith of God rather than by cold penance, and the whole world ought to rejoice. When John Wesley, that grand, good man, caught the idea that men must love God and with their hearts must demonstrate the purity of life, that they must put their souls into their religion, he but expressed that which ought to characterize every human heart under the shining stars to-night. But after having said all this, and much more, in commendation and in commemoration of these great reformers, there is not the least reason under heaven why anybody should so become beside himself as to render undue respect, undue homage, and undue adoration unto either. Was John Calvin crucified for us? No. Then leave him as but a man among men. Were you baptized in the name of Martin Luther? Then likewise let him remain in the place that he doubtless would ask and demand for himself. Was John Wesley in any way our Savior? Absolutely not. It was his one

purpose, his very chief objective, try to reform that which refused to be reformed. There are some things that will yield to reformation. There are some men that can be straightened out from their crookedness and corruption and turned into the right channel. There are others that positively and absolutely refuse to be reformed, and the last remedy and resort is to depart and to seek a divorce therefrom.

I say it in all kindness and to the credit of each of these men that, noble as their work was, they started on an impossible task. Those institutions which they endeavored to reform stubbornly and vehemently refused to yield to the efforts made. Therefore, failure characterized the labors of all three of those men, whose motives, intents, and purposes, I doubt not, were as pure as the drifting snow. The opening of the nineteenth century found the religious world still in a state of chaos and confusion. Denominationalism, division, discord, and a partisan, sectarian spirit were visible on every hand. The Christianity of the Bible, characterized by its purity and simplicity, had been lost to the world, and infidelity went about waving its blackest banner and challenging the doctors of the day.

Then appeared upon the scene Thomas Campbell and his illustrious son, Alexander, who, profiting by the experience and failure of the reformers, set about, not to reform anything, but to restore the religion of the apostolic age. They saw that denominations were unknown to the Bible; that creeds were a source of division and infidelity; and that party names were a curse and a hindrance to the fulfillment of our Savior’s prayer. In a "Declaration and an Address" they set forth some general principles on which all who loved God could unite and at the same time no one sacrifice a real matter of faith. Their motto was: "Let us speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent."

They, therefore, proposed to the religious world for all to cut loose from anything and everything not specifically in the Bible and to go back to the beginning, back through the "Dark Ages," and on further until all come to Pentecost and Jerusalem. It was their purpose to plant the Jacob’s staff at the beginning corner and, with the Bible as their guide, to run again the lines outlined by the apostles under the direction of inspiration. Hence, the work of the Campbells was not that of reformation, but of restoration, of the church of the Bible and the religion of our Lord. For me to say to you that they had the right ideal and the proper conception is but to compliment your intelligence and unbiased judgment. They insisted that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom, and that it made no difference whether or not a single crop of Christians had been produced or a church of God established during the centuries past. Of one thing they were certain—viz., that if the same seed, unmixed and unadulterated, were planted in the year 1812 as were in the year 33, they would produce exactly the same kind of a crop as when planted and preached by Peter on Pentecost. If I were sure to-night that I had the same kind of wheat that was raised in our Savior’s day and were to plant it in your county, I would feel absolutely sure that a similar crop would be reaped. Such is God’s principle told over and over in Gen. 1. Therefore, I have never worried over "church succession" or the "apostolic chain." The supreme effort of these restorers was to get all real believers to come together and find out just what God demanded, aside from ecclesiasticism, aside from human opinions, creeds, and speculations. The principle upon which they set to work is outlined by Moses E. Lard, who was a graduate of Bethany College and a companion of Alexander Campbell. He interpreted the work of the Campbells as follows, and I insist that you hear him patiently: "The restoration was to consist in holding precisely and only what is taught in the word of

God, and in founding our practices strictly thereon.... It was determined that the final end to which the restoration should look is a complete return to primitive Christianity, in doctrine, in practice, and in spirit. All of which is concisely expressed in the following decision: To believe precisely what the Scriptures teach, to practice only what they enjoin, and to reject everything else. Hence, the restoration proposed was to be marked, positively, by accepting, as matters of faith, what, and only what, the Holy Scriptures teach; practically, by doing everything and only what they enjoin; and, negatively, by rejecting everything which they do not sanction. . . . Hence, all practices having their origin in tradition, human reason, or expediency are utterly eschewed. Such was the restoration proposed by Mr. Campbell and his brethren." (Lard's Quarterly, 1863.) This is a platform big enough, broad enough, and deep enough for every Christian on earth to occupy and have no occasion to feel that he is making a sacrifice in so doing. The creeds of the land are a curse to the cause of Christ. They ought to be cast aside, not because of prejudice, not that they were not written by honest, earnest, good men, but because we have God's word, which needs no revision, no amendments, no repealings. The creeds of men hinder the progress of Christianity, divide believers in the Lord, and engender a party and sectarian spirit. In the language of the great English evangelist, I can truly say that if I had my way, and all of them were in a pile before me, I would be glad to strike the match and see them light up the heavens in their final destruction and annihilation. I really believe I would be doing that which would advance primitive Christianity in our beloved land. A further statement of the restorers was this: "We propose to the world that in matters that are purely opinions, men shall have the greatest possible liberty: but in matters of faith, there shall be unity. Every man may have his private opinion, but he must hold it in check and keep it to himself; and whenever any man, therefore, undertakes to drive his opinion into the body assembled and let that be the standard, then the purpose and objective shall have been thwarted and turned aside." Oneness was the chief ambition, the end in view; for they realized the force of our Savior's prayer, the last that he ever prayed previous to his crucifixion, when in John 17:20-21 he said:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us." Lord, what for? "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The greatest tool that the devil has obtained is not direct talk against the Bible, but the most effective weapon in the hands of sinners to-night, in the hands of atheists and skeptics, is the fact that people who claim to be religious are divided into parties, sects, denominations, and orders unheard of and absolutely unknown to the book of God.

We are reminded of the story of the old character unto whom the missionaries had gone. First one denominational preacher came, then another, begging the old character to become a Christian and enter into civilization. AFTER all had made their pleas, he, speaking with possibly more wisdom and greater philosophy than they contemplated, finally said: "Gentlemen, I have heard your pleas; I have listened to your stories. Why don't you gentlemen go back to your enlightened America—back into, possibly, Tennessee; maybe to our splendid capital—and you gentlemen agree among yourselves, and then come to me, and I will give more respect to your story." Christ had that in view. In the name of common sense and of high Heaven, do you think that any sensible man is going to believe that God Almighty is back of all the denominationalism and creeds and parties that are all divided and contrary and in opposition the one to the other? That very teaching

is sowing greater seeds of infidelity and doing more destructive work than all the atheists in the entire land. My friends, there are some three or four points on which, if the world could unite, other matters would follow in their respective places. I want to suggest them to you in these terms:

1. Upon the right creed, 2. Upon the proper name, 3. Upon the correct baptism, 4. Upon the right order of worship.

All other matters would hardly be responsible for a be but subsidiary and could divided state. Time forbids the discussion of these matters to which they are entitled, but let me just say this: If this world ever unites upon a creed, it must be the Bible and that alone.

Now, you may take some creed written by man; let its advocates make the finest speech in its behalf, laud its articles, the faith therein, the splendid writings, and the ritualistic form; and when he has done his best, do you think the world is going to accept that? Absolutely not. Positively to the contrary. I might say to you: "Here is a discipline; I could make a fine speech in its behalf; I think good men wrote it; I think honest men were back of it, and it is a fine production." But when I insist upon its acceptance on the part of the people, some man arises and says: "Men uninspired wrote that. I have a confession of faith that was written by just as learned men, just as honest, just as sincere, as those that penned your discipline; and I won't give up mine to accept yours, on the ground that both of them are uninspired." There is no possible union on either of these. But let me walk up with the word of God and say: "Gentlemen, in behalf of unity and oneness, would you have to sacrifice any principle to lay aside your discipline and accept God's word ?" If they were to answer fairly, the reply would be: "No."

Listen: If your discipline contains more than the Bible, it might contain too much; and if it contains less than the Bible, it might contain too little. But if it contains no more nor no less, then it is just like the Bible; and since we don't need two books identical, I beg you, in behalf of union, to give up yours and accept the article that is genuine in itself. That is what the world must do, if ever union is brought about in that line.

Well, again, if this world unites upon a name by which professed followers of the Lord shall be called, it will not be the name "Democrat." Why, you could not possibly get the world to unite on that. Why? It is not in the Bible. God says not one word about it, and no Republican would sacrifice his dear name in order to accept one of no higher authority and no more Divine than is his own.

What will happen if we professed followers of the Lord ever intend to help bring about the union and answer the prayer that our Savior prayed while in the shadow of the cross he bowed himself? It must be a name that all men can wear, that is not narrow, nor limited, nor bound by party lines or ties, or prejudice, in any respect whatever. It shall be the name "Christian," which shows our relation to our federal head—Jesus Christ, the husband, of whom the church is the bride. As a matter of fact, when a woman loves a man as she ought to love him before forsaking all others father and mother, home and all—she ought not to want to wear anybody else's name than his unto whom she pledges her life, her service, her all. Enough love for the husband will wipe out a desire to the contrary. If the world, therefore, is ever united upon a name, we will all have to be just simply Christians, without a prefix, without a suffix, without a handle to it, without something added that is unknown to the word of God.

Upon the question of baptism the world is practically, if not altogether, united. Everybody says and knows that immersion is the genuine article.

What is to be the union? Let us stop trying to substitute. Let us stop trying something that is untaught in the word of the Lord. Let us just simply take things as they are; and since already we all profess to believe in immersion and will accept candidates that have been immersed, why not let that settle the question and say we have decided to get together and strike hands thereon.

Again, when I come to the system of the worship of the restoration movement, let me say that they taught that men and women in the church of God, in the local congregation, ought to meet together on the first day of the week, the object of which was to worship God in spirit and in truth. They said that worship consisted of teaching, of preaching the gospel unto the people, of praying to God, of partaking of the Lord's supper, of the giving of our means according to our abilities, and of singing praises and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. My friends, where is the man or the woman who cannot do that and at the same time not sacrifice any genuine conviction or principle or matter of faith? Is there something in that theory or outline that you believe to be untaught? If so, show it, name it, and we are ready to remove that thing. Is there something else that ought to be incorporated in that list? If so, show it, name it, and I, for one, want it before the morrow's sunlight bursts upon the bosom of the earth. From 1812 on down the line there never had been such a wonderful influence exerted upon the hearts and the lives of men. It swept this country from center to circumference, bidding defiance to all manner of opposition and towering above, like mountain peaks, all the things that challenged or were contrary to the word of God.

I would like to tell you, if time permitted, of the greatest debate ever held in America. When Robert Dale Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, came to our Southern city of New Orleans in January, 1829, he immediately offered defiance to every sacred and holy thing in religion, and challenged the clergy to debate with him the truth of Christianity. This he had done wherever he had gone. His challenge went out to all America. Why didn't some of the very eloquent and learned doctors of the day respond and meet him ? There was a reason. Do you know, my friends, that it was not only true then, but it is true to-night, that any man who is bound by a creed or discipline or a confession of faith other than God's word is not in very good shape to meet an infidel in debate? They knew that Robert Dale Owen would have said: "Sir, if you believe the Bible to be sufficient and complete, why do you have to have your little supplementary book "" I can fancy the humiliation and the force that such a query would bring. The doctors all sought a hiding place and allowed the infidel to stalk triumphantly over the land. But there was a young man over at Bethany, Va., humbly teaching school; and when his Bible was challenged and the faith in which he believed was brought to task, he rose up to champion it. This was none other than Alexander Campbell, who came to the rescue of the Christianity of God's book; and, with a boldness characteristic of the man, he went forth without human aids or human equipment. He was simply clad in the Christian armor, with nothing under heaven but the sword of the Spirit, God's word. He met Mr. Owen in the city of Cincinnati on April 13, 1829, and continued the discussion eight days, at the close of which the banner of Christianity waved in triumphant victory. All the world to-night ought to bow in gratitude and thanksgiving unto his courage, to his scholarship, and to his ability to rout the infidel from the American continent and to save believers from humiliation. And yet sometimes some poor, puny, insignificant soul is so low as to speak belittlingly of Alexander Campbell, when, as a matter of fact, if the least thought that he ever had were put into his critic's cranium, there would be an

explosion like a bombshell.

Let me tell you, I stand, ladies and gentlemen, in defense of old John Calvin; I stand ready to commend Martin Luther, and to uphold the honesty and nobility of purpose of John Wesley; I respect likewise Alexander Campbell. But neither of these men died for me. I was baptized in the name of neither of them. Therefore, I am not a Calvinist nor a Lutheran; I am not a Wesleyan; I am not a Campbellite. This is no disrespect unto those men; but it is because of the fact that there is a name that is above every other name, there is a name that characterizes the Person that was led outside the city's walls and there crucified for my sins and for yours. When I walked down into the waters of baptism, I was not baptized in the name of Campbell, nor of Luther, nor of Wesley; but into the name of the spotless Son of God Divine. I am not married to Calvin, Luther, Wesley, nor Campbell. Therefore, I have no disposition whatever to honor them by wearing their names.

Let the world to-night take its stand upon the Bible as the authority of all religious procedure, under the appellation of a Christian, a member of the body of Christ, over which he reigns as head, and in which God's spirit must forever dwell.

I regret more than I can ever express to you the fact that after this movement of restoration had shaken this entire earth and made men sit up and take notice of the very fine principle, every plank of the platform of which was based upon a "Thus saith the Lord," by and by a very lamentable occurrence transpired, and that was the introduction into the service and worship of a thing untaught in the New Testament Scriptures. In the year 1869, in the city of At. Louis, there was injected into the church an instrument of music. The result was a division in what had been a happy, contented, united brotherhood. Its influence spread throughout the land, and about twenty-five or thirty years ago it struck our own beloved Tennessee. What was the result? The tears, the heartaches, the agonies, the sighs, and the prayers of godly, sainted, devoted people, men and women, have been overridden roughshod; and the result is division, even in the city of Nashville—division among people that ought to stand together.

Let me say to you to-night, as before God I must stand, I would rather be the man that walked out and injected the sword into the body of Christ on the cross than to be responsible for having injected into the spiritual body of Christ that which has torn it asunder. Question: Does the New Testament authorize said practice? Is it according to what the Bible says? Its most devoted and sincerest advocate will not so contend.

I want to say to you, without prolonging the argument, that it was a part of the restoration movement to handle aright and to rightly divide God's word into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Where, then, do you find authority for instruments of music? Not in the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation. "But," says one, "I find it back in the days of David and under the law of Moses."

I want to present to you an argument that I think has some logic in it. I march down the aisle to-night, posing as a Mormon of the old type, believing in polygamy, and I come to the borderland and want to pass over into the church of God. Some good brother says: "No, Mr. Hardeman, you must stop just there." Well, Why? "Because the New Testament does not authorize polygamy." But I say: "My dear sir, I remember that back in the days of David and Solomon and under the permission and toleration of God Almighty, men had a plurality of wives; and upon the authority

and under the example of David, a man after God’s own heart, let me pass in with my outfit." "O." he says, "there is no authority in that! We are not living under the same law." Well, all right; I will go back and come again. I have my dear, precious babe, my own child, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; and I walk down and approach the New Testament church, the church founded on Pentecost, with the babe in my arms, and say: "Brethren, I want to unite with you, and then I want my baby to come likewise." You say: "O. no; hold a while there! The New Testament does not authorize the acceptance of infant membership." And then, with a courage bidding defiance, I say: "Sir, put your finger on the chapter and the verse where God says you must not." And you have to be as silent as a tomb. You say: "We are not going by what the Bible does not say, but by what it does say." I say: "Well, there were babies back in the Old Testament church under the Abrahamic covenant, and in the days of David there were babies in the assembly; let me bring them into the church." But you say: "No." And I try you on another argument. I pass clear over the church, and enter into the new Jerusalem, and call attention to the fact that there are babies in heaven, and that Christ said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And I press that upon you. I say: "Brethren, if they were good enough under the Abrahamic covenant, if they are good enough to be in heaven, why not let me bring them into the church?" Let me say that no man can make one single argument in favor of instrumental music in the church that cannot be made in favor of infant membership. Name it. But some one says: "You are prejudiced against the babies." If you would come to my home, you would find to the contrary.

Well, let’s try again. I walk down and approach the New Testament church with my animal sacrifice, with my incense pot, and I come to the border line and say: "Brethren, I want to come into the church with these." You say: "O. no!" "Well, why?" "God does not demand it." "Well," I say, "hasn’t that been the order? Did not God authorize such in the days of David?" "O. yes; but we are living under a better covenant, founded upon a better promise." My friends, it does seem to me useless, absolutely useless, to continue a line like unto this. According to the demand of every advocate thereof whom I have ever met, their statement is this: "Brother Hardeman, this is a minor thing. It ought not to be made so much of. I can either do it or not do it."

Since I have been in your city I heard a man say that he preached once for two churches—on one Sunday for one that had the instrument, and then the next Sunday for one that didn’t have it; that he held prayer meeting for one that did have it on Wednesday night, and then held prayer meeting for one that didn’t have it on Thursday night. If I felt that way about it and loved the cause of Christ and the unity of God’s people, I would certainly advise its elimination from the service and worship of God.

Now, friends, with absolutely no unkindness, with no spirit of bitterness whatever, let me say that I cannot help but think that if people loved the union of God’s children and the peace of professed followers of the Lamb as they should, they would be willing to lay aside anything not demanded that greater results might come to pass.

If in the city of Nashville the instrument of music, with its attendant matters, could be eliminated, what would be the result? The glad news would sweep over the country unto earth’s remotest points, and such a joyful shout would go up as would push forward the cause of primitive Christianity as nothing else under heaven could. I pray God that he may speed the day when brethren may have enough love for God’s word, respect for the truth, and love for the brethren that

they will not have anything that tends to part the body of Christ. And I say to my brethren who have honored me so wonderfully and who all during my days have given me such fine recognition that, with all gratitude to them, if there is one single thing that they practice and insist upon that is serving to divide the body of Christ and I learn of it, I must say that I am done with them and must seek affiliation elsewhere. But there is another thing that I must mention, because I do not want to prolong this talk hereafter—viz., instead of relying upon the church of God as heaven's own missionary institution, men have become wise above that which is written and they have taken unto themselves human societies and organizations, thereby supplanting the work of the church; and the worst evil is that the thing is founded purely upon dollars and cents. I have the constitution of the "American Christian Missionary Society," and Article No. 3 says this:

"Its membership shall consist of life directors, life members, annual members, delegates from churches of Christ, and delegates from States as follows—viz.: Any member of the church of Christ may become a life director of this society and a member of the general board by the payment of $100 in five annual installments; a life member, by the payment of $50 in five annual installments; or an annual member, by the payment of $5. Any congregation contributing $10 or more shall be entitled to one delegate in the annual meeting of this society for that year, and any State missionary board or society contributing a dividend from its State treasury for the objects of this society shall be entitled to two delegates in the annual meeting of the general society and to one additional delegate for every 5,000 disciples in the State." The Lord Jesus Christ, if here on this earth and in the same financial condition he was in the long ago, could not become a member of that society. Why? He didn't even have enough money to pay his tax, much less to pay the initiation fee.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is wrong. Why ? Because, instead of being founded upon goodness and ability and intelligence and religion, it is based, every single entrance, upon a money consideration. But what else? It proposes to hire the missionaries, to make the trade, to fix their compensation, and to direct their labors. The missionaries are responsible and amenable to this society. Where is the church? What is the prominent thing? A society unknown unto the word of God Divine. I beg of you, my brethren, to remember that the church of God is heaven's missionary institution. Let us not supplant it, but let us work through it, and through it alone. Let us not organize something unknown and unauthorized. Lay these aside, and take out from the service that which professedly and admittedly is not commanded of God; and leave off the human machinery, the overhead expense of which is immense. Then what ? Upon what God says I will strike hands and take a stand to live and die, and fight it out on that line, if it takes all the summers of our existence. By so doing, a happy, prosperous, solid phalanx will march under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel, with the sword of the Spirit as our weapon, until by and by this spiritual wickedness in high places will have to take to the realms of forgetfulness because of the forward march of God's united force. But I have talked longer than I should. Let me ask of this splendid audience tonight, whose patience has been wonderfully extended, are there any present that want to become simply Christians? If so, will you put your hand in the wounded palm of the Savior? Will you accept the Bible, and that alone, as God's word? Will you become a member of the church of the New Testament, live and die under the shadow of Heaven's banner, and finally trust him for the fulfillment of his promise? Let us stand and sing.

1.20 - REFORMERS AND RESTORERS

REFORMERS AND RESTORERS

I think, ladies and gentlemen, that I have never seen a finer interest displayed on the part of the public to hear the truth, or at least what I believe to be the truth, than you have manifested by your presence to-night, especially in view of the fact that it is raining and storming; and your having come even through the rain makes me regret very much that our services are so rapidly drawing to a close.

I want to say that I have especially appreciated your presence, and, above that, the very courteous and inspiring attention that you have given to every effort that I have made. God has, I think, bountifully blessed us all, and unto him be all the praise.

I want to talk to you in a general manner about reformers and restorers along religious lines. Time forbids anything like a detailed account of the history that has characterized the church; and even if I were well prepared thus to present it, I could not do so on an occasion limited as this one necessarily is. All scholars practically of note and merit agree that the day of Pentecost was the birthday of the church of Christ. It was then that the material prepared by John the Baptist was builded together, and thus the nucleus wars formed. Under the guidance of inspiration and by the power of the gospel, believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. It may seem strange to say that in a space of thirty years, the gospel, starting out from Jerusalem under the very simple machinery that characterized its efforts, spread abroad unto earth’s remotest parts, until the apostle declared that the gospel in which the Colossians had been rooted and grounded was preached unto every creature under heaven. He also stated that their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world. Their work began in Jerusalem, and it spread throughout Judea, the immediate country, then to Samaria, then to Galilee, then to Asia Minor, and at last across the Aegean Sea, over sweeping the country of Europe and passing on to earth’s remotest parts. But before the close of the first century the disposition of humanity, in its opposition to submitting to the authority of the word, had begun to manifest itself, and a series of the bitterest sort of persecutions had their origin. Not many centuries had passed until there was formed an ecclesiasticism, the object and purport of which was to direct the religious machinery, not according to the word of God, but according to human intelligence, personal feeling, and opinion. This grew and multiplied until by and by a regular hierarchy was formed upon the earth. Seeking step by step and order by order to weave itself into the political affairs of the world, it finally succeeded in blending the powers of church and state. The Pope became the highest authority on the earth. Second to him was the king or the ruler of the country. Unto these all powers were granted, and unto these every person was amenable. But during the time that is incorporated in what I have possibly suggested there was begun what is known in history as the "Dark Ages," lasting for a period of about twelve hundred years and bringing the world down to the beginning of the sixteenth century. At this time people began to open their eyes and cast aside delusions under which they had been, and to exercise more thoughtfulness, greater intelligence,

and greater freedom in all matters. This marks the beginning of that period in history that has to do with what we style the Reformation. It is the period of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and others that towered above their fellows, each one having a special line of thought that he wanted to emphasize and get before the world.

Martin Luther, of Saxony, is the acknowledged leader and head of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. When about nineteen years of age, he became a monk in an Augustine convent. Here he found an old Bible, the study of which soon convinced him that the religion of his day was wholly foreign to that taught by the God of heaven. He was led to see the corruption and hypocrisy of those directing religious affairs. and he set himself to the task of bringing a change or reformation along these lines. Menaced by the thunders of Rome, he fearlessly proclaimed what he believed to be the truth in the face of all that men or devils could devise to intimidate and destroy him. In the presence of the Pope and under the maledictions of Rome, he said: "I am free by the grace of God, and bulls neither console nor alarm me. My strength and my consolation are in the place where neither men nor devils can reach them."

Since Christ stood before Pilate, since Peter stood before the Sanhedrin, since Paul stood before Agrippa, one of the greatest moral spectacles which this old earth has ever witnessed was Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms. In the presence of emperors, kings, and potentates—all the power and pomp of civil authorities, reinforced by the ecclesiastical omnipotence of Rome he stood, with the demand made upon him to retract his religion or forfeit his life! His answer will ring down the corridors of time until it mingles with the funeral notes of the last trumpet that proclaims the end of the world: "Since your serene majesty and your high mightiness require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the councils, because it is as clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, . . . I cannot and will not retract; for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience." He concluded by saying: "Here I stand. I can do no otherwise. May God help me! Amen !"

He saw the church in alliance with the state, clad in the robes of earthly splendor, purchased in exchange for her virtue. With a courage all must admire he undertook to reform an institution that had sunk to the lowest depths of corruption and had made merchandise of the salvation of the souls of men.

It was Luther who taught justification by faith in contrast to the cold and ritualistic theory of Rome. It was he who unchained the Bible and tore it loose from the ecclesiastical powers that held it from the people. He gave it back to the world and championed their right to read and learn for themselves God’s will and way. Of such as was he Mr. Whittier has well said:

"Let, then, O God thy servant dare Thy truth in all its power to tell; Unmask the priestly thieves and tear The Bible from the grasp of hell!"

Following close after Luther came John Calvin, of France, emphasizing as no one had ever done the sovereignty, majesty, and dignity of Jehovah. His platform consisted of five planks, as follows: Predestination, Irresistible Grace, Original Sin, Particular Redemption, and the Perseverance of the Saints. By his power and earnestness he made a profound impression upon the world and

caused his name to be perpetuated as a great reformer. In connection with Luther and Calvin there is another not known especially as a reformer, but rather as the founder of the Church of England. When Henry VIII. came to the throne, he was married to his brother's wife Catherine, of Spain. Unto them several children were born; but all had died in infancy, save one daughter, the "Bloody Mary" of later time. He was lamenting the fact that he had no son to succeed him, when he became attached to Anne Boleyn, the queen's maid of honor. He, therefore, decided to secure a divorce from his wife and marry this girl of nineteen summers. The matter was presented to the cardinal, who at first favored the scheme; but when the final test came, the Pope and the court decided to the contrary. Whereupon the friends of Henry declared him to be the supreme head on earth of the Church of England. In 1533 he married Anne Boleyn; and when the Pope heard of it, he ordered the king to put her away and to take back Catherine. Parliament met the next year and declared Henry VIII. the sole head of the church, and made denial thereof an act of treason.

Thus began the Episcopal Church, which owes its origin to the fact that a man wanted to get rid of his legal wife in order to marry another, both against the law of the land and of God.

Time rolled on. Another century sped by, and the beginning of the eighteenth found the religion of the world cold, formal, and ritualistic.

About this time John Wesley, of illustrious parentage, came prominently into view. Of him it was said: "He breathed into the nostrils of English-speaking Protestantism, and it became a living soul." With three other young men, he formed an organization or a society the object of which was to emphasize purity of heart and a reality of religion. He stirred the sentiments of his hearers and kindled a zeal that spread throughout the land.

Paul encountered the hate of Judaism; Luther, of Romanism; and Wesley met in nearly every form short of death the malice of the Established Church.

Despite the ridicule, contempt, disparagements, and degrading persecutions heaped upon him by the Established Church, of which he was a regularly ordained minister, this grand man forward marched with an unfaltering step to the accomplishment of the great mission he felt God had committed to his hands. So I have presented to you in this general way those who were styled "the reformers" on the pages of history. I would not be guilty of causing any reflection or any kind of jeer or sneer at a man of the type thus outlined and delineated. I bow in recognition of the nobility of purpose and splendid achievement of John Calvin, who announced the supreme sovereignty of God Almighty. All of us ought to join in a hearty "Amen." Martin Luther marched out and unchained the Bible from the pulpit and gave it back to the people and announced a system of justification by the faith of God rather than by cold penance, and the whole world ought to rejoice. When John Wesley, that grand, good man, caught the idea that men must love God and with their hearts must demonstrate the purity of life, that they must put their souls into their religion, he but expressed that which ought to characterize every human heart under the shining stars to-night. But after having said all this, and much more, in commendation and in commemoration of these great reformers, there is not the least reason under heaven why anybody should so become beside himself as to render undue respect, undue homage, and undue adoration unto either. Was John Calvin crucified for us? No. Then leave him as but a man among men. Were you baptized in the name of Martin Luther? Then likewise let him remain in the place that he doubtless would ask and demand for himself. Was John Wesley in any way our Savior? Absolutely not. It was his one

purpose, his very chief objective, try to reform that which refused to be reformed. There are some things that will yield to reformation. There are some men that can be straightened out from their crookedness and corruption and turned into the right channel. There are others that positively and absolutely refuse to be reformed, and the last remedy and resort is to depart and to seek a divorce therefrom.

I say it in all kindness and to the credit of each of these men that, noble as their work was, they started on an impossible task. Those institutions which they endeavored to reform stubbornly and vehemently refused to yield to the efforts made. Therefore, failure characterized the labors of all three of those men, whose motives, intents, and purposes, I doubt not, were as pure as the drifting snow. The opening of the nineteenth century found the religious world still in a state of chaos and confusion. Denominationalism, division, discord, and a partisan, sectarian spirit were visible on every hand. The Christianity of the Bible, characterized by its purity and simplicity, had been lost to the world, and infidelity went about waving its blackest banner and challenging the doctors of the day.

Then appeared upon the scene Thomas Campbell and his illustrious son, Alexander, who, profiting by the experience and failure of the reformers, set about, not to reform anything, but to restore the religion of the apostolic age. They saw that denominations were unknown to the Bible; that creeds were a source of division and infidelity; and that party names were a curse and a hindrance to the fulfillment of our Savior’s prayer. In a "Declaration and an Address" they set forth some general principles on which all who loved God could unite and at the same time no one sacrifice a real matter of faith. Their motto was: "Let us speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent."

They, therefore, proposed to the religious world for all to cut loose from anything and everything not specifically in the Bible and to go back to the beginning, back through the "Dark Ages," and on further until all come to Pentecost and Jerusalem. It was their purpose to plant the Jacob’s staff at the beginning corner and, with the Bible as their guide, to run again the lines outlined by the apostles under the direction of inspiration. Hence, the work of the Campbells was not that of reformation, but of restoration, of the church of the Bible and the religion of our Lord. For me to say to you that they had the right ideal and the proper conception is but to compliment your intelligence and unbiased judgment. They insisted that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom, and that it made no difference whether or not a single crop of Christians had been produced or a church of God established during the centuries past. Of one thing they were certain—viz., that if the same seed, unmixed and unadulterated, were planted in the year 1812 as were in the year 33, they would produce exactly the same kind of a crop as when planted and preached by Peter on Pentecost. If I were sure to-night that I had the same kind of wheat that was raised in our Savior’s day and were to plant it in your county, I would feel absolutely sure that a similar crop would be reaped. Such is God’s principle told over and over in Gen. 1. Therefore, I have never worried over "church succession" or the "apostolic chain." The supreme effort of these restorers was to get all real believers to come together and find out just what God demanded, aside from ecclesiasticism, aside from human opinions, creeds, and speculations. The principle upon which they set to work is outlined by Moses E. Lard, who was a graduate of Bethany College and a companion of Alexander Campbell. He interpreted the work of the Campbells as follows, and I insist that you hear him patiently: "The restoration was to consist in holding precisely and only what is taught in the word of

God, and in founding our practices strictly thereon.... It was determined that the final end to which the restoration should look is a complete return to primitive Christianity, in doctrine, in practice, and in spirit. All of which is concisely expressed in the following decision: To believe precisely what the Scriptures teach, to practice only what they enjoin, and to reject everything else. Hence, the restoration proposed was to be marked, positively, by accepting, as matters of faith, what, and only what, the Holy Scriptures teach; practically, by doing everything and only what they enjoin; and, negatively, by rejecting everything which they do not sanction. . . . Hence, all practices having their origin in tradition, human reason, or expediency are utterly eschewed. Such was the restoration proposed by Mr. Campbell and his brethren." (Lard's Quarterly, 1863.) This is a platform big enough, broad enough, and deep enough for every Christian on earth to occupy and have no occasion to feel that he is making a sacrifice in so doing. The creeds of the land are a curse to the cause of Christ. They ought to be cast aside, not because of prejudice, not that they were not written by honest, earnest, good men, but because we have God's word, which needs no revision, no amendments, no repealings. The creeds of men hinder the progress of Christianity, divide believers in the Lord, and engender a party and sectarian spirit. In the language of the great English evangelist, I can truly say that if I had my way, and all of them were in a pile before me, I would be glad to strike the match and see them light up the heavens in their final destruction and annihilation. I really believe I would be doing that which would advance primitive Christianity in our beloved land. A further statement of the restorers was this: "We propose to the world that in matters that are purely opinions, men shall have the greatest possible liberty: but in matters of faith, there shall be unity. Every man may have his private opinion, but he must hold it in check and keep it to himself; and whenever any man, therefore, undertakes to drive his opinion into the body assembled and let that be the standard, then the purpose and objective shall have been thwarted and turned aside." Oneness was the chief ambition, the end in view; for they realized the force of our Savior's prayer, the last that he ever prayed previous to his crucifixion, when in John 17:20-21 he said:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us." Lord, what for? "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The greatest tool that the devil has obtained is not direct talk against the Bible, but the most effective weapon in the hands of sinners to-night, in the hands of atheists and skeptics, is the fact that people who claim to be religious are divided into parties, sects, denominations, and orders unheard of and absolutely unknown to the book of God.

We are reminded of the story of the old character unto whom the missionaries had gone. First one denominational preacher came, then another, begging the old character to become a Christian and enter into civilization. AFTER all had made their pleas, he, speaking with possibly more wisdom and greater philosophy than they contemplated, finally said: "Gentlemen, I have heard your pleas; I have listened to your stories. Why don't you gentlemen go back to your enlightened America—back into, possibly, Tennessee; maybe to our splendid capital—and you gentlemen agree among yourselves, and then come to me, and I will give more respect to your story." Christ had that in view. In the name of common sense and of high Heaven, do you think that any sensible man is going to believe that God Almighty is back of all the denominationalism and creeds and parties that are all divided and contrary and in opposition the one to the other? That very teaching

is sowing greater seeds of infidelity and doing more destructive work than all the atheists in the entire land. My friends, there are some three or four points on which, if the world could unite, other matters would follow in their respective places. I want to suggest them to you in these terms:

1. Upon the right creed, 2. Upon the proper name, 3. Upon the correct baptism, 4. Upon the right order of worship.

All other matters would hardly be responsible for a be but subsidiary and could divided state. Time forbids the discussion of these matters to which they are entitled, but let me just say this: If this world ever unites upon a creed, it must be the Bible and that alone.

Now, you may take some creed written by man; let its advocates make the finest speech in its behalf, laud its articles, the faith therein, the splendid writings, and the ritualistic form; and when he has done his best, do you think the world is going to accept that? Absolutely not. Positively to the contrary. I might say to you: "Here is a discipline; I could make a fine speech in its behalf; I think good men wrote it; I think honest men were back of it, and it is a fine production." But when I insist upon its acceptance on the part of the people, some man arises and says: "Men uninspired wrote that. I have a confession of faith that was written by just as learned men, just as honest, just as sincere, as those that penned your discipline; and I won't give up mine to accept yours, on the ground that both of them are uninspired." There is no possible union on either of these. But let me walk up with the word of God and say: "Gentlemen, in behalf of unity and oneness, would you have to sacrifice any principle to lay aside your discipline and accept God's word ?" If they were to answer fairly, the reply would be: "No."

Listen: If your discipline contains more than the Bible, it might contain too much; and if it contains less than the Bible, it might contain too little. But if it contains no more nor no less, then it is just like the Bible; and since we don't need two books identical, I beg you, in behalf of union, to give up yours and accept the article that is genuine in itself. That is what the world must do, if ever union is brought about in that line.

Well, again, if this world unites upon a name by which professed followers of the Lord shall be called, it will not be the name "Democrat." Why, you could not possibly get the world to unite on that. Why? It is not in the Bible. God says not one word about it, and no Republican would sacrifice his dear name in order to accept one of no higher authority and no more Divine than is his own.

What will happen if we professed followers of the Lord ever intend to help bring about the union and answer the prayer that our Savior prayed while in the shadow of the cross he bowed himself? It must be a name that all men can wear, that is not narrow, nor limited, nor bound by party lines or ties, or prejudice, in any respect whatever. It shall be the name "Christian," which shows our relation to our federal head—Jesus Christ, the husband, of whom the church is the bride. As a matter of fact, when a woman loves a man as she ought to love him before forsaking all others father and mother, home and all—she ought not to want to wear anybody else's name than his unto whom she pledges her life, her service, her all. Enough love for the husband will wipe out a desire to the contrary. If the world, therefore, is ever united upon a name, we will all have to be just simply Christians, without a prefix, without a suffix, without a handle to it, without something added that is unknown to the word of God.

Upon the question of baptism the world is practically, if not altogether, united. Everybody says and knows that immersion is the genuine article.

What is to be the union? Let us stop trying to substitute. Let us stop trying something that is untaught in the word of the Lord. Let us just simply take things as they are; and since already we all profess to believe in immersion and will accept candidates that have been immersed, why not let that settle the question and say we have decided to get together and strike hands thereon.

Again, when I come to the system of the worship of the restoration movement, let me say that they taught that men and women in the church of God, in the local congregation, ought to meet together on the first day of the week, the object of which was to worship God in spirit and in truth. They said that worship consisted of teaching, of preaching the gospel unto the people, of praying to God, of partaking of the Lord's supper, of the giving of our means according to our abilities, and of singing praises and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. My friends, where is the man or the woman who cannot do that and at the same time not sacrifice any genuine conviction or principle or matter of faith? Is there something in that theory or outline that you believe to be untaught? If so, show it, name it, and we are ready to remove that thing. Is there something else that ought to be incorporated in that list? If so, show it, name it, and I, for one, want it before the morrow's sunlight bursts upon the bosom of the earth. From 1812 on down the line there never had been such a wonderful influence exerted upon the hearts and the lives of men. It swept this country from center to circumference, bidding defiance to all manner of opposition and towering above, like mountain peaks, all the things that challenged or were contrary to the word of God.

I would like to tell you, if time permitted, of the greatest debate ever held in America. When Robert Dale Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, came to our Southern city of New Orleans in January, 1829, he immediately offered defiance to every sacred and holy thing in religion, and challenged the clergy to debate with him the truth of Christianity. This he had done wherever he had gone. His challenge went out to all America. Why didn't some of the very eloquent and learned doctors of the day respond and meet him ? There was a reason. Do you know, my friends, that it was not only true then, but it is true to-night, that any man who is bound by a creed or discipline or a confession of faith other than God's word is not in very good shape to meet an infidel in debate? They knew that Robert Dale Owen would have said: "Sir, if you believe the Bible to be sufficient and complete, why do you have to have your little supplementary book "" I can fancy the humiliation and the force that such a query would bring. The doctors all sought a hiding place and allowed the infidel to stalk triumphantly over the land. But there was a young man over at Bethany, Va., humbly teaching school; and when his Bible was challenged and the faith in which he believed was brought to task, he rose up to champion it. This was none other than Alexander Campbell, who came to the rescue of the Christianity of God's book; and, with a boldness characteristic of the man, he went forth without human aids or human equipment. He was simply clad in the Christian armor, with nothing under heaven but the sword of the Spirit, God's word. He met Mr. Owen in the city of Cincinnati on April 13, 1829, and continued the discussion eight days, at the close of which the banner of Christianity waved in triumphant victory. All the world to-night ought to bow in gratitude and thanksgiving unto his courage, to his scholarship, and to his ability to rout the infidel from the American continent and to save believers from humiliation. And yet sometimes some poor, puny, insignificant soul is so low as to speak belittlingly of Alexander Campbell, when, as a matter of fact, if the least thought that he ever had were put into his critic's cranium, there would be an

explosion like a bombshell.

Let me tell you, I stand, ladies and gentlemen, in defense of old John Calvin; I stand ready to commend Martin Luther, and to uphold the honesty and nobility of purpose of John Wesley; I respect likewise Alexander Campbell. But neither of these men died for me. I was baptized in the name of neither of them. Therefore, I am not a Calvinist nor a Lutheran; I am not a Wesleyan; I am not a Campbellite. This is no disrespect unto those men; but it is because of the fact that there is a name that is above every other name, there is a name that characterizes the Person that was led outside the city's walls and there crucified for my sins and for yours. When I walked down into the waters of baptism, I was not baptized in the name of Campbell, nor of Luther, nor of Wesley; but into the name of the spotless Son of God Divine. I am not married to Calvin, Luther, Wesley, nor Campbell. Therefore, I have no disposition whatever to honor them by wearing their names.

Let the world to-night take its stand upon the Bible as the authority of all religious procedure, under the appellation of a Christian, a member of the body of Christ, over which he reigns as head, and in which God's spirit must forever dwell.

I regret more than I can ever express to you the fact that after this movement of restoration had shaken this entire earth and made men sit up and take notice of the very fine principle, every plank of the platform of which was based upon a "Thus saith the Lord," by and by a very lamentable occurrence transpired, and that was the introduction into the service and worship of a thing untaught in the New Testament Scriptures. In the year 1869, in the city of At. Louis, there was injected into the church an instrument of music. The result was a division in what had been a happy, contented, united brotherhood. Its influence spread throughout the land, and about twenty-five or thirty years ago it struck our own beloved Tennessee. What was the result? The tears, the heartaches, the agonies, the sighs, and the prayers of godly, sainted, devoted people, men and women, have been overridden roughshod; and the result is division, even in the city of Nashville—division among people that ought to stand together.

Let me say to you to-night, as before God I must stand, I would rather be the man that walked out and injected the sword into the body of Christ on the cross than to be responsible for having injected into the spiritual body of Christ that which has torn it asunder. Question: Does the New Testament authorize said practice? Is it according to what the Bible says? Its most devoted and sincerest advocate will not so contend.

I want to say to you, without prolonging the argument, that it was a part of the restoration movement to handle aright and to rightly divide God's word into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Where, then, do you find authority for instruments of music? Not in the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation. "But," says one, "I find it back in the days of David and under the law of Moses."

I want to present to you an argument that I think has some logic in it. I march down the aisle to-night, posing as a Mormon of the old type, believing in polygamy, and I come to the borderland and want to pass over into the church of God. Some good brother says: "No, Mr. Hardeman, you must stop just there." Well, Why? "Because the New Testament does not authorize polygamy." But I say: "My dear sir, I remember that back in the days of David and Solomon and under the permission and toleration of God Almighty, men had a plurality of wives; and upon the authority

and under the example of David, a man after God’s own heart, let me pass in with my outfit." "O." he says, "there is no authority in that! We are not living under the same law." Well, all right; I will go back and come again. I have my dear, precious babe, my own child, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; and I walk down and approach the New Testament church, the church founded on Pentecost, with the babe in my arms, and say: "Brethren, I want to unite with you, and then I want my baby to come likewise." You say: "O. no; hold a while there! The New Testament does not authorize the acceptance of infant membership." And then, with a courage bidding defiance, I say: "Sir, put your finger on the chapter and the verse where God says you must not." And you have to be as silent as a tomb. You say: "We are not going by what the Bible does not say, but by what it does say." I say: "Well, there were babies back in the Old Testament church under the Abrahamic covenant, and in the days of David there were babies in the assembly; let me bring them into the church." But you say: "No." And I try you on another argument. I pass clear over the church, and enter into the new Jerusalem, and call attention to the fact that there are babies in heaven, and that Christ said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And I press that upon you. I say: "Brethren, if they were good enough under the Abrahamic covenant, if they are good enough to be in heaven, why not let me bring them into the church?" Let me say that no man can make one single argument in favor of instrumental music in the church that cannot be made in favor of infant membership. Name it. But some one says: "You are prejudiced against the babies." If you would come to my home, you would find to the contrary.

Well, let’s try again. I walk down and approach the New Testament church with my animal sacrifice, with my incense pot, and I come to the border line and say: "Brethren, I want to come into the church with these." You say: "O. no!" "Well, why?" "God does not demand it." "Well," I say, "hasn’t that been the order? Did not God authorize such in the days of David?" "O. yes; but we are living under a better covenant, founded upon a better promise." My friends, it does seem to me useless, absolutely useless, to continue a line like unto this. According to the demand of every advocate thereof whom I have ever met, their statement is this: "Brother Hardeman, this is a minor thing. It ought not to be made so much of. I can either do it or not do it."

Since I have been in your city I heard a man say that he preached once for two churches—on one Sunday for one that had the instrument, and then the next Sunday for one that didn’t have it; that he held prayer meeting for one that did have it on Wednesday night, and then held prayer meeting for one that didn’t have it on Thursday night. If I felt that way about it and loved the cause of Christ and the unity of God’s people, I would certainly advise its elimination from the service and worship of God.

Now, friends, with absolutely no unkindness, with no spirit of bitterness whatever, let me say that I cannot help but think that if people loved the union of God’s children and the peace of professed followers of the Lamb as they should, they would be willing to lay aside anything not demanded that greater results might come to pass.

If in the city of Nashville the instrument of music, with its attendant matters, could be eliminated, what would be the result? The glad news would sweep over the country unto earth’s remotest points, and such a joyful shout would go up as would push forward the cause of primitive Christianity as nothing else under heaven could. I pray God that he may speed the day when brethren may have enough love for God’s word, respect for the truth, and love for the brethren that

they will not have anything that tends to part the body of Christ. And I say to my brethren who have honored me so wonderfully and who all during my days have given me such fine recognition that, with all gratitude to them, if there is one single thing that they practice and insist upon that is serving to divide the body of Christ and I learn of it, I must say that I am done with them and must seek affiliation elsewhere. But there is another thing that I must mention, because I do not want to prolong this talk hereafter—viz., instead of relying upon the church of God as heaven's own missionary institution, men have become wise above that which is written and they have taken unto themselves human societies and organizations, thereby supplanting the work of the church; and the worst evil is that the thing is founded purely upon dollars and cents. I have the constitution of the "American Christian Missionary Society," and Article No. 3 says this:

"Its membership shall consist of life directors, life members, annual members, delegates from churches of Christ, and delegates from States as follows—viz.: Any member of the church of Christ may become a life director of this society and a member of the general board by the payment of $100 in five annual installments; a life member, by the payment of $50 in five annual installments; or an annual member, by the payment of $5. Any congregation contributing $10 or more shall be entitled to one delegate in the annual meeting of this society for that year, and any State missionary board or society contributing a dividend from its State treasury for the objects of this society shall be entitled to two delegates in the annual meeting of the general society and to one additional delegate for every 5,000 disciples in the State." The Lord Jesus Christ, if here on this earth and in the same financial condition he was in the long ago, could not become a member of that society. Why? He didn't even have enough money to pay his tax, much less to pay the initiation fee.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is wrong. Why ? Because, instead of being founded upon goodness and ability and intelligence and religion, it is based, every single entrance, upon a money consideration. But what else? It proposes to hire the missionaries, to make the trade, to fix their compensation, and to direct their labors. The missionaries are responsible and amenable to this society. Where is the church? What is the prominent thing? A society unknown unto the word of God Divine. I beg of you, my brethren, to remember that the church of God is heaven's missionary institution. Let us not supplant it, but let us work through it, and through it alone. Let us not organize something unknown and unauthorized. Lay these aside, and take out from the service that which professedly and admittedly is not commanded of God; and leave off the human machinery, the overhead expense of which is immense. Then what ? Upon what God says I will strike hands and take a stand to live and die, and fight it out on that line, if it takes all the summers of our existence. By so doing, a happy, prosperous, solid phalanx will march under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel, with the sword of the Spirit as our weapon, until by and by this spiritual wickedness in high places will have to take to the realms of forgetfulness because of the forward march of God's united force. But I have talked longer than I should. Let me ask of this splendid audience tonight, whose patience has been wonderfully extended, are there any present that want to become simply Christians? If so, will you put your hand in the wounded palm of the Savior? Will you accept the Bible, and that alone, as God's word? Will you become a member of the church of the New Testament, live and die under the shadow of Heaven's banner, and finally trust him for the fulfillment of his promise? Let us stand and sing.

1.21 - THEORY AND PRACTICE

THEORY AND PRACTICE

I must express the very deep and genuine appreciation that I have, not only because of the presence of this magnificent audience, but because of the many things Brother Acuff has stated, some of which were quite a surprise to me; and while it is truly appreciated, the trust shall be cared for in harmony with the thought that prompted the action taken. To those of you in the rear who cannot be seated I pledge my word not to speak at length on this last occasion.

You have listened to Brother Acuff's splendid review of this meeting and to his suggestions so well made, and now I hope to have your usual attention at this last effort on my part.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit." That is from Hebrews 6:1-3. The suggestions here made are applicable to any company or organization. "Let us go on unto perfection." The Bible is a wonderfully simple book in so many respects, especially those parts that have directly to do with man's duty. From first to last, throughout its sacred pages, every phase and condition of life is presented to us under such pictures as carry but two points therewith. In fact, in the final reduction of the complexities of our existence, there are but two things that ought to challenge and interest mankind. I suggest them for your consideration. One is the proper conception, the right theory; the other, the correct practice. It is unfortunate that people launch out into the activities of life, conscious of their responsibility unto God, without having thoroughly studied the principles and the theory of our existence among men. When that has been mastered and thoroughly comprehended, there is but one other duty, and that is to fill our obligations, to carry the correct theory into practice, and thereby discharge the duties binding upon us. Therefore the statement in the old terms, "Theory and practice."

It is not only true of our religion and of our Christianity, but it is true of every occupation and every endeavor of life. If a man be a farmer, first of all, he needs to learn the theory of agriculture; he needs to understand the elements that go to make up the fertility of the soil; he needs to understand the nature of plants and the character of seeds and the processes by which certain things are developed according to natural laws. After that he only needs to rise with the voice of the birds and earnestly till the earth and cultivate the crop to insure a bountiful harvest.

If a man wants to be a lawyer, I have an idea that those same two things are true. First, he needs to become acquainted with the common principles of law and to learn the very foundation upon which the laws of our great republic are based. After that he needs to be able to apply the facts of the law and the principles thereof unto the many and varied conditions of our relationships here.

Just so, my friends, to-night, in the proclamation of the word of God, I need to study God's word; I need to understand, as much as possible, the human family; I need to know the way, the path, the

outline, that has been left by the matchless Leader of humanity. When these things are thoroughly learned, I should preach the word, contend for the faith, and shun not to declare the whole counsel of God.

I say it to you candidly that I came to you as a stranger from the country and from a small town; but to-night, after thirty and nine addresses in your midst, I would be ashamed to go back home unto those with whom I mix and mingle if I were conscious of the fact that in the presence of any living man I had failed to tell the story of the cross. Hence, in living a Christian life, I have tried to insist upon but two things that you understand what the terms of salvation are and that you be led by the full appreciation thereof out of darkness into the marvelous light of the kingdom of God. After that, you take up the line of march and faithfully discharge the duties all along the pathway of life till, worn and weary, He shall touch you as one of His jewels of earth and bid you come home to all the joys of "over there."

Now, in the pictures presented in the New Testament, life has these two scenes: For instance, in the sixth chapter of the book of Ephesians, Paul pictures our career as one of a great warfare, in which he said: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." That is the theory, that is the preparation. Then what? "Unsheathe the sword of the Spirit." March out under Heaven’s flag, true to the command of Him who is our leader, and fight the battle until He bids us stack arms on fairer fields and in brighter climes. In the twelfth chapter of the book of Hebrews life is pictured as if it were a great race track, upon which we enter at the beginning with all our impediments and hindrances laid aside. We are washed and cleansed as a new-born babe. This is the preparation, the theory. Then run in the straight and narrow path that leads from this to the pilgrim’s home beyond, until at last we pass under the wire in the final home stretch and receive the crown that fades not away. But in the lesson of to-night it is not that of warfare, nor yet that of a race; but, as the matchless apostle said, I want you to view life in the likeness of a great building, in which there are just two parts—first, the foundation, laid wide, broad, deep, safe, and secure upon the rock of eternal ages. Having done that, he said: "Brethren, let us then go on unto perfection." Let us erect the corner posts, then put up the studs, then the siding, then the roof, and at last adorn it and make it ready for God’s acceptance in the by and by. When Paul said, "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," I am quire sure he did not mean in the sense of denying or minimizing or repudiating, but simply the application of these foundation principles unto the higher problems of life. When boys and girls come to school, if as yet they are unlearned and untutored, we begin with the foundation principles of mathematics and teach them to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. When these are thoroughly mastered, we say: "Let us leave these principles." That does not mean that we are never to add any more. That does not mean to deny or make less of multiplication, but it does mean: "Let us leave those principles as such." Let us go on and apply them to compound

numbers, fractions, interest, bank discount, partial payments, and the higher problems in mathematical lines. So when Paul said, "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," he surely meant for those Hebrews to go on and apply those principles to the duties and obligations of life. Think on his suggestion: "Let us go on unto perfection."

Every word is of easy origin, and yet laden with such splendid meaning. When Paul said, "Let us go on unto perfection," it means an encouragement, admonition, and exhortation. When I say to you, "Brethren and friends, let us- do it," I mean to imply that I am in; that I will help. Let me say to you that men differ not from other animals of the earth in that they need encouragement all along the pathway of life. The boy out in the field with his favorite dog understands the philosophy thereof; and when on the trail of the rabbit, he encourages, admonishes, and exhorts him to do his best. The dog, the ox, the horse—every animal, including man—responds to proper encouragement.

I am sure that numbers of us have made various mistakes along the pathway of life. Hundreds of fine boys and girls--diamonds in the rough, perhaps—only need some man to give them the proper encouragement. They, perhaps, need only the spark of their ambition to be touched. After a while, though from a humble log cabin they came, the world will make a beaten path to their door; for, regardless of ancestry and surroundings, "if a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, though he live in the forest, the world will make a beaten path to his door."

I think many times that we have the wrong philosophy of life. We wait too often until some poor fellow has ceased to be, until his tongue is still in death; then we begin to sing his praises and cover his casket with sweet-scented flowers. When no longer we can obstruct and hinder, we are ready to sing praises. My friends, I need no special encouragement then. I know the problems of life. I have been against the difficulties. I have seen mountains rise as almost impossible barriers. In passing along life’s way, I need the sunshine and showers; I need the sweet-scented flowers and the encouragement of those who want me to succeed and accomplish humbly that which is greatest and best.

Paul comes as a friend to the Hebrews that were downcast, that were almost ready to give up their following after Christ, that were longing to go back unto the old form of Jewish worship. Paul said: "Brethren, let us not do that. You have laid the foundation; let us go on to perfection." He did not say: "Let me and mine, or my son and his wife, us four and no more, thus do." That kind of a thought never entered his mind. In this world we have our relationships one toward another. In the body of Christ I have never seen the man as yet from whom I wanted to be separate and distinct. I know that in the gospel of Christ and the church of God there are no distinctions.

Paul said: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may

know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Php 3:4-11)

Ladies and gentlemen, in the church of God there is no place for class distinction, no place for social distinction. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." That is the relationship that exists in the church of God to-night. I submit, therefore, that it is not "my Father who art in heaven," but every child of God can voice the sentiment, "our Father"—not "my church," not yours. It is the church of Jesus Christ, in which all of God's children are standing upon equal terms. There is no such thing in the church as a distinction between the clergyman and the layman. I am not one whit better by virtue of the fact that I try to preach than the humblest and most insignificant member of the church of God unless I do better, and that does not always happen. I want no honor other than simply that of being a Christian. Sometimes people (and I appreciate their motive to give me honor) speak to me as "Doctor." Friends, I am no doctor. Sometimes they say "Reverend." My name is not "reverend." That word is found only one time in all God's book, and David says: "Holy and reverend is his name." Mine is not. And if I shall even merit the simple term "brother," I count myself fortunate in such recognition and such relationship.

"Let us go on unto perfection." There are brethren in the city of Nashville men whom I love, but whom I think to be in error on some points. They claim simply to be Christians. They claim the Bible, and the Bible alone, as their sole guide. They claim Jesus Christ as the sole leader. Let me plead with them in persuasive terms from the very depths of my heart, "Brethren, let us unitedly go on unto perfection;" and when we kneel by our bedside tonight, shall we assume unto ourselves anything that tends to divide the body of Christ unless we are ready to announce openly that God demands such matters at our hands? We have the grandest platform upon which any people ever stood. Let us be unhampered, unbound by creeds, unbound by denominational or sectarian ties, members of the church, and that alone, with God's word, and that alone, as our creed. We ought to rejoice and be glad because of such a foundation. Let us, as a solid band, march out under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel and pass from victory unto victory. But Paul said: "Let us go." I am glad my brethren, as well as others, are learning some things. We used to read that scripture quite different. We never did know until recently what the word "go" spelled. We thought that it meant "drag," but it does not. We thought when it comes to business, we must be fervent; but when it comes to religion, let's "poke along" and drag our days by.

Ladies and gentlemen, I submit, as a matter of fact, the church of God demands the greatest activity, the greatest enthusiasm, and the most fervor that men can possibly put forth. I ought not, therefore, be on hand Monday morning and be active until Saturday night, and then drag around on Sunday like I did not have a friend on earth. That belongs to the heathen world, and not to the Christianity of the Bible, concerning which Paul arid: "Let us go on unto perfection."

I never did like to drive a horse that it took a fifty-cent whip every trip to get him along. I like to get in a buggy behind a horse full of life, so that all you need to do is to pull up the lines and give him the word. I like to see him pick up his feet and "burn the wind" down the pike. Somehow or other, I like automobiles, and the best thing about them is that they go—most of the time. We live at a time that demands action, that demands life, energy, thought, and carrying into effect. Paul said,

"Brethren, in the religious relationship, simply as members of the church of God, let us go ;" and the congregation or the Christian that does not have that element in his nature is out of line with the main thought of gospel truth. But note the next. Paul said, "Let us go on"— indicative of the direction in which we are to move. It is not a question of your having gone, but a question of direction. I never have liked a crawfish, and one reason is that he travels in the wrong direction. I like the fish that has gameness about it, that goes up the stream or down the stream or across the stream—that can stem the tide. "Let us go on." But note the next: "Unto perfection." "Unto" is a word of stickability. It is a word of perseverance, a word that means staying on the job, a word of tenacity—that, when once a firm hold is fixed, knows no let-up until the goal is reached.

Let me tell you that all the progress, achievement, and advancement of the world is due to the fact that men and women have gone on unto the accomplishment of their ideals.

I think schoolboys and schoolgirls to-night will remember that Columbus, with a firm conviction of the rotundity of the earth, toiled and met with disappointments one after another for eighteen years; but he was determined to stay with it. He believed in the correctness of a theory, and he worked at it until at last a new world lay smiling out before him.

Cyrus W. Field conceived the idea of laying the Atlantic cable, by means of which we might communicate with another continent. He went at it~with all the power of a being. Three different companies were organized, with millions of dollars, and all failed. It is arid that fifty times he crossed the Atlantic, and met with failure on every hand. But he had that characteristic, as did David and Paul, that "none of these failures move me." He had that element of perseverance, tenacity, and wonderful "stick-to-it-iveness," and success crowned his efforts at last.

Young man, there is but one thing under heaven that ought to challenge your concern, and that is for you to determine what is right and what duty demands. When this is correctly settled, let me say that there are not enough demons in hell or powers on earth to prevent the accomplishment thereof. We have just begun to explore the great fields of activity round about us. Progress and science are as yet in their swaddling clothes, and a half century hence will reveal matters of which the geniuses of today have not dreamed.

Paul said: "Let us go on unto perfection." At this time he was in prison at Rome. His case was undecided. His destiny was unknown, and yet he said: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13-14) Friends, that is the sentiment that must be ours if success would crown our efforts. But the last word, briefly put: "Let us go on unto perfect~on." I do not know what that means. It is superior to the things of earth. It- is the objective and the goal and the star toward which we ought to be moving. It means the summoning up of all our powers, the consecration thereof, and the concentration upon one sublime fact—that ideal that determines my success or failure, that toward which all other things are but supplementary and subsidiary. Far away, like some distant star upon the troubled waters of life, the light of that perfection shines, and for its final and full realization all can well afford to labor and to patiently wait. After we lay aside this earthly tabernacle in which we now dwell and launch out across the stream we style "death" unto the grandeurs and effulgent glory of that eternal home, clothed upon with our house which is from heaven—when this mortal shall have put on immortality and this corruption shall have put on

incorruption—then we will enter into that state of perfection characteristic of the heavenly home in the by and by.

Let me, therefore, leave this thought with you to-night: Unto this Christian people, members of the body of Christ, that have laid the foundation according to Heaven’s terms, that have believed the gospel with all your’ hears, that have genuinely and sincerely repented of all of your sins, that have publicly confessed your faith in the Lord, that have been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and have arisen to walk in newness of life having thus laid the foundation, friends, "let us go on unto perfection."

God will help those who help themselves; and if they bear fruit, he will purge them and cleanse them that they may bring forth more fruit—rich, ripened, golden grain, after the sheaves of earth have been gathered in.

I want to ask, therefore, in conclusion, again, are there any in this company tonight that want to acknowledge the Lord as your Savior? Will you lay that foundation, the basis of a Christian character, by obedience to his will? Those of you that have gone in a wrong direction, won’t you halt and come back into the fold ? Those that have not in any sense rendered obedience to the gospel of Christ and wish or desire to take your stand upon God’s word, and that alone, live in his church, and that alone, I bid you likewise to come to-night. Therefore, whosoever in any sense whatsoever considers himself a subject of the gospel call, while together we stand and sing, it is your privilege to respond to-night, if you find it in your heart so to do.

1.22 - THE BIBLE AND BUSINESS

THE BIBLE AND BUSINESS (An address by C. M. Pulling, delivered before the Exchange Club, Nashville Tenn., at luncheon.)

Gentlemen:

It is my greatest pleasure to have the honor of being your guest to-day and the privilege of speaking to you. I am very much unlike other speakers, since I have devoted my entire life to the study of only one book, and that book is the Bible. It is, therefore, but natural for me to select a subject which belongs to and concerns it. My subject, then, is "The Bible and Business." In the study of the Bible we have a concrete idea of every legitimate theme in the world. It is, therefore, not strange to think we would find in the Bible the sanest and safest business ideas—yea, the finest guide to business to be found anywhere. How many business men that feel the use and need of the Bible in their business affairs. By the great majority it is business and religion—the Bible for religion, church, Sunday school, and the sick room, but something else for business. But the Bible has a place in every store and factory and business place, as well as in every home and heart, church and Sunday school, religious gathering and sick room.

It is the Bible that sweetens the air and makes the world a fit place in which to live. But for its influence there would not be an institution of mercy or benevolence on the earth; no orphan homes, asylums, hospitals, or homes for the unfortunate; neither would your present property values be worth ten cents on the dollar. It has not only been the power that reared every institution of mercy and wielded a mighty influence over men and women—morally, intellectually, and spiritually—but builded better homes and raised better horses, mules, and cattle, and its influence has been as marked even on the farm lands. The hand that is under the influence of the Bible has the magic power to make the earth bud and bloom and burst into golden fruitage. The Bible, therefore, is the direct cause of civilization’s advancement; for where it has not gone, the savage man plows the native ox, with the bark of a tree for his harness and a forked stick for a plow, while he lives in a den or a cave or dwells in a tree. The Bible brings him out of this crude state and makes him build homes and schoolhouses, characterized by sanitation and purity—socially, religiously, and otherwise. The business world would not be troubled again by bankrupts and delinquents if the Bible were the guide; for it says, "Not slothful in business," but "diligent in business ;" and, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." This followed, and the business of the world would be so renovated and overhauled that all the friction, economically and industrially, would entirely disappear, as well as all domestic disorders. The same Bible, furthermore, says that we should learn honest trades for necessary uses, that we be not unfruitful. (Titus 3:14) "Do your own business;" "work with your own hands;" "that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12) "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28) This would protect the merchant and safeguard the buyer, for all would produce something; hence, all would have something. All could and would

meet their obligations; and, therefore, the Golden Rule would become a reality instead of a theory. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—socially, industrially, or otherwise. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing;" and the earth "shall rejoice" and "blossom as the rose." The Bible bears the same relation to the spiritual world as the sun does to the material world. But for the sun, the moon and stars would not shine; neither would the grass grow nor the water flow; there would be no rippling stream nor babbling brook. The Bible, in a metaphor, picks open the petals of every heart and twines the tendrils about the throne of God; it picks the frozen locks of frosty streams and sends them singing to the sea; and it kisses bud and bloom into life and lifts the ocean of sorrow to the clouds.

Thank God for the Bible, which is the rule of life in everything and brings faith and hope and love!

I thank you.

2.00 - Title

HARDEMAN'S TABERNACLE SERMONS

VOLUME II A Series of Twenty-three Sermons Delivered in the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tenn., April 1 to April 22, By N. B. HARDEMAN HENDERSON, TENN.

Bible Book Store Freed-Hardeman University Henderson, Tennessee 38340

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2.00.02 - Forward

FOREWORD

Freed-Hardeman University appreciates Joe Hardeman and Martha Foy for reprinting Volume II of Hardeman’s Tabernacle Sermons. The University will make these available to the brotherhood and it will place these into the hands of young men enrolled as a resource to help them become better gospel preachers. Brother Hardeman’s sermons have been preached by others to the strengthening of the church and we hope the present generation of preachers will also study these sermons and present these messages for the up building of the kingdom.

Oh, how we need brother Hardeman now! With the fragile condition of the brotherhood, the possible rupture in this decade, and the actual abandonment by some of the restoration plea for primitive Christianity," we sorely need the truths of the volume restated and "shouted from the housetops" ere it is too late. The church will survive because it is the eternal Kingdom, but we seek to save as many brethren as possible from going into another apostasy. The clarion call of brother Hardeman’s sermons is to return to New Testament Christianity. We continue this worthy goal at Freed-Hardeman University.

E. Claude Gardner, Chancellor Freed-Hardeman University

2.00.03 - Preface

PREFACE The re-issuance of Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, Volumes I and III elicited a gratifying response as a result of distribution by Freed-Hardeman University. Consequently, I have arranged with Freed-Hardeman to add this volume to the republication. In this second tabernacle meeting the author developed a description of the New Testament church in all its aspects, its establishment, its unity its identity its work, its worship and its relationship to Jesus Christ. Then in a Summary and Review, he articulated as lucid and comprehensive an exposition of Restoration philosophy as exists in our literature. it was a plea to escape from the confusion of denominational differences.

He stated his central proposition in stark simplicity: "Having simply believed and obeyed the gospel, we propose to be Christians only Now, there is a wonderful difference between saying that we claim to be Christians only and that we claim to be the only Christians." Churches of Christ should find in this not only the incentive to eschew human names and human creeds, but the imperative to avoid a narrow, sectarian spirit of their own. it would be ironic if the struggles of the Restoration Movement produced Just another human organization among the confusing welter of sects from which Stone, Purviance, Campbell and others would have led the escape.

One of my friends has suggested to me that Volume II is the most outstanding of the entire series. Certainly it contains the clearest exposition of the church that the Restoration Movement sought to find in the New Testament and restore.

Therefore, through the kind cooperation of Freed-Hardeman University, I present this volume to another generation of those who faithfully preach the word.

Joe H. Foy

PREFACE The first volume of "Tabernacle Sermons" resulted directly from the Hardeman-Pullias meeting held in the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tenn., April, 1922. The author had no intention of publishing this volume, but upon their request gave his consent to the brethren in Nashville to do so. Later, however, the whole matter was turned back to him as trustee of a fund to be accumulated from the sale of the book and to be used to assist worthy boys and girls to attend school. Of course no second volume was contemplated, for at least two reasons. First, it was not known at that time that the author would ever preach another series of '"tabernacle Sermons;" and, second, he had no idea with what sort of reception the first volume would meet. Another meeting, however, having been arranged and the first book of sermons having had a most gratifying sale—nearly 5,000 copies within a year—it was decided to bring out this second volume, with the hope that it may meet the same hearty reception . This collection of sermons was delivered orally In the language suggested by the occasion and reported by a stenographer. Some corrections have been made in the manuscripts, but other than that each sermon appears in the same words in which it was originally spoken. Naturally the language is not as smooth nor the diction as pure as if they had been carefully written out, but it is hoped that the personal element

and the flavor of the occasion in them will somewhat make up for these deficiencies. The author is very grateful for the hearty reception given the first volume and for the many expressions of approval that have reached him concerning it. As he sends forth this second one, it is his "heart's desire and prayer to God" that many may be brought to a deeper conviction and a clearer understanding of the "simplicity that is in Christ," and that they may be led to see the all-sufficiency of the gospel and the completeness and perfection of the New Testament church. THE AUTHOR.

Chapter 30

2.00.04 - SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE BIRTH— TIME AND PLACE.

SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR’S LIFE BIRTH— TIME AND PLACE.

Nicholas Brodie Hardeman was born May 18, 1874, in a log house, consisting of one large room and a side room, about one mile north of Milledgeville, McNairy County, Tenn. This small country village was situated on White Oak Greek, nine miles from Coffee Landing, on the Tennessee River, and about twenty miles from the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. PARENTS. His father, Dr. John Bellefont Hardeman, was reared on Big Greek, in Giles County, Tenn., near Pulaski. He studied medicine and had begun the practice of his profession before the outbreak of the Civil War. He entered the Confederate Army; was captured at Island No. 10 and carried to prison at Chicago, Ill. After the war was over, he continued the practice of medicine in McNairy, Hardin, and Cheater Counties for the next forty years. For several years he had owned and operated a farm, and in 1884 or 1885 he built a storehouse and began the selling of goods. He was successful in all these enterprises, and soon accumulated considerable property.

Throughout his early manhood he had been a member of the Methodist Church; but during a meeting conducted by J. A. Minton in the storehouse mentioned above, just after it was completed and before it was occupied, he heard, believed, and obeyed the "old Jerusalem gospel." In 1893 he moved to Henderson, Tenn., where he lived the rest of his life. In January, 1902, the differences in the church at Henderson over innovations resulted in a division and the organization of another congregation. Dr. Hardeman took his stand with those who opposed these innovations, and remained true and faithful to the "OLD PATHS" till he died. He took the lead in securing a suitable location and building a new church house. He bought a house and lot, moved the house away, and gave the nice corner lot on which the church house in Henderson now stands. He saw to it that the deed to this property forever secured it to those who opposed innovations in the church of Christ. it was written by E. N. Tabler, N. B. Hardeman’s father-in- law, and is a notable document of its kind. In dignity of expression, in strength of diction, in completeness, and in scripturalness of sentiment it is a unique, original, and remarkable production. it has been copied many times for other congregations.

Dr. Hardeman died Sunday afternoon, September 5, 1905. His funeral was conducted the following day in the new church house he had done so much to build. In the presence of a seat throng of people both the writer and the subject of this sketch made speeches—a very unusual occurrence for a son to stand with his hand upon his father’s casket and help to preach his funeral. His mother, before she was married to Dr. Hardeman, was Miss Nannie Smith. She was reared in McNairy County, Tenn., near the little town of Enville. To this union there were born four children h-o girls and two boys —of which N. B. ("Brodie," as he is familiarly called) was the youngest. The two sisters—Mrs. J. H. Ellis and Mrs. J. E. Ledbetter—are still living at Henderson, Tenn. His brother, Dorsey, who was three years older, died in April, 1893, at the age of twenty-two years. His mother had died many years before-September, 1876—when he was only one and a half years of

age. He was so young that he doesn’t remember her.

STEPMOTHER. In 1877 Dr. Hardeman was married again, to Miss Eliza Wade, who still lives in the town of Henderson. Five children were born to this second union-two boys and three girls—all of whom are still living. One of these, John B., is a successful teacher and a splendid preacher of the gospel.

Mrs. Eliza Wade Hardeman was a good mother, and especially a good stepmother. She seemed to be just as kind and devoted to her stepchildren as she was to her own. Her husband being a physician and necessarily away from home much of the time, the care of the children was left principally to her. Brodie, when a small child, was very frail and delicate. it was thought very doubtful as to whether or not he would survive. His stepmother nursed and cared for him tenderly during this trying period of his life. it is related that it was a common thing for her to put down one of her own children and take him up instead. Out of a deep sense of gratitude for her devotion during his early childhood it is his desire that she be given her full measure of praise.

EARLY LIFE.

N. B. Hardeman grew up on a farm, part of which lay in each of the three counties—Hardin, McNairy, and Chester. His father being away from home much of the time and he himself not being strong enough to do much work, he was left very largely to his own devices. He spent a great deal of his time in breaking and riding young mules and yearlings—it didn’t make much difference which, nor did it matter how wild and ungovernable they might be. During the summer months he passed many of his leisure hours in "the old swimming hole." After he became large enough, he was put to hauling goods for his father’s store from Coffee Landing with a yoke of oxen. He spent a good portion of each year in this way. it is said that he became an expert in that picturesque and emphatic form of expression generally used by those who drive "steers."

He has always been a lover of good stock, especially of fine horses. He is to-day one of the best horsemen in the country. When he was a boy, he had a race track on his father’s farm, where he engaged in the training of such stock as happened to be on the place. Later on he attended the county fairs at the near-by towns of Savannah, Purdy, Lexington, and Henderson. He took great interest in the races, and often rode or drove a horse therein.

While he was growing up, he seems to have been under very little restraint and to have had what is generally termed a "good time." When it suited him to do so, he would take his "colt" and go to "Uncle Bill’s and Aunt Addie’s" – his father’s brother and wife—and stay for weeks at a time. On one such trip he rode a small "tow-headed" mule. In approaching rapidly the brink of Middleton’s Greek the mule stopped very suddenly and unexpectedly. The rider, however, did not, but went straight on over the mule’s ears and landed in the midst of the creek.

He also stayed a great deal with his oldest sister and her husband—Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Ellis.

EDUCATION The first school he ever attended was taught in a one-room log house by Miss Sue Inman. He then went to old Salem, in Hardin County, and Mount Zion, in McNairy County, walking a distance of three miles to the latter place. He was ten or twelve years old at this time. He rode horse- back a distance of five miles and attended school one entire session at Morris’ Chapel, in Hardin County. This school was taught by Prof. A. C. Ham. In September, 1890, he came to

Henderson and entered West Tennessee Christian College, then under the presidency of G. A. Lewellen, but later of C. H. Duncan and H. G. Thomas. He graduated from this institution with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1895. During the year following—1895-1896—he did review work under A. G. Freed, who had succeeded to the presidency of the college; and still later, after the West Tennessee Christian College had become the Georgia Robertson Christian College, he received the Master of Arts degree from the latter institution.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY.

N. B. Hardeman was married to Miss Joanna Kendall Tabler on Sunday evening, April 21, 1901. The wedding took place in the Christian church house at the close of the evening service, with Prof. A. G. Freed officiating. Mrs. Hardeman—"Miss Jo," as moat of her friends still call her—was reared in Henderson, and is a graduate of the Georgia Robertson Christian College. She is a talented musician, and for many years was principal of the department of Instrumental Music and Voice in Freed-Hardeman College and its predecessor, The National Teachers' Normal and Business College. She is a woman of due character and culture, and is devoted to her home and family. She thinks there is no other man in the world quite the equal of her husband, to whom she has been a real helpmeet. She is in hearty sympathy with his work; and though it deprives her of his presence much of the time, she never complains on that account. Her interest and cooperation has been one of the primary factors in making him the great preacher that he is.

They have three children just now getting grown—Dorsey B., Mary Nell, and Carrie Neal. They are all bright and intelligent, and, having been almost literally brought up in the college, are consequently well advanced in their literary studies, as well as accomplished in music, expression, and other things.

RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

During childhood and youth his religious environment was wholly Methodist. His father, mother, and stepmother were all members of the Methodist Church, and so were nearly all of the religious people of the community. The religion of those days was highly emotional. The protracted meetings were characterized by great excitement, and they aroused the highest interest among both saints and sinners. Everybody went—some, to have a part therein; others, to enjoy the "show." it is to be feared that the subject of this sketch was among the latter class. The fanatical emotionalism of these religious services disgusted rather than impressed him. it did not appeal to him as being common sense and he concluded that, if it was a fair sample of the religion of the Bible, he wanted none of it. But about this time there came into the community in which he lived two preachers of an altogether different sort. Their manner of preaching was quiet and dignified. They appealed to the word of God and to the intelligence of men. They called the people's attention to the Bible, and insisted that a faithful compliance with the conditions of salvation as revealed in the gospel of Christ was the only way to life and salvation. These preachers were J. A. Minton and J. L. Haddock, both of them strong men and able expounders of the old Jerusalem gospel. He began to get a glimpse of the beauty and simplicity of the gospel plan of salvation. Certain expressions—such as, "We call Bible things by Bible names," and, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak"— made a profound and lasting impression upon his young mind. He remembers especially to have heard Brother R. P. Meeks use these expressions many times. Having heard all three of the above-mentioned preachers on a good many occasions and having

become more and more favorably impressed with that which they preached, it is not surprising that when he came to Henderson in 1890 and entered West Tennessee Christian College, during a meeting conducted by Professor Lewellen, he accepted the gospel and was baptized by Brother Meeks in the baptistery of the old Christian Church.

TEACHER AND SCHOOL MAN.

He began his career as a teacher out in the country in a rural school. After teaching two summer schools, he became principal of a two-teacher school near Kenton, Obion County, Tenn., during the year 1896-1897. The next year he came back to Henderson and became a member of the faculty of the Georgia Robertson Christian College, where he remained for the next eight years. During this time he taught quite a variety of subjects. The writer remembers to have had classes under him in psychology, logic, literary criticism, biblical geography, and church history. At that time the annual enrollment of the college was above Ave hundred. There was no member of the faculty more popular among them than "Professor Hardeman."

After the church in Henderson divided over innovations in its work and worship, Professor Freed quit the Georgia Robertson Christian College, which was under the control of the "digressives," and went to Texas. Hardeman also severed his connection with it, and he and the writer took charge of the public schools of Henderson for the next two years. In the winter of 1906-1907 Hardeman began to make plans for the building of another school. He took the matter up with Prof. A. G. Freed, who was then president of Southwestern Christian College, Denton, Texas. They soon came to an agreement that Freed should return to Henderson, and that they should undertake to erect another building and start another school. These plans culminated in the National Teachers' Normal and Business College. This school opened in the fall of 1908 with a large enrollment. it continued to flourish as a private institution, belonging to Freed and Hardeman, till the spring of 1919. Brethren over the country, feeling that the permanence of the school, belonging as it did to Freed and Hardeman, was an uncertain matter, decided to undertake the raising of a fund of $100,000, buy and enlarge it and place it in the hands of a board of trustees. The transfer of the property was made in March, 1919, the name changed to "Freed-Hardeman College," and a campaign to raise the money was inaugurated. it was thought best to build a girls' dormitory with the first funds raised and defer the payment of Freed and Hardeman until later. So this building was begun and partially completed, when the funds were exhausted. Money matters had become so close that it was difficult to raise any more. The girls' home was unfinished and badly needed. Finally a good friend of Hardeman's—James T. Anderson, of Hurricane Mills, Tenn.—voluntarily offered to loan him $12,000, without any security, without even a nets, but solely upon his promise to return it when he should call for it. So the money was received upon these conditions and the building finished. The financial condition of the school grew worse and worse until in the spring of 1923 it looked as if the property would have to be Bold to pay off its indebtedness. A supreme effort to clear the school of all obligations was made, and, in order to do this and thus save it, N. B. Hardeman made a donation of $10,000. Considering his financial ability, it is perhaps the largest gift made by any member of the church of Christ in recent years.

He has been with the school continuously since its beginning.

During the many years he has spent in the schoolroom "Professor Hardeman" has taught a great variety of subjects, but of recent years has confined his work principally to the Bible and related

branches—biblical geography, church history, hermeneutics, homiletics, etc. He is a great teacher from any consideration; but as a teacher of the Bible itself and those branches that aid in its understanding, he probably stands without a peer in all the brotherhood. Not only is he an able teacher in the classroom, but he is a fine executive and administrator. He is a pretty strict disciplinarian, demanding that students shall behave themselves, that they learn obedience, that they "do all things decently and in order," and that they devote themselves to their work. He believes in securing these ends by appealing to a student’s sense of honor and duty, by encouragement and inspiration; but when "kind words and gentle means" fail, he doesn’t hesitate to resort to sterner measures. For a period of twelve years he was Superintendent of Public Instruction in Chester County.

It is safe to say that during his career as a teacher not less than ten thousand students have come under his influence and instruction. They have gone away better prepared to take their place and do their work in the world. The most of them are succeeding in the various fields of labor into which they have entered. Scores of young men are able preachers of the gospel to-day because of their connection with him. His chiefest interest of recent years has been teaching and training young men to proclaim the gospel to a "lost and ruined and recreant race." In spite, however, of his great love for this work, the demand for his services as an evangelist has become so great, the calls so numerous and urgent, and the advice of friends and brethren so insistent, that he finally made up his mind to give up his school work, at least temporarily, and devote himself more completely to the ministry of the word. This decision is a great event in his career—greater by far, perhaps, than he can realize. it means the closing of a long chapter in his life and the beginning of another, probably the last one. it is to be hoped that henceforth his labors may be productive of greater good than ever before and that before he goes hence he may be the means through which thousands shall be "turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." AS A PREACHER

He didn’t start out in life with the intention of being a preacher. While a boy and during his early manhood it was his ambition and purpose to be a doctor, like his father’. With this end in view, he did a year’s premedical work in college. During this time, however, he was studying the Bible, making talks at prayer meetings and in the Bible society in the college, and thus unconsciously preparing himself for the great work he was afterwards to do. In the month of April, 1898, Professor Freed, then president of Georgia Robertson Christian College, had an appointment to preach on a certain Sunday in the little town of Enville, about fifteen miles from Henderson. When the day arrived, for some reason he could not go. So, rather than disappoint the people entirely, he induced young Hardeman to go in his place; and thus on this occasion, in just a few miles of where he was born, he preached his first sermon on the text: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The preaching, therefore, of his first sermon was somewhat of an accident—i. e., it was altogether unexpected and unpremeditated upon his part. The theme he selected for his first sermon was characteristic. During the twenty-five years that have elapsed from that day to this no one who has ever heard him preach has any reason to believe that he is either ashamed of the gospel or afraid to preach it just as he finds it revealed in the book. On the other hand, he has startled his own brethren many times by his boldness and fearlessness in contending "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." No man sticks closer to the book nor fights harder for the ancient order of things than

does he. No man more unreservedly condemns human creeds, doctrines and dogmas, and "every high thing that exalteth itself against God." He is one of the few men among us in these degenerate times who seems to still have the courage, spirit, and vision of the great pioneer preachers of the "Restoration Movement."

After preaching his first sermon, notwithstanding it was unexpected and accidental, "the die was cast," the Rubicon was creased. He soon began preaching frequently and regularly. He sprang into prominence very rapidly, and it was not long until his services were in great demand. it was noised abroad that he was the most promising young preacher anywhere in his section of the country, and people went far and near to hear him. His youthful appearance, engaging manner, fluency of speech, and remarkable ability to quote the Scripture attracted much attention and caused a great deal of favorable comment. In preparation for his work as a preacher he studied the Bible under R. P. Meeks, A. G. Freed, and H. L. Calhoun, who is now connected with Bethany College, W. Va., the school founded by Alexander Campbell. He took a special two-year course under Calhoun, from whom he acquired that careful, exact, and thorough method of studying the Bible which has ever characterized his work as a teacher and preacher.

He has never devoted himself entirely to preaching. He has been constantly engaged in the schoolroom from nine to ten months in the year ever since he began to preach; besides, he has had a number of other interests to look after. He has been the administrator of other men’s estates. Most of the time he has looked after a farm. He has been the business manager of Freed-Hardeman College for many years, and other things of lesser importance have engaged his attention and taken his time. Despite all these hindrances, he has forged his way to the front among preachers of the church of Christ. While he has only conducted meetings during the summer vacations between the closing of one session of school and the opening of another, he has had many successful meetings and baptized hundreds of people. He has labored in Tennessee Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Colorado.

While he has never sought religious discussions, yet he has had quite a number with champions of the denominations. He has met the Goliath of the Baptist Church in this country—I. N. Penick, dean of the Theological Department, Union University—in seven debates. He met another great Baptist debater—Ben M. Bogard—twice. Besides these, he has had several other debates with Baptists, Methodists, and "digressives." Polonius advised his son, Laertes, "to avoid entrance into a quarrel, but, being in, to bear it so that the opposed may beware of thee." This is Hardeman’s attitude in regard to religious debates. He doesn’t Seen them, doesn’t want them; but when he thinks the interest of the cause of Christ demands it, he doesn’t hesitate to enter into it, and he conducts it with such masterful ability, meets his opponent’s arguments so squarely, and treats him so fairly and courteously, that he not only wins the argument, but the audience as well. There are very few men among us who are his equal as debaters, and, perhaps, none who are his superior. He never dodges the issue nor evades an argument, but meets them all with fairness and candor. His thorough understanding’ of both sides of the question under discussion, his comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, his keen logic and quick repartee, make him a formidable opponent in a discussion. Notwithstanding his great ability to do so, he prefers, however, not to engage in religious discussions, desiring rather to devote himself to the proclamation of the gospel. AS A SPEAKER.

N. B. Hardeman is regarded se one of the best speakers in the State of Tennessee. it makes no difference what the occasion or how short the notice, he can always make an interesting speech. When he gets on his feet before an audience, it seems to set all of his mental machinery to work, and his thoughts come rapidly and clearly, and he is never at a loss for words to express them. He speaks with great ease, entirely free from self-consciousness, and in language that the humblest can understand. He is very unlike our distinguished Ex-President, who said he had a "one-track mind," because his mind will run on almost any track and with very little shifting of gears. At least once per week for more than twenty years he has spoken to the student body of Freed-Hardeman College and its predecessors. For the most part these speeches have been extemporaneous, delivered today and forgotten to-morrow, and yet many of them have been gems of oratory. If a statesman, orator, or lecturer comes to his town to make a speech, by universal consent he is expected to be master of ceremonies and introduce the speaker. First and last, he has spoken on a great variety of subjects, many times under very trying circumstances, and always with credit to himself and delight to his audience. He has a pleasing personality, an engaging manner, and a pleasant and well-modulated voice that carries distinctly to the remotest corner of the largest auditorium. His speech carries conviction with it, for "he speaks as one having authority, and not as the scribes." His language is not dowery nor rhetorical, and yet it is truly eloquent. Taking him all in all, there are not many better speakers on the platform or in the halls of congress to-day than he. He is really and truly a "master of assemblies." AS A MAN. it matters not how brilliant or talented a man may be; how great an orator, statesman, or preacher; how distinguished his name or exalted his fame, "a man’s a man for a’ that." Is N. B. Hardeman a real man, or does he just appear so on the surface? The writer knows him better, perhaps, than anybody in the world, except his own immediate family, and he can say without any reservations that he has never known him to do a little or mean trick. His word on any matter is worth one hundred cents in the dollar. He is scrupulously strict in keeping a promise or agreement. He has no secrets, tricks, or schemes, but is open and frank in everything. One of his hobbies is paying his debts. He believes that when he owes a debt and has the money to pay it, then is the time to do it; and he will do so without delay if it takes the last cent he has.

He is exceedingly unselfish and liberal in money matters.

He believes that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver" and "that the liberal soul shall be made fat." An appeal for help is rarely ever made to him in vain. He has remarked many times that if he should be so unfortunate as to be lost in eternity he doesn’t intend that it shall be on account of stinginess or covetousness. He is one to whom hospitality is not a lost art, and during the past several years hundreds of friends and brethren have been entertained in his home. He gives freely to the cause of Christ, and has taught his children to do likewise. No man is more ready to do his fellow man a "good turn" than is he. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," is a Divine injunction that he literally and constantly heeds; and it makes no difference who it is, whether white or black, male or female, rich or poor, Greek or Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free. The Hardeman family is endowed with a rather unusual amount of that rare and valuable commodity called "common sense" They are anything else but fanatics, hobbyists, cranks, or extremists. They have good judgment about meet matters, and are usually able to appraise things at about their proper value. They are not easily deceived nor imposed upon. N. B. is not a whit behind the red of the family in this respect. He is quick to

detect all sorts of shams, frauds, and affectations; hates and abominates them; and, when occasion requires, is merciless in exposing them. He has no use for "aristocracy" nor "society," because he believes the very soul and spirit of it is hollow and false and contrary to the spirit of Christ. He despises its exclusiveness and the "I-am-better-than-thou" air that goes with it. His tastes and manner of life are simple, and he is exceedingly democratic in his relations with his fellow man. He associates with perfect ease and on a plane of equality with all classes and conditions of men, adapting himself easily to their manners and customs and modes of thought. He has great tad, and is able to handle persons and situations with rare skill and good judgment.

Because of the above qualities he would have made a successful politician and an able public official. We have had scores of Congressmen, Senators, and Governors that were far inferior to him in the necessary qualifications for the offices they held. On account of his social qualities and his oratorical powers he would have been a great "vote getter." Because of these well-known abilities he has been urged time and again to "cast his hat into the ring" and become a candidate for some of our higher State or national offices. At one time a man who exercised more political power and influence, perhaps, than any other man in the State urged him to enter the race for Congress, assuring him of the almost certainty of his election. it is but fair to say that these prospects of political success and preferment were exceedingly alluring. During a period of several years they were a constant source of temptation to him; but as his faith in God and his word and his interest in the cause of Christ grew stronger, he became less and less interested in political affairs until Anally he dismissed the matter from his mind entirely.

VERSATILITY.

It is an old saying that a "jack at all trades is good at none," but this won’t do in Hardeman’s case. He is a many-sided man. it has been sometimes remarked that "he can do anything and make a creditable job of it." it would be hard to And a man that has been engaged in a greater variety of activities than he. At times he has had so many "irons in the fire" that it looked like he would be compelled to let some of them burn, but he has generally managed to keep them from being scorched. He can do almost anything, from digging a ditch on his farm to officiating at a fashionable church wedding. He can take care of himself in a horse trade or preach the commencement sermon for a college or University. In short, he will undertake almost anything, and, to use a slang phrase he generally "gets by with it." His religion is not the long-faced and "hark-from-the- tomb" kind. He makes no hypocritical pretense to a piety that he does not feel and live. He believes that the way to be good is to do good, and that no man is better than another unless he does better. He believes in what the late Ex- President Roosevelt called "robust righteousness"—that is an earnest and aggressive fight for truth and righteousness, backed up by a life consistent therewith.

He is a kind and indulgent husband and father, a good neighbor, a first-class citizen, and a genuine Christian gentleman.

TWO EVENTS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE. The first one is a religious discussion held in the Ryman Auditorium soon after the close of the Hardeman-Smith meeting. In the State of Tennessee for twenty-five years or more those of our brethren who favor the use of "mechanical instruments of music" in the worship of the church had followed the policy of silence and ignoring the question. They never advocated it nor defended it publicly, but carried on their propaganda

privately. it seems that they finally came to the conclusion that this policy had proven a failure, and, on the presumption that they couldn't make it any worse, they decided to "fight it out" "from Carter to Shelby." Accordingly, they passed a resolution to that effect at one of their conventions, and immediately began to agitate the question of a debate. Those who opposed their practice in this matter were not slow to respond, but immediately accepted their challenge and went about working out arrangements for the discussions. After about a year's negotiations, the two sides agreed on a proposition, also the time and place for the discussion to take place. The proposition as finally agreed upon was: "Instrumental music In church worship is scriptural." it seems that those on the affirmative side of the question had no little difficulty in finding a man to represent them; but finally Ire M. Boswell, of Georgetown, Ky., agreed to do so. Those on the other side selected N. B. Hardeman. The debate was conducted in the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tenn., from May 31 to June 5, 1923. The Christian Standard, in announcing it, said it is "to be a thoroughly representative discussion on both sides. Its object is to bring out everything that can be said on each side of this question, that all may know the merits of the two contentions, . . . and more people will hear this debate than any debate in our history."

Interest on both aides of the question was intense. Thousands were in attendance every session, and excitement ran high. Many visitors from other sections were present. The speeches were reported and published in full in the Nashville Tennessean, and the entire debate will be published in book form. A detailed account of the discussions cannot be given, but suffice it to arty that N. B. Hardeman conducted his side of it to the entire satisfaction of all his friends and brethren. In fact, to say they were jubilant and could hardly contain themselves over the masterly manner in which he took care of his side of the proposition would express it very mildly. The other event to which reference was made was a visit to the Holy Land. For twenty years Brother Hardeman has taught classes in biblical geography. Figuratively speaking, he has measured every hill and valley, followed the meanderings of every stream, visited every village, town, and city, and located every important spot in that historic and sacred country. He has longed to see it with his own eyes, but never felt that be had the time nor means to do so. Finally his release from the schoolroom provided the time, and his good friend and brother, James T. Anderson, provided the means; so on June 23, 1923, he set sail from New York on the steamship George Washington for Egypt and the Holy Land. Brother I. A. Douthitt, of Sedalia, Ky., as his traveling companion. As this book goes to press they are on the long journey. They expect to visit France, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, England, and some of the other European countries before they return. NOT PERFECT—HAS FAULTS. it is by no means intended to leave the impression that Hardeman has no faults. Just like all other men, he has them a-plenty. He is human, very much so; and that is to say that he has many of the weaknesses that belong to humankind. The writer could, no doubt, point out errors in his life and preaching, and would not shrink from doing so if he felt that any good purpose could be served thereby. But inasmuch as it does not appear that any good would likely come of it, he throws the mantle of silence and charity over that phase of the subject, with the hope that as he grows older his faults may become fewer and his virtues more numerous.

Let it be said, further, that this sketch represents the subject as he is to-day, or seems to be; but "it doth not yet appear what he shall be." Men have lived honorable, upright, Christian lives till they were older than he and then gone wrong and spoiled it all before they died. So it might be with

him; but let us hope that he may grow better as he grows older, and, finally, that his last days may be his best ones and that his journey toward the "golden gate" may be like the path of the just that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

L. L. BRIGANCE.

P.S.—The writer of this sketch realizes that it is a difficult and delicate task to write the biography of any one so as to please him and his friends and give no occasion to his enemies. It has probably not been done in this instance, but a sincere effort has been made to present the facts as they have been gathered from friends and relatives of Hardeman and from an intimate association with him of more than twenty years' duration.

L. L. B.

2.00.05 - EXTRACTS CONCERNING THE PREACHER AND

EXTRACTS CONCERNING THE PREACHER AND THE MEETINGS In an article written by F. W. Smith, one of the editors of the Gospel Advocate, just after the close of the first Tabernacle meeting, conducted by Hardeman and Pullias, there is the following extract concerning the preacher:

N. B. Hardeman is a great preacher; and the beauty of it is, he does not seem to know the fact. Nature has done much for Hardeman in bestowing upon him an almost matchless voice, an exceedingly pleasing personality, a kindly disposition, with a good-natured smile that will win its way anywhere. He has all the elements of an orator, and, if he had been so disposed, could have gone to the top in the political world. but chose rather to consecrate his God-given powers to a better cause Hardeman knows the Bible, and is as true to the gospel as the needle to the pole, and shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God to saint and sinner. He carries in his preaching both sides of the great commission, and is neither afraid nor ashamed to preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He uses the simplest illustrations, and the most ordinary mind can grasp the truth illustrated. This man of God is, beyond any question, a master of assemblies, and sways his audiences with an ease and grace of voice and manners that attracts and holds almost the breathless attention of his auditors.

About the same time S. H. Hall, in a description of the same meeting written for the Firm Foundation, said:

Since the revival at the Ryman Auditorium is now history, it will not be amiss to say something about it in a general way. First, the preaching This as our readers know, was done by N. B. Hardeman, of Henderson, Tenn. To say it was well done puts it mildly. There are three outstanding characteristics of Brother Hardeman as a man and preacher. First, his loyalty to the Book. If any man can stay closer to the Book than he, it would have to be one of the inspired men that wrote the Bible. The plain and simple conditions upon which Christ has promised to save were given fully, clearly, forcibly, and repeatedly. Then the simple worship of the New Testament church was also given in contradistinction to the many innovations that men have introduced. If ever any one closed a meeting and could say, as did Paul,"I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole coun

29 30 Extracts Concerning the Preacher, Etc. sel of God," that man is N. B. Hardeman. Second, his kindness. Here our brother is par excellent—not that he is kinder than his adherence to the teaching of our Lord. He seems to he as strong in one as in the other. The facts are, only those who adhere with the whole heart to the doctrine of Christ know how to be really kind. He stays with the Book because he loves the teaching of Christ, and this love for and loyalty to what Christ says seems to give him that kindness our Lord himself possessed. If one thing was said in all his thirty-nine addresses that had an unkind word or was uttered with an unkind expression on his face, we failed to see it and hear it. Third, his humility. Here is another outstanding characteristic. Not one time did he let anything emanate from him that had the merest shadow of egotism, conceit, or

self-exaltation. To make a long story short, let me conclude by saying: Hardeman proved himself equal to the occasion in every sense of the word, adorned the doctrine be so earnestly and faithfully preached, and left those who stood nobly behind him satisfied in the highest degree. After the close of the second meeting, F. W. Smith again wrote an article for the Gospel Advocate, which is here quoted in full, because it contains many interesting things concerning the preacher, singer, and meeting in which the sermons in this volume were preached: The second meeting conducted in the Ryman Auditorium is now a matter of history and will long be remembered as one of the greatest meetings ever held in the State of Tennessee. In point of attendance, it was all that could be desired, the great building frequently being unable to accommodate the vast throngs eager and anxious to hear the word of God proclaimed and to enjoy the soul-stirring songs of devotion in which it seemed every one heartily engaged. There is no way of estimating the great good accomplished by this meeting; for, notwithstanding the immense audiences that assembled in the Ryman Auditorium, they constituted but a small part of the multiplied thousands who read the sermons as they were broadcasted by the daily papers. Never in the history of the South have so many people been reached by the plea for a return to the church of the New Testament in doctrine, discipline, practice, name, and worship. The "seed of the kingdom" has been sown in the soil of human hearts through what is termed the "secular press" that, in all probability, would never have had a correct idea of the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Brother Hardeman fully sustained, and even went beyond, his reputation as a preacher of the word, holding the vast audiences as if by magic throughout the entire series of meetings. As a rule, those who heard him once desired to hear him again and again, and thus they Extracts Concerning the Preacher, Etc. 31 kept coming till the close of the meeting, and it was estimated that seven thousand people were in attendance at the last two services.

Perhaps some who were not present are anxious to know of the "drawing power" that attracted and held with rapt attention such vast audiences for such a length of time. This can be summed up in few words—-vis: The Bible, the word of the living God, was the magnet that drew and held these people.

While N. B. Hardeman is a fluent speaker with a pleasing personality and a voice with a splendid reach, falling upon the vast audience as he did with anything other than the word of God. He at no time posed before his audience as an actor, seeking to attract the people to himself instead of to the message he was delivering, but every movement and his entire demeanor was characterized by the very essence of simplicity and humility. The people were deeply impressed with the feeling that the speaker was not relying upon himself, but upon the word of God. It is true that occasionally there were outbursts and flights of eloquence that lifted the audiences into realms sublime, but it was easy to see these were not studied efforts, the stock in trade of the professional actor. They were simply the spontaneous expressions of a soul on fire for the salvation of men.

Denominationalism, with all of its evils, was clearly and forcefully shown to be antichristian and wholly unauthorized by the word of God; while the church of the New Testament, in all of its features and simplicity, was presented with such clearness, supported by such an array of scripture quotations that even a child could not fail to comprehend it.

Brother Hardeman’s familiarity with both sacred and profane church history stands him well in hand in setting forth the truth relative to the church of the New Testament, and he handles the

matter in such a way as to leave the denominations to fight it out with their own church historians 32 Extracts Concerning the Preacher, Etc.

What shall be said of Brother John T. Smith, who led the songs in this great meeting? Well, too much in praise could hardly be said; for he is a man of God, and a better leader of song could not have been procured for this meeting. For weeks before the meeting Brother Smith had been drilling numbers of Nashville's best singers, and they, with many others, gave him a splendid support throughout the meeting. The leader has a splendid voice, and he opens his mouth wide so as to be distinctly heard above those who follow. The songs were well selected, not only from a spiritual and scriptural consideration, but they were token from among the old standard songs with which all were familiar.

Brethren Hardeman and Smith are comparatively young men, with the promise of many years of usefulness in the Master's kingdom before them. Brother Smith is not only a singer of the gospel, but is one of the best preachers of it in the country.

2.00.05 - JOHN T. SMITH

JOHN T. SMITH The subject of this sketch is the son of G. W. and Lucy Campbell Smith, both of whom were reared in West Tennessee. He was born September 19, 1883, six miles east of Union City, Obion County, Tenn. He was the youngest of eleven children. He was reared on a farm in one of the richest agricultural sections of the State.

Until he was about sixteen years of age his time was divided between working on the farm and attending the district school. At this time, encouraged and assisted by his older brother, the lamented G. Dallas Smith, he entered school at Hornbeak, in Obion County, where he remained for only a few months After this he went to Weatherford, Texas, where his brother, G. Dallas, was living and preaching, and secured a position as salesman in a clothing store. In 1906 he gave up this place in order to enter Southwestern Christian College, Denton, Texas, then under the presidency of A. G. Freed. In the fall of this same year he became a student in David Lipscomb College, Nashville Tenn., where he remained during one session. In the autumn of 1908, at the opening of Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tenn., he again entered school, and continued in this institution for the next four years. During this time he taught the classes in vocal music and did splendid work in the Bible Department under A. G. Freed, N. B. Hardeman, and T. B. Larimore.

John T. was reared by Christian parents in a home that was distinctly religious. His father and two older brothers, G. Dallas and Robert D., were preachers of the gospel, and the influence of their lives and work made a deep impression on his young mind. Very early in life it was his desire and ambition to become a preacher and thus follow the example of his father and brothers. The fear, however, that he could not succeed and that he might not be able to continue permanently in such a noble calling caused him to hesitate. He continued, therefore, in a state of indecision for several years, relying largely upon time and chance to determine his life work.

He obeyed the gospel in 1897 at the age of fourteen. He was baptized by John R. Williams, of Hornbeak, Tenn., "whom," to use his own words, "he considered then, and still considers, one of the greatest preachers in the church." In his early manhood he spent a great deal of time with Brother Williams, leading the song service in many of his meetings. His association with this godly man and fearless defender of the faith had a great influence for good upon his life. No doubt it was one of the factors in causing him to finally decide to become a preacher of the gospel.

He preached his first sermon at Poolville, Texas, in the summer of 1904 on the subject of Paul’s charge to Timothy, "Preach the word." He has been preaching regularly from that time to the present without any interruption. He has done general evangelistic work in most of the Southern States, having held many successful meetings and baptized a great number of people. He has also labored with the churches at Marvell, Ark.; Fullerton, La.; Jackson, Tenn.; Sparta, Tenn:; Dickson, Tenn.; Lubbock, Texas. He is now back at Dickson, Tenn., for the second time, preaching the word.

Brother Smith was married to Wilma Sue Warren, of Dyer, Tenn., June 14, 1911, N. B. Hardeman officiating. Two children—Warren Clayton and Annie Bose-have come to bless their home and brighten their lives.

He is one of the sweetest singers in all Israel. He thoroughly understands the technique of vocal music, and he has a marvelously sweet and melodious voice. When he was a student and teacher in Freed-Hardeman College, he would sometimes sing a religious or popular song on public occasions to the great delight of the audience, which would call him back again and again as long as he would respond. His taste and judgment in selecting suitable songs for religious services is unexcelled. As a leader and director of congregational singing he has few superiors. His tall figure and graceful movements, added to the charm of his voice, give him a commanding influence over an audience and enable him to get a hearty response In the way of singing. it was these outstanding qualities that caused his selection as the song leader and director of the Hardeman-Smith meeting—the second great Tabernacle meeting conducted by the churches of Christ in Nashville.

It is not, however, as a song leader, but as a preacher, that John T. Smith has done and is doing his greatest work. He ranks as one of the best preachers among us. He came of preacher stock. As has already been mentioned, his father and two of his brothers were preachers, and another brother is a fine song leader and great church worker. He was greatly assisted and encouraged by all of them, and especially by his oldest brother, G. Dallas, who was his ideal as a man and preacher. He is a close student of the Bible, is thoroughly acquainted with the great scheme of redemption, and can present it in an attractive and forcible manner. He has been especially successful in building up and strengthening churches for which he has labored. He is deeply interested in the cause of Christ and the extension of his reign in the hearts of men. He follows the advice of Paul to Timothy and gives himself wholly to the things that pertain to the preaching of the gospel and the work of the church. He has no other aims, purposes, or ambitions in life but to preach the gospel, convert sinners, and build up the saints. His social qualities are of the very highest order. He makes himself pleasant and agreeable with all classes and conditions of men. Without affectation or insincerity, he makes every one feel like he is his special friend. Wherever he goes or lives, he counts his friends by the number of his acquaintances. He is refined and cultured in his tastes, and has a fine sense of the fitness of things. He is almost a Lord Chesterfield in the politeness of his manners and the elegance of his dress.

Altogether, he is an earnest, sincere, lovable character, who believes that "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

L. L. BRIGANCE.

2.01 - BIBLE HISTORY

BIBLE HISTORY

Ladies and gentlemen, brethren, and friends, I am very seriously impressed by the wonderful rapidity with which the weeks and the months of time roll by. To me it is but a short space since together here we met under circumstances so much akin to this, to study those things in which all seemed intensely interested; yet I recognize we are one year nearer our eternal destiny.

Far more than I can express it do I appreciate the very kindly invitation to return to your capital city and to engage in this meeting. I could but congratulate myself, indeed, upon the confidence which those who have this meeting directly at heart have in me personally, and upon the splendid gathering of you, friends, who by your very presence lend encouragement to the services thus begun. I had hoped and really would have been delighted to have had with us to-day Brother Pullias as a fellow laborer in directing the part he had last year; but I rejoice to know that he will soon, if not already, be engaged in a series of meetings somewhat akin to this, and, therefore, perhaps wield a greater influence than he might here. In his absence, as has been stated, we are glad to have Brother John T. Smith, one of Israel’s sweetest singers, with whom, I am sure, you will be glad to join in hymning praises to "Him from whom all blessings flow."

I must acknowledge personally my genuine appreciation to the newspapers of the city of Nashville for their kindness in giving publicity to this meeting and publishing the sermons, and I do hope and trust that as the months and years go by there may be nothing done by your humble servant or those with whom he labors that will cause them ever to regret the extension of this splendid courtesy in helping to bear the messages that shall be announced to numbers and numbers of yearning hearts who cannot be present in body during this series of meetings. Political, social, and economic questions and issues are forever changing, but the things with which we shall have to do are perpetual and eternal.

I have not come to you brethren to preach myself; for, in the language of Paul, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake." Neither have I come to please men other than as an earnest, honest effort to present the truth as best I can may meet their approval, for I recognize that if I seek to please men I cannot be the servant of God. I have not come, therefore, simply as a matter of entertainment. I have not come to play upon your fancies or your emotional nature in any way, for I recognize full well that though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; "for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe it, unto me, if I preach not the gospel" of the Son of God. I come to you "not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him’ crucified." "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you" who are of Nashville, and who will from time to time, I hope, be glad to favor me with your presence, your prayers, and your interest in every way.

There are two great books for the human family to study and by which to be governed and guided according to their respective needs along the pathway of life. I refer to the book of nature and the book of revelation. I think it safe to say that the object of the first has to do purely and solely with the things that are temporal and transient in their nature. My material success in life and relationship with reference to time and timely things are dependent upon my ability to harmonize with nature and nature's law. In that special held alone I do not need the Bible. But there is another—a higher and a nobler-characteristic of humanity which we call the "spiritual," that which differentiates man from the other animals of earth and links him to divinity. With reference to that part of our nature, God's book, the Bible, gives us a message from high heaven indicative of God's will and of heaven's desire that the human family may be happy in its journey from the cradle to the grave, from time to eternity, and ultimately blessed in that home of the soul across which the shadows never come.

Since this meeting is going to continue for twenty and two days, representing as it shall forty-three sermons, I think it is not at all amiss for us to begin as if it were a great school with the Bible our text, at the close of which we expect to be better acquainted therewith and have a more thorough grasp of that wonderful book which has, indeed, been the anvil on which numbers and numbers of hammers of opposition have been worn out, a book which has withstood the ravages of time and stands to-day the most prominent book in all the history of the world.

I think it necessary for us to have a general grasp of the entire field of Bible story and of Bible history, that it may be both chronologically and logically fixed concretely and definitely in mind, that we may be able to see the general trend of God's revelation to man from start to finish.

I know the difficulty and the disadvantage of learning an abstract fact here and another there and a third somewhere else, these having no relation either logically or in point of time one with the other. All knowledge of any sort whatsoever, if it be practical and helpful, must be correlated in some kind of a definite and tangible manner. In the study, for instance, of the history of this, the greatest country under heaven, it is absolutely necessary, in order that it be remembered and appreciated, that it be divided into periods and the events connected therewith properly classified so that they may be grasped and related the one to the other. In this study there are five great periods. First, the aboriginal, which embraces that period in which three prominent characters appear—viz., the Norsemen, the mound- builders, and the Indians; second, the period of discovery, in which we learn of the different activities of the five leading nations that were sending out explorers and discoverers to gain information regarding the world that lay to their west; third, the period of settlement and development; fourth, the period of the Revolution, when the yoke of bondage was laid aside and a new nation was born upon the earth and assumed its rightful place among the sister nations of the world; last of all, from the inauguration of Washington down to the present, we have what we call the "national period."

Now, to understand the history of this country, I need to know the facts and the particular period to which they belong; also, I must know the relation of each event to the others. The history of the Bible covers a period of forty-one hundred years—from 4004 B.C. to 96 A.D., according to Arch-bishop Usher's chronology. The dates found at the top of all our Bibles are generally accepted, and perhaps are as nearly correct as any one can determine. In these forty- one hundred years the history of God's dealings with humanity has been written in one volume

complete. But it likewise is divided into periods. I want you, therefore, carefully and thoughtfully to be able to get a glance, a bird's- eye view, of all Bible story from first to last, a general outline, and in the remainder of this meeting to All in such things as may be discussed. According to others who have thus classified events better than I could have done, there are Ave great periods of Bible history. First, the period of early races, covering a stretch of time from 4004 B.C. to 1921 B.C.-two thousand and eighty-three years; second, the call of the chosen family, from 1921 B.C. on down four hundred and thirty years to 1491 B.C.; third, the Israelite people, from 1491 to 1095 B.C.;fourth, the Israelite kingdom, from 1095 B.C. to 587 B.C.; fifth and last, Jewish provinces, from 587 B.C. down to 70 A.D., the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem.

I trust that you may be able to follow now and to appreciate the details that shall be mentioned therein.

Referring to the first period, the early races of mankind, are embraced the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. That period has but one topic that subdivides it.

First of all, the races of mankind were united upon the earth. They were all of one accord, spoke the same language, were of one tongue, one tribe, one dialect, and one in every respect. But finally there was an incident that marred the continuation of that state of affairs, known as the building of the tower of Babel, 2234 B.C., from which time unity no longer prevailed ; but the people were dispersed and scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, and thus were in a state of division when that period closed, and God saw fit to lead out a family and offer promises through the blood line of the same. The events characteristic of the first period are very simple, and a Bible student needs only to recall what therein happened.

Under that period comes the story of creation outlined in the first chapter of Genesis—the creation, fall, and expulsion of man, and the first sons born upon the earth, with their endeavor to worship God.

After that we have an account of the ten generations from Adam to Noah. These are: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah.

After that we have a development of wickedness as it begins to evidence itself upon the earth, brought about, seemingly at least, by marriage relationships of the sons of God with the daughters of men. The record tells us that when these sons of God looked upon the daughters of men they saw they were fair to behold. Attracted, enamored, and allured thereby, they took unto themselves wives; and the next statement that follows is that wickedness multiplied upon the face of the earth more and more, until finally "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." it appears that the world reached a state when almost total depravity was the condition of humanity. But such a condition was not allowed to continue, and immediately God issued a decree that there should come a great flood upon the earth and that everything in whose nostrils was the breath of life should be wiped out of existence. The command was given to Noah to make ready for the wonderful scene that was soon to transpire, and hence the direction and the instruction for the building of an ark. Noah began the preaching of righteousness to the world. Just how long he continued thus to proclaim, I do not know—perhaps one hundred and twenty years. This encouragement he gives to every man—viz., that while he absolutely failed to impress his neighbors and to convert the world to the

truth, he succeeded in saving his own family; and if you and I and every other man could be equally successful, the angels would look out over the battlements of heaven and rejoice with joy unspeakable even this afternoon.

I am not, therefore, friends, discouraged when on any occasion people refuse to accept what I conceive to be the truth or fail to acquiesce in the things proclaimed; but there is a solemn obligation resting upon every man and upon every soul, and that is, God expects of us a rendition of service and of duty according to the requirements and demands under which we live. At last the windows of heaven were opened, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the rains descended, and for one hundred and fifty days the waters prevailed upon the face of the earth. Noah took his wife, his three sons and their wives, entered the ark, and launched out upon the bosom of an ocean without a shore, guided by the great Captain of that wonderful vessel, until by and by, in Jehovah's providence, having ridden the waves of the mighty flood, it rested upon the summit of Mount Ararat. At the voice of God, Noah and his family emerged into a new world, cleansed and purified and made ready for the beginning of a race of people of which he was the second representative Soon after that event the posterity of Noah drifted southward, attracted, perhaps, by the rich alluvial soil along the lower course of the Euphrates; and, as is characteristic of humanity, they became forgetful and unmindful of God's providence and grew conceited to the extent that they said: "We will build us a tower and make us a name, that no matter where we wander or where we go, we will never get outside the view of this splendid monument." According to profane history, they laid the foundation well—a square two hundred and seventy-two feet, then up, pyramid like, until at last one hundred and fifty-three feet of height was reached. Perhaps they fancied that by their own physical force and power they could build a tower that would pierce the vaulted canopy of the heavens and permit them to look in upon the throne of Jehovah. Then God saw fit to stop the vainglory of man and to demonstrate the futility of any efforts of his prompted purely by physical power. He visited their city, confounded their language, and scattered the people that had hitherto been one over the face of the earth. And this was the beginning of the division of the language of the people, which division has continued until a thousand tongues, dialects, and languages are found in the earth today.

Next, the genealogy of Adam is traced on down to Abraham through Noah's sons: Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abraham—twenty generations, covering a period of two thousand years. The world was steeped again in sin. Idolatry was in the land. God saw fit to visit one special family, which dwelt down on the lower course of the Euphrates River, in the land of Shinar, and said to Abram: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." These promises mark the close of the first and the beginning of the second great period in Bible history, covering a space of time from 1921 to 1491 B.C. This period of the Bible is characterized by the study of three personages—namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At God's call Abraham left Ur of Chaldea, together with Sarah, his wife; Lot, his nephew; and Terah, his father. Up the valley they marched for a distance of possibly five hundred and fifty miles, until they came to old Haran, in the country of Mesopotamia. There they tarried, for how long I do not know, but sufficiently long for Abraham to secure a number of souls and to enrich his already

increasing physical effects. There his father died at the age of two hundred and five years and was buried in a strange land.

After Abraham, with the rest of his people, marched around the northern part of the Arabian Desert, he came into the land that was afterwards to be the land that flowed with milk and honey. When they reached Bethel, ten miles north of the city of Jerusalem, Abraham stopped, built an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord. Prompted by a famine in the land of Canaan, he moved on southward into the land of Egypt, and there trouble arose because of the beauty of his wife. Abraham, thinking that the exigencies of the hour demanded that a falsehood be perpetrated, almost brought destruction upon an innocent people and their king by deceiving them in the half-true statement concerning Sarah's being his "sister," when she was only a half sister and his legal wife. Let me stop to offer this suggestion: The very fact that the Bible account reveals this weakness on the part of Abraham carries with it a genuine conviction that a hand higher than that of man must have penned the story. it is characteristic of humanity to record the good things about our heroes and heroines and to leave the bad in the background and to the unknown. But in the Bible, without exception, God tells of the weakness of man as well as his superior traits of character. By the intervention of Jehovah, Abraham escaped out of the land of Egypt and came into the land of promise. Here trouble arose between his herdsmen and those of Lot. Knowing that they were in a strange land and that the enemy was on every hand, he said to Lot: "Let there be no strife between me and thee; for we be brethren." The whole land was before them, and Abraham made a generous offer relative to their separation. Lot's character of selfishness and greed is revealed in that he selected the best section and pitched his tent toward Sodom. This decision meant his ultimate ruin. Abraham turned to the left and made his home at old Hebron. He next pursues the Elamites and rescues Lot. On his return he meets Melchizedek and to him pays tithes. Soon Ishmael is born, and the cities of the plain are overthrown. He next moves to Beer-sheba; and Isaac having been born, he goes to the land of Moriah to offer him as a burnt offering unto God. Sarah died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven and was buried in the cave of Machpelah. Abraham continues on until his career closes at the age of one hundred and seventy-five, when his remains were placed beside the body of Sarah. The life of Isaac, though longer than the lives of Abraham and Jacob, was spent in a small range of territory and with but few events. After his marriage to Rebekah at the age of forty, his home was at (1) Beer-la-hai-roi, (2) Gerar, (3) Rehoboth, and (4) Beer-sheba, where he died at the age of one hundred and eighty years and was buried in the family sepulcher. The story of Jacob is related with more of detail than any other person in the Old Testament. His career is varied and presents many phases of life. After having gained the birthright over Esau and having secured the blessing from his deceived father, he left the old home, where he had spent about sixty years, and hastened to Haran, where he remained for the next forty years. Here he married Leah, then Rachel, and unto him eleven sons and a daughter were born. Being a fine trader, he soon grew rich in cattle, flocks, and herds. The time came for him to leave, and, with his possessions, he started back to the land of Canaan. At Mizpah he made a treaty with his father-in-law; at Peniel he wrestled with the angel and was reconciled to Esau; and at Shalem he rested once again in the land of Canaan. At Bethlehem, Benjamin was born and his beloved wife, Rachel, died.

Joseph is sold into Egypt; a famine waxes sore in the land; and finally Jacob and his family, now numbering about seventy souls, come into Egypt to remain for about two hundred and fifteen

years. At the age of one hundred and forty-seven Jacob died, and his body, being embalmed, was carried back to Hebron and laid to rest in the ancestral sepulcher. The Israelites fared well until a king rose up which knew not Joseph, and then their bondage became so severe that God heard their groanings and cries and sent Moses to deliver them. But Pharaoh refused to let them leave his control, and a series of plagues finally convinced him that God's hand was with them. Under the leadership of Moses, they crossed the Red Sea and sang the song of glad deliverance on the farther shore.

Thus ended the second period in 1491, and introduced to us the next, known as the period of the Israelite people, lasting from 1491 to 1095. Having become free from Egypt, these people march along the eastern shore of the Red Sea and finally come to Mount Sinai, where they remain for one year.

During this stay four important events came to pass— (1) the making and worship of the golden calf; (2) the giving of the Decalogue, the constitution of their great law, to be written by Moses and to last for the next fifteen hundred years; (3) the building of the tabernacle, God's golden house, upon a foundation of silver; (4) the numbering and organization of the people preparatory to their onward journey. From Mount Sinai they marched on, and at the end of the second year they came to old Kadesh-barnea, at which time Moses thought best to send out the spies to view the land, and thus one from each tribe was selected. They went into the land of promise, viewed it over, and brought back evidences of the richness and of the fertility thereof. They were all agreed on a number of points respecting the same. They said with one accord that it is a fine land and a goodly country; it has its fruitage galore; and its wonderful harvests are, indeed, attractive to the eyes of men. They further agreed that there were giants dwelling in that land. Ten of the spies opposed the efforts to take the land and proposed to make them another captain and return to Egypt, but Caleb and Joshua rent their clothes and insisted that under the banner of Jehovah they could drive out the enemy and come into their own promised possessions. Because of the report made by the ten, God issued a decree that none of that generation above twenty years old, except Caleb and Joshua, should come into that goodly land, but that they should wander in the wilderness a year for every day spent in searching the country. Thus for forty years they roamed up and down the wady beds of a barren region until all had died. During all these years Moses bore their grievances and suffered their frequent condemnations, until at last they came to the plains of Moab, just east of the Dead Sea. Here occurred (1) the episode of Balaam's prophecy, his efforts to curse God's people being turned into a blessing; (2) the iniquity of Israel with the women of Moab, and the plague upon them as a result; (3) the numbering of Israel once more; (4) the campaign against the Moabites and the Midianites; (5) the allotment of the land east of the Jordan to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh; (6) the repetition of the law as found in the book of Deuteronomy; and (7) the ascent of Moses to the height of Nebo, his splendid view of the promised land, and his lonely death.

I have tried, my friends, to think of Moses as thus he stood at the close of the most eventful career that any man had hitherto had—a man who had stood as the very confidant of God himself, who had been privileged to receive and give to the world that basis of law that has been the model and the standard for all nations of civilized peoples since that time, the man that led the greatest army the world has ever seen and directed them to victory. He stands, if you please, one hundred and twenty years young, with his physical force unabated, with the same eagle eye that gazed into the

eye of old Pharaoh forty years before. Looking out to the right, Moses could view the entire land that glided away toward the great Arabian desert. Northward there was old Mount Hermon, veiled in misty clouds, towering above the surrounding country. Then as he cast a wishful eye beyond Jordan's stormy banks, he saw the rich fields of Canaan, the silvery streams, and the smiling valleys. When he thus beheld the sublimest sight ever viewed by mortal man, God laid his hand upon his heart, and, without a pain, an agony, or a sigh, Moses fell asleep. God buried him in some lonely spot, unmarked, unknown, that his tomb might never be desecrated, that his body might sleep in solemn silence until the trump of God shall sound and all the ransomed be gathered home.

Upon the death of Moses, Joshua took the lead and conducted the people across the river Jordan, whose waters were parted as were those of the Red Sea. Then he remembered that a reproach had rested upon Israel for forty years, due to the fact that they had failed to circumcise their children, and hence were under the disfavor and disapproval of God. When the male children were circumcised, they called the place of their headquarters "Gilgal," which means their reproach had been taken away.

Joshua then planned three campaigns to drive out the seven nations that occupied the western part. Each of these was a success, and then the land was allotted to the remaining nine and one-half tribes. Thus was the promise made by God to Abraham with reference to physical affairs literally fulfilled.

Things went well for a time; but, as the further history will show, they soon became unmindful, forgot the part God had had in their delivery and that he had guided them thus far. To reprove them and bring them to the recognition of their sins, God allowed a series of oppressions to come upon them, seven in number, until by and by the people were humbled, dependent, and recognized their relationship to God. Judges were ordered to rule over them, according to the demands of the hour; and hence the period of the chosen family and of the Israelite people closes with the reign of the fifteen judges. At the close of Samuel's career the people demanded that a change of affairs be brought about; and hence a system was inaugurated unlike that which God had ordained, which did not meet with his approval, and that stands out an exceedingly prominent period in the subsequent history of God's dealings with humanity. But enough for this time. From this talk, ladies and gentlemen, I am perfectly aware that nobody could learn what to do to be saved. I am certain that from it you could not understand what God's will is to you personally and individually; but from your previous study of the Scriptures and from the preaching hitherto to which you have listened, if there should be those in this audience who understand what the will of the Lord Is and have a disposition to render obedience to him now, I am always glad, and shall evermore be, I hope, to extend to you the gospel call.

It is very encouraging to be met by this goodly number again and to hear you join in the singing of these songs. I do hope that the services here to-night may be exceedingly pleasant and profitable to you. it is my earnest desire that good, and good alone, may result from our meetings, that the people may be brought nearer together, that the name of the Lord may be revered by the great masses of this city, and that numbers of souls may be led to the cross of Christ and be saved in the by and by.

I tried to get before you this afternoon a part of the history covered by this book we call the "Bible." it embraces forty-one hundred years, from the creation of man to the close of revelation. In our study this afternoon we learned that all Bible history was divided into five periods-viz., the early races, the chosen family, the Israelite people, the Israelite kingdom, and the Jewish provinces. The first three of these have been presented, and I call your attention tonight to number four, the Israelite kingdom, which was established 1095 B.C. Humanity's disposition has always been about the same. After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea and passed through the wilderness of wandering, they were settled in the land promised by God to Abraham. They entered into houses which they never built; they came into possession of orchards which they never planted, of waving fields of grain which they never sowed, and of wells which they did not dig. As is generally true, riches and possessions obtained in this manner are never appreciated. These people came to think too much of themselves. They were puffed up and filled with pride. Then it was that God allowed the nations round about them to gain the ascendency over them until they might come to recognize their dependance and be conscious of the fact that God still reigns over the affairs of men. A system of government was, therefore, inaugurated to meet the demands of the hour. God ordained that judges should be raised up to throw off the oppression and fight their battles. When Samuel, the last of these, grew old and his sons began to rule over Israel, the record tells us that they perverted judgment and arrested justice. This was the occasion that a demand be made for a change in the entire system. Those who wanted to be like the nations round about them took advantage of the situation and insisted upon a different order of government. Let it be understood, however, that a failure on the part of individuals to do their duty is no just ground for a departure from God's established order. When the people demanded a king that they might be like the nations around them, Samuel was wonderfully grieved, and carried the matter to the Lord in prayer. The Lord answered him, saying: "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." Samuel returned to the people and warned them regarding the step they were taking. He pictured clearly the nature of the kings who should reign over them—how that their own sons would be appointed for himself, for his chariots, and for his horsemen. He declared that the king would appoint captains over thousands and over fifties, and would set them to ear his ground and to reap his harvests and to make instruments of war and instruments of chariots. He further declared that their daughters would be taken for cooks, bakers, and confectioners. He said their fields, their vineyards, and their orchards would be given to his servants, and that the king would take a tenth of their seed and give to his officers, and that all of their menservants and maidservants would be given to his work. He further showed that these very people which demanded a king would one day cry out because of him, but the Lord would not hear. "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." When God saw that they were determined on their course and that they gave no heed to the earnest pleadings of his servant, Samuel, he overruled their own personal preference and caused Saul, the son of Fish, to be selected as their first king. This whole procedure, be it remembered, was never in harmony with God's will, nor did it ever meet with his approval. He allowed them to have their say until they should at last come to a recognition of the fact that his hand was in it all.

Under the leadership of Saul, a number of battles were won over the enemies, and a territory of six thousand square miles became theirs. Because of Saul's disobedience in the destruction of the Amalekites he was rejected by Jehovah, and he finally died upon his own sword.

David came to the throne 1055 B.C., and at once evidenced the fact of his superiority. He subdued the nations round about and increased the territory received from Saul tenfold. His kingdom reached from the Euphrates, on the northeast, to the river of Egypt, on the southwest. His last days, however, were filled with sorrow; and he died with his hands stained with blood and forbidden by Jehovah to build a house for the Lord. His son took the throne after a period of forty years, and made memorable his reign by the building of the temple. The grandeur, the glory, and the greatness of Israel were centered upon this magnificent structure. For wisdom, riches, and prominence, Solomon stood without a peer in all the history of the world. Strange to say, after God had so signally honored him and granted to him that which no one had previously enjoyed, he, the wisest of all the ages, was led away into idolatry and disobedience to God. Upon his death, 975 B.C., this government, which had stood together for one hundred and twenty years, was divided.

Rehoboam took the throne at Jerusalem and reigned over two tribes, while Jeroboam went to Bethel, carrying with him the remaining ten tribes. The kingdom of the ten tribes was ruled over by a series of nineteen kings, from Jeroboam to Moses. These were unmindful of Jehovah, and in the course of time lost their individuality, their distinctiveness, and their identity. By the year 721 they had become so much like the idolatrous nations around them in practice, customs, and worship that they were absorbed by the Assyrians and passed out of history. From their blending with the Assyrians have come the Samaritans, hated and despised by every faithful Jew. The woman, therefore, at Jacob's well was right when she told the Savior that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. The two tribes under Rehoboam continued faithful to God for a period of three hundred and eighty-eight years, at which time Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, swept down the Jordan valley, destroyed the temple built by Solomon, and carried away the best of the people, together with the golden vessels and silver cups, to that city beyond the Euphrates. For seventy years the Jews were under Babylonian authority, and their country was in waste, their sacred temple in ruins. Thus was begun the fifth period in Bible history, known as the "Jewish provinces." As previously stated, they were under Babylonian rule from 606 to 586—nineteen years in subjection at Jerusalem and fifty-one years in Babylon. In the year 536 Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was slain, and the Medo-Persian empire was established, to which the Jews were in subjection for a period of two hundred and six years. Under the decree of Cyrus, Zerubbabel led an army back to Jerusalem and laid the foundation for a second temple. He was followed by Ezra, and after much discouragement and a number of years, during which hope was deferred, the temple was finally rebuilt. In grandeur and glory it was incomparable to that built by Solomon. Some of the old men who had witnessed the first looked upon this one and wept because of its inferiority. The Solomonic temple, which stood for four hundred and twenty-four years, was the crowning glory of Mount Moriah. it was constructed at a time of profound peace, and by the aid of powerful allies, purchased by the freewill offerings of a proud, wealthy nation. No wonder it should assume such glorious proportions. This second temple was erected in the midwinter of Israel's sorrow and discontent. it was built by a mere remnant who returned from a long and rigorous captivity. They were without means, with enemies in the Persian court to obstruct the royal permit and foes lurking near their work to impede their labor; but to them it was a

glorious house, and the prophet declared that its glory should exceed the former, because of the fed that one day the footfalls of the Prince of Peace should echo throughout its sacred walls. The Persian empire ceased to be, and in 330 Alexander the Great swept over the land like a comet's flash across the sky and subdued the nations of all the earth. For seven years he was the idol of all civilization. When but thirty-three years of age, he died, having conquered the world, but unable to conquer his own passions and lusts. His government was divided among his four generals, which soon blended into two rival governments-viz., the Egyptian and the Syrian. Of these two rival powers, the former was in the ascendancy from 301 to 174. Under the Egyptian rule the Jews enjoyed their liberty and were privileged to carry on their worship according to their own pleasure. In 174 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes, the Assyrian, gained the supremacy and crowded into the following eleven years such horrors as have seldom disgraced a sovereign or maddened a people. Antiochus was great, and even brilliant, but with these attributes he combined the worst qualities that dishonor manhood. One of the ruling passions of his disordered mind was a hatred of the Jewish people and of the religion of Jehovah. Cost what it might, he was determined to crush the Jews and wipe out their system of religion. Checked in his campaign by the threatened intervention of Rome, he wreaked his fury upon the Jews. Though allowed to enter the city of Jerusalem without resistance, his general slaughtered forty thousand of its inhabitants and sold as many more into slavery. He broke down the walls, burned the gates, ransacked the temple, seized the sacred utensils, erected a statute of Zeus in the temple court, and consummated the sacrilege by the offering of a sow upon the altar of burnt offerings. The seventy-ninth Psalm throbs with the passionate pain of that awful day. The nation gazed aghast at the desecration of the holy place while it lay prostrate at the tyrant's heel. Two years afterwards Antiochus issued an edict which combined the designs of Jezebel and Haman-the suppression of the religion and the extermination of the race. The carrying out of this edict was as relentless as its conception was atrocious. Worship of Jehovah was forbidden; the temple was transformed into an idolatrous sanctuary; the Holy Scriptures were everywhere sought out and destroyed. Many of the Jews died; some gladly apostatized and aided the oppressors against their own people. There was no armed resistance, and Antiochus boasted that the religion of Jehovah had ceased to be. The hearts of the Jews were burning, and the nation, relying upon its promises, stayed itself. Beneath the surface lay the smoldering fires. Only a hand was needed to stir them, and the whole land would be in flame. In a little town called "Modin," a few miles west of Jerusalem, a venerable priest, "Mattathias" by name, and his Ave stalwart sons, had taken temporary refuge from the storm. The officers of Antiochus came in their efforts to enforce the edict. They called upon Mattathias to set an example of obedience by sacrificing to the gods. Ready for death, but not for apostasy, he refused. One of those degenerate timeservers who disgrace every age and every cause, anxious for favor, stepped forward to show the way to faithfulness. "And Mattathias saw, and was grieved; and his wrath was kindled according to the judgment of the law." (1Ma 2:24) With one blow he laid the apostate dead. His five sons gathered round about him with the same zeal in every heart. The villagers responded, the guard was put to flight, and the altar was overthrown. The die was cast, and the war for country and creed was begun. Under the years and hardships the father soon sank; but all the Ave sons, worthy of their name and race, remained. In all the history of the world there is, perhaps, not a parallel to this family. One by one these boys took the lead, and each lives in history with some fond title after his name—"John the Holy," "Simon the Guide," "Judas the Hammer," "Eleazar the Beast Sticker," and "Jonathan the Cunning." The struggle for

independence continued for a number of years, during which the greatest victories were won and the greatest sacrifices made by almost any people who have ever lived. The Ave sons of Mattathias, each in turn, lay prostrate upon the field; but their cause was won, and the Jews entered upon a state of independence from B.C. 160 to about 6 A.D. For the benefit of those who wish to study this line of thought more particularly I submit the following as leaders of their people: Judas Maccabaeus, Jonathan, Simon, John Hyrcanus, Alexander Jannaeus, Alexandra, Aristobulus, and Hyrcanus. This brings us to the year 39 B.C., at which time Herod the Great, an Idumean, occupied the throne. No man of greater duplicity has ever lived upon the earth. He was able to influence either Caesar or Pompey and use them for his own selfish end. Herod was of magnificent presence, lion-like strength and courage, and possessed of an energy that knew no fatigue and a will that acknowledged no defeat. He became the most prominent character on history's page, and by his ability to handle the Roman authorities he was known as the "king of the Jews." He married the beautiful Mariamne, of Maccabean ancestry, and was so devoted to her; and yet so selfish was he that twice, at the crisis of his affairs, he gave orders that, in the event of his death, she, too, was to die. Moved by the jealousy of his sister, Salome, he caused to be put to death the grandfather, father, brother, and uncle of his beloved wife, and in the end climaxed his crimes by her murder. He also had put to death his own sons, lest they might rise up and seek to dethrone him. In the midst of the most bitter remorse and with an anxiety to throw of the cares that had come upon him, he planned and carried out the greatest public enterprises with which his name is identified. He fortified cities, fostered industries, and threw the shield of his protection over the Jewish communities throughout the empire. To gain the affections of the Jews, he set about the rebuilding of the temple. This he did, not because of any religious conviction or zeal, but with the earnest desire to dazzle the religious imagination and to excite the pride of the people. His temple surpassed that of Solomon, as Solomon's surpassed that of Zerubbabel. He also Bought to build a palace that might eclipse that of the ease. But try as he might, he could never place himself wholly in sympathy with his subjects. His introduction of Roman names and symbols offended the sensibilities and evoked an indignation which all their national satisfaction failed to silence.

Idolatry was in evidence on every hand, and so he gradually lost the respect of his subjects and began his rapid decline. His physical forces were abated. His mental ability likewise waned. The description of his last days given by Josephus cannot be read without disgust. He lay upon the couch a rotting mass. No foot came near to him save unwillingly, so offensive was he to both sight and smell. In all history there is probably not a more ghastly scene than that of Herod's deathbed. In perverted ingenuity he devised a scheme to compel a national mourning when he died. He summoned the chief men of all the nations to Jerusalem and shut them up in the Hippodrome. He then charged his sister, Salome, and her husband that the moment the breath left his body the soldiers should be let loose among them and all should be slaughtered.

If ever evil was embodied in one man, it was in that corrupt mass that lay upon the royal bed and plotted death even when incarnate love was born into the world. From the couch of Herod pass for (I moment to the cradle of Christ. A peasant couple from the hills of Galilee trudged along to the historic Bethlehem, the woman worn with long travel and pinched with the pain of approaching maternity. The road was not far from the palace fortress, and, perhaps, they saw the lights and heard the strains of music with which Herod's servants sought to soothe his agony. it was late in the day ere they reached the "inn," and all the sleeping compartments were occupied. A place was

found on the lower level used for the stabling of the cattle, and there on that night Jesus, the Christ, was born.

Such a contrast between the village khan and the palace fortress the world had never seen and can never see again. The Prince of Peace was among the beasts, and the beast was among the princes. The real King was in the stable, while the usurper was clad in purple. Only a few miles, as men measure space, separated the two; but, as God measures moral distance, a whole universe intervenes. Herod and Christ are at opposite poles. Infinity interposes between the selfishness that lived to slay and the self-sacrifice that died to save.

Upon the death of Herod the Great in B.C. 4, Archelaus took the throne, and reigned till 6 A.D., at which time the land of Palestine was ruled by a series of procurators, as follows: Coponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annius Rufus, Valerius Gratus, Pontius Pilate, Vitellius, and Marcellus. This brings us to the year 41, when King Agrippa I. was made ruler over the land. He continued for three years, and then procurators or governors continued, with Cuspius Fadus, Tiberius Alexander, Cumanus, Felix, Porcius Festus, Albinus, and Gessius Florius, thus closing the political rule over the Holy Land until the destruction of the temple.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have gone into detail regarding the history embraced in the study of the Bible and during the four hundred years between the Old and the New Testaments. This has been done with the earnest hope that your interest in the book of God may be increased and that you may have a firmer grasp upon the affairs that then transpired. The church of Christ was established toward the closing years of this long history, and through the simple machinery characteristic of New Testament times the gospel was carried into all the world and proclaimed to every creature. That gospel we have to-night, and during this series of meetings I hope to unfold to you its principles and cause you to enlist under the banner of Him who died that we might live. If already you know the truth and have a disposition to obey it, the opportunity is now yours, and may the Lord help you to use it.

2.02 - THREE GREAT RELIGIONS

THREE GREAT RELIGIONS

I have promised to talk to you to-night about the three great religions of the Bible, or what might be equally styled the three dispensations of God’s government unto man. Notwithstanding the opinions of a number of learned men of the earth, I really believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth; that he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; that he stood there a living soul, bearing the impress of divinity upon his brow and the very stamp of God’s image upon his heart. it was intended for him to exercise dominion over all the Ashes of the sea, the very animals of the earth, and the beasts of the field. He was then fit company for Divine association in that innocent, happy state that characterized his original condition; but after sin entered into the earth, in harmony with the dignity of the law and the majesty thereof, Jehovah saw At to drive him out, and thereby man forfeited that splendid association and heavenly companionship that had at first characterized his condition, and from then on was driven out and made to grope his way down the aisles of time.

God loves him still, and seeks to bring about a restoration to his original condition, and hence, as a means to that end, establishes the first system of religion know to mankind, or the first general system of government under which man is thus placed. it is generally known in Bible language and by all students thereof by the name of the "Patriarchal Age," lasting for a period of twenty-five hundred years, from Adam to Moses. The word "patriarch" means a father, as the head or ruler of the family. The patriarchal age would be that system of Divine government executed and carried out by the father of every family. Hence, this is the only system of which we have a record for the first twenty-Ave hundred years of the world’s history.

It was God’s custom and manner to deal with the father direct, and never with the members of the family, only through the father as the representative thereof. For instance, unto the sons and daughters of Adam, God regulated their lives through laws given unto the father, or the head of the family. To the sons of Noah, God directed them by laws given unto Noah, and the sons of Abraham were governed by laws given to Abraham, and so on down the line of each, according to generation and the family to which he belonged.

There is one verse back in Genesis 18:1-33 that I think reflects the whole system, where, concerning Abraham, God said: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah." And in that statement there is the explanation of the dispensation known as the patriarchal age or system of government.

All laws were not revealed at one time; but, considering man’s state and ability to make advancement, God gave laws as man was able to receive them and in perfect harmony with his progress. These laws were such as would finally fit him for the coming of the Messiah, the fullness of God’s intention in the remedial system of mankind. Hence, in the early morning of time he gave

unto Adam the law of animal sacrifice, with the victim and the altar, and made known to them, since all sacrifices back there were but typical of the coming Christ, that the Lord himself was to be approached only upon the presentation of blood or the slaughter of some victim in whose veins blood flowed.

Later on God gave to Noah the commission to build an ark, in which alone he was to be transferred from the wicked antediluvian world to the new, purified and cleansed by water. Later on God gave to Abraham the law of circumcision, designating and differentiating his sons and posterity from the races of the world round about. There was a complete system of laws adapted to the ignorance, weakness, and slow development of the newly fallen race; but God expected them to live up to the full demands as made obligatory upon them in the simplicity of the few laws thus imposed upon them. Their standard, therefore, was far inferior to that under which you and I now live; and all the declarations concerning these patriarchs are to be measured and determined in the light of the age in which they lived. For instance, it is said of Noah that he was a perfect man in his generation, and yet weak enough to become drunk after he emerged from the ark into the new world. Abraham, because of his righteousness, was called the "friend of God," and yet by the incident that occurred down in the land of Egypt he almost caused the destruction of an innocent people and their king by announcing to them the half-true statement regarding Sarah that she was a sister, when, as a matter of fact, she was only his half sister and his legal wife. Let me say, moreover, that the marriage which was then recognized and accepted by God would be considered in the light of the gospel age nothing short of incest—one of the most abominable crimes of which the human race can be guilty.

Hence, when we study those characters of the long ago, we ought to bear in mind that the apostle said in Acts 17:30 that at the time of their ignorance God "winked at" — passed it by, overlooked it—but now, under the gospel age, commands all men everywhere to repent. Incest and polygamy were tolerated by God Almighty under the patriarchal age, but never approved; and it would be but foolish, I think, to base an argument upon these examples to the intent that it would be right for me to do those things under this splendid age in which we now live.

While the laws were few and absolutely simple, yet God expected obedience to the very letter and the very spirit thereof; for it is said in Holy Writ (Hebrews 2:2) that every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, and Paul recites that fact as an argument to show how you and I cannot expect to escape the wrath of God if we neglect so great salvation under which we are now privileged to live. This is further illustrated in the historic story of Cain and Abel, where God Almighty commanded that they offer a blood sacrifice unto the Lord. I learn from Paul’s comment in Hebrews 11:4, where he said, "By faith [and be it remembered that faith comes from hearing God’s word] Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," that the sacrifice by him was accepted, while the one tendered by Cain was rejected. I do not know but that Cain fancied that something else would do just as well; and hence, being a farmer and a tiller of the soil, he brought forth from the earth the fruit thereof and offered that in all honesty and perfect sincerity as a substitute for the sacrifice which God commanded. But it was rejected, and early in the morning of God’s dealings with humanity there was a principle demonstrated and carried out that God expects the strictest obedience unto his will, and no substitute will be accepted as an equivalent. Nothing short will meet with heaven’s approval. This system of government was purely that pertaining to a family. it was suited to the age unto which it was given. There were very few

people then upon the earth, who were nomadic in their nature, wandering about from place to place, and it was fitting that their system of religion was such that wherever they chose to go, the head of the family, acting as the patriarch and the priest, could build an altar and there offer a sacrifice, assured of the fed that it would meet with God's approval and secure his richest benedictions to rest upon them. This dispensation, system of government, or first religion by God established upon the earth lasted for twenty-five hundred years, until the establishment of a greater religion; and if it did not end at that time, it was applicable thereafter only unto that part of the world separate from the posterity of Abraham. But having led a tremendous host of perhaps something like three million souls out of the land of Egypt, fifty days thereafter God brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai and there inaugurated a system of government absolutely new, wholly separate, not dependent upon nor leaning upon any of the characteristic features of the patriarchy, destined, as it was, to last for the next fifteen hundred years. This is known in Bible story and in Bible history as the Jewish, or the Mosaic, dispensation. The change wrought was the emergence from a family system to a national one. No longer is it a family affair; no longer does the father, or the head of the family, officiate. God no longer is dealing with humanity simply as a family; but having led them, if you please, throughout the kindergarten department of his great school, they now become a nation, and into their hands God is ready to place the first textbook ever delivered unto mortal men. Hitherto all the teaching and information was given by direct word of mouth, just as we teach children in the kindergarten department; but after coming out of Egyptian bondage and receiving the basis of that law at Mount Sinai, the religion of the world, from that good hour unto this, has been what might be properly called a "book religion." God's will, demand, and word to the human race has been written upon the pages of truth Divine and confirmed by the approbation of God Almighty, sealed and dedicated by the blood of animals and at last by the blood of the spotless Son of Mary. By this word the sons and daughters of men have ever thereafter been directed in all of the affairs of life. This Jewish system of religion, as before stated, was not based upon the patriarchal, and, with the exception of just two principles, it was an entirely new feature unto the nationality descending from the seed of Abraham. Inasmuch, my friends, as all things back there had to be of necessity typical of the blood of Christ, and inasmuch as the blood of Christ had not been shed, it was necessary that animal sacrifices characteristic of the patriarchal age likewise be involved in the system of Judaism; and whereas the sons of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the Israelites, make up this great nationality, there was the doctrine of circumcision still in effect; but, with these exceptions, God gave to the Jews at Mount Sinai a new covenant and a new dispensation, wholly distinct in all of its phases and parts from that which had characterized the history of the world for the previous twenty-five hundred years it is not amiss to suggest to you that the entire system of the Mosaic law was but typical or symbolic in its nature—scarcely any prominent feature connected therewith but that was typical of that which was to come when the fullness of time came upon the earth. The wanderings in the wilderness, the temple, and the tabernacle were typical of the church of God under the last dispensation. Moses, their matchless leader and lawgiver, the lamb sacrificed under the law, were but typical of the Christ who was afterwards to come. The common priests back there were typical of Christian people to-day, and the service through which they passed was largely but a picture painted upon the pages of God's word of the service in which you and I, too, are to engage, and from which all benedictions and the promises of God must forever come. But be it remembered that the law was exceedingly weak and only intended for a short time to fulfill the purposes that God had in mind.

Hence, Paul, in commenting upon it in Romans 8:3, said: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son," etc. The weakness of the law is demonstrated in various and sundry ways, one of which was that all those who had a part therein and rendered obedience thereto could never be rid of the consciousness that there was something lacking that was to be fulfilled in the golden by and by. All the worshipers never had their conscience thoroughly purged, but were ever mindful of the fact that there is to be a repetition of our acts time and again until by and by the fullness shall have come upon us in the earth. With all the sacrifices that characterized their affairs, there was no forgiveness, no blotting out, no wiping away of the sins and of the transgressions in the absolute, but only were those sacrifices typical of the Christ that was by and by to come, the shedding of whose blood was at last fully, wholly, and completely to rid the world of the sin under which it was then cursed. That statement is further and fully verified in Hebrews 10:1-39, where Paul says: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect, For then would they not have ceased to be offered? But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." But these animals being all they had, evidenced the fact that the sacrifices must be repeated year after year in the regular order. For instance, when under the Mosaic dispensation faithful, loyal Jews brought their sacrifices unto the altar, sought out a priest of the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron, and the sacrifice was offered, they were conscious of the fact that the sacrifice that was offered only rolled forward their sins, pushed them on in front, for just one year at a time, at the expiration of which there came that great load of sin back upon them, and hence another sacrifice had to be offered. And thus it was on down the line for a period of fifteen hundred years, until by and by the Christ ultimately came. There was nothing made perfect, as Paul emphatically declared in Hebrews 7:19, under the law of Moses. The law made nothing perfect, but it remained for a better covenant thus to do. Let me suggest again that under the law there was a man-made tabernacle, with all the apartments purely pertaining to earth, to time, and to timely things, which was destined to last through their wandering in the wilderness, on until Solomon’s temple should be built; and that likewise was transient in its nature, fitting type though it was of the final culmination and the ultimate development of the church of God.

Finally, my friends, the law was intended only as our pedagogue, or schoolmaster, to bring us unto the Christ— unto that faith, unto that final system, which was to be world-wide, ecumenical, unlimited, unrestricted by any nationality, country, tribe, tongue, or people upon the earth.

Perhaps a series of questions with reference thereto might develop and bring out in full plainness some of the primary, elementary principles found therein; and so I ask, therefore: For what purpose did God Almighty ever inaugurate the law given by him to Moses in the summit of Mount Sinai? But for the fact that Paul has answered, it would be largely speculative and imaginary on the part of humanity; but in Galatians 3:19, Paul, in arguing that question, has this to say: "Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." Be it remembered, my friends, that four hundred and thirty years previously God had called out Abraham and had announced unto him a world- wide promise—namely, that "in thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Four hundred and thirty years rapidly sped by,

at the end of which time God led them out and brought them to Sinai and there gave them a law, and Paul said it was added because of transgressions. it stepped out upon the stage, if you please, as an actor emerging from the background, played its part as was intended, and then made its exit, giving place to another greater and grander.

What sin had been committed, what law had been transgressed? May I suggest to you that the inference is not wanting nor the suspicion lacking that direct reference was made to the fact that the sons of Abraham were marrying daughters of the Gentile world, thereby corrupting and defiling the blood stream through which and from which the Christ was by and by to come? Hence, something must be done in order that the family of Abraham be kept pure, in order that through his seed, and that alone, the Christ should by and by come. God, therefore, built a wall separating the Jews from the rest of humanity, forbidding them to mix and mingle and associate or intermarry with the rest of the world, until by and by the great promise made to Abraham should ultimately be fulfilled. Hence, Paul said: "Because of transgressions God gave this law." But the next question: For how long did Heaven intend the same to last? Notwithstanding the conflict in theories and doctrines of men, I submit to you the plain declaration of God's word in reply thereto, and this same verse absolutely and positively answers the question that is propounded: "Wherefore then serveth the law' it was added because of transgressions" until a certain thing should come to pass. Now, you stop and ask what that means. The record says: Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." God's word being true, therefore, the law of Moses wars never intended to last for all time nor to be applicable to all people in its every announcement. In the very beginning God said it was added because of transgression until the promised seed should come. And in the same chapter, Galatians 3:16, I do not have to guess as to what Paul meant by the promised seed of Abraham, for he said: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Hence, Galatians 3:19 might well be read after this fashion: "Wherefore, brethren, then serve the law, which was added because of transgression, until the Christ should come, and it was ordained in the hands of a mediator."

Jesus Christ occupied and sustained a relationship to that law that is admirable in all of its phases. He was to be the end or fulfillment of all things connected therewith. Hence, he is the end of the law, no doubt of that; and during his entire career he lived in perfect harmony and with direct deference and due regard to all of the principles therein found; and to set aside a prevalent opinion that perhaps prevailed when he was born upon the earth he announced in the memorable Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17-18): "My friends, think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy. I have come as a fulfiller, and until heaven and earth shall pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law until all be fulfilled." Not only did Christ himself teach the observance of the law, but he practiced it and commanded his disciples to observe the things taught by those who sat in Moses' seat; and until finally when he expired on the tree of the cross there was never a time but that Jesus recognized the dignity of the law of Moses, the fed that God was its giver, and it was his purpose not to destroy it, not to violate it, but to live in perfect obedience and ultimately be the fulfillment thereof it served its purpose to bring us down the line until the Christ should come. Paul styles it our "schoolmaster," or our pedagogue, whose business was not to teach the classes, but to go to the home of the children in the early morning, have general oversight and care thereof, accompany them from their home

down to the schoolroom, and turn them over to the real teacher thereof. Thus the law of Moses began just as they marched from Egyptian bondage in their state of progress or development, led them down and educated them for fifteen hundred years, and finally brought them unto Christ, their great Teacher, Leader, Lawgiver, Prophet, Priest, and King.

You ask finally, friends, what was the end thereof? In discussing this point, Paul said in Colossians 2:14 : "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." The Bible does not declare that God's Son simply took away the ceremonial part or the judicial part; but in discussing the law Paul said that he blotted it out, took it out of the way, and nailed it (the law) unto the cross. And, again, in Ephesians 2:1-22, discussing the very same thing, commencing with Ephesians 2:13, he has this to say: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity [what was the "enmity?"], even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." Well, why that? "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Equivalent to the expression that he might make in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. The only thing under the shining stars that ever alienated or separated the Jew and the Gentile was the law, known as the Mosaic dispensation, or Jewish age; and thus when that was blotted out, it was equivalent to the tearing down of the middle wall of partition; and no longer national lines, race distinction, or any kind of relationship other than that of a mutual one was thereafter to prevail. Hence, Paul spoke in Galatians 3:28-29 after this fashion: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And this, my friends, was the final culmination characteristic thereof.

But, passing from the law as being accepted and Fulfilled and finished by Christ, there was to be inaugurated a better covenant, founded upon better promises. That dispensation, beginning as it did on the memorable Pentecost, continuing until time's knell shall be sounded and all the ransomed of earth are gathered home, we are under now—the reign of Christ as our Priest and great King. But be it remembered that Christ was not a priest while upon the earth he remained. Paul declared in Hebrews 8:4 : "If he [Christ] were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." The priesthood upon this earth was provided under the law of Moses. The priesthood of Christ and the reign thereof is one to be higher than the earth; it was to be higher than the heavens themselves. Hence, it is declared in Ephesians 4:8 that "he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men"—this indicative of the beginning of his reign. In that very simple text, friends, Jesus, the Christ, is represented as a victorious monarch, coming forth from battle with the victories won, and at the head of the great procession of the vanquished foe. Governments in days gone by were characterized by the king's bestowal of princely gifts upon the parties and individuals of his government; and so, in perfect accord therewith, Paul said that he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. When Christ at last ascended the throne and was seated at the right hand of God as "King of kings, and Lord of Lords," entering into his priestly relationship, he commenced by the giving of gifts unto the apostles and the disciples, evidencing the fact that the new reign is now to be inaugurated—a world-wide system, not bounded by

national ties or racial distinctions, but for every man and to all the sons and daughters of men. The Son of God is now occupying David's throne, having ascended into the heaven and become "head over all thing! to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all;" and hence there is the inauguration of that system of religion under which you and I are to gladly live and willingly respond to-night. Be it remembered that this new dispensation could not have begun prior to the death and triumphant resurrection of the Son of God. That is stated in such a simple, easy way, in language that you and I can appreciate and understand, embodying all the principles as found in Hebrews 9:16-17. Paul said this: "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." I am sure that this audience understands and appreciates the simplicity of that statement. When men in Nashville make their wills, write out a disposition of their effects, that will is not operative nor effective while the maker thereof is alive. He can destroy it, write another wholly different, dispose of his property in any way that seemeth good to him. But if a man die slid among his effects his will or testament is found, it becomes effective when a certain legal procedure is carried out; but it is of no effect until after the man is dead. So Paul pictured the Christ se the maker of the great will, in which it is possible for every man on the face of the earth to become a beneficiary, and emphatically declares that where the will is and where the testament is, there must not may, but must-always be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, "otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

You and I to-night, therefore, are not living under the patriarchal dispensation, not living subject to the law of Moses, and we will search in vain if we try from the teachings of Christ in his personal ministry or the work of John the Baptist to read our titles clear to mansions over there. I grant you that Christ taught many things that were afterwards to be incorporated in his will. For instance, when he gave the great commission, authorized the apostles to preach the gospel unto every creature and offer salvation and remission of sins upon obedience thereunto, that is followed by the statement that they were to go to Jerusalem and there tarry until they be clothed upon with power from on high. When Christ made the splendid promise to Peter at the foot of Mount Hermon (Matthew 16:19), "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," it is said (mark the next statement—Matthew 16:20): "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." Why, friends? On the principle that the time is not come, the testament is not of force until it shall be sealed and dedicated and consecrated for evermore by the blood of the maker thereof. In that wonderful scene of the transfiguration, in the next chapter in the book of Matthew, there are presented Moses and Elias and Christ—three of the earth's greatest characters. Peter, James, and John, as witnesses thereof, are enraptured by the grandeur and sublimity of the scene; and hence they suggest: "Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.)) Then there was a bright cloud that overshadowed them, they having fallen to the earth because of fear; and when they rose up and opened their eyes, behold, all had passed sway save Jesus, the Christ. The purport of all this, beyond the shadow of a doubt, is this idea: "Time was when you should have heard the voice of Elijah; the time has been when you should have lent an attentive ear unto the direction of Moses, Israel's great lawgiver; but now the time has come when they have both been eclipsed by the supreme glory, the superlative grandeur of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and he stands here a physical demonstration that we should listen unto him." And there came from the

skies the sublime declaration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." No longer listen to those gone by; they have served their purpose, fulfilled their mission, and faded away, giving rise to a greater and grander, in which successive stage Christ alone is left, and hence hear him. But just before the Lord bade them goodby, mark this significant statement made to the disciples: "Tell no man that Jesus is the Christ until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." "I have incorporated the principles, indeed; but the time has not come for them to be operative, as yet they are of no force; and hence you wait until you be endued with power from on high. Wait until the appointed time in God's providence for this will to be probated by the court of high heaven; wait until God sends acknowledgment, letters testamentary, unto you as executors thereof, and then, with the will and the testament having been sealed, commencing at Jerusalem, go throughout Judea, then Samaria, then Galilee, and then finally speed across the continents and bear the glad tidings unto earth's uttermost bounds." The apostles, therefore, became the executors, the ambassadors, of God's will; and hence I can understand what Paul meant when he said: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "His affairs have been turned over to us. We bear evidence of the fed that he selected us, he authorized us, and clothed us with power; he clothed us, if you please, with authority from on high, and bade us, as executors of his will, to carry the glad tidings over the rivers unto the ends of the earth."

It behooves you and me to-night that we investigate the gospel age, that we learn what God would have us do in this last will and testament under—not the patriarchal age nor the Jewish age, but the gospel age. We are not under the starlight nor the moonlight, but under the full strength of the sunlight age of God's revelation to man; not under a family religion, not under a national religion, but under an ecumenical religion, absolutely unbounded; not during the time when God appeared in vision, not during the time when he appeared wholly in words, but in that dispensation when he appeared manifest in the flesh and evidenced his very person by the gift of his matchless Son to mortal men. Under this dispensation, friends, we are no longer commanded nor authorized to offer animal sacrifice; no longer do we have to go to Jerusalem and there find a priest of the tribe of Levi and of the house of Aaron-no longer are we thus to do; but beside Calvary's bleeding brow we should gladly come and say: "Lord, speak, command; we will hear."

I bid you stop and reflect: What does the gospel age demand? That it demands faith in the Son of God, I think no sober-minded soul would question; that the same gospel age and Christian dispensation requires of you and me that from our sins we turn away and in absolute and genuine penitence resolve to forsake the evil of out, way, the unrighteousness of our thoughts, and turn unto God with all our hearts; that, in addition to that, the Christian dispensation demands and commands that you and I confess with the mouth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, which amounts to the acceptance of God's full and complete revelation, which amounts to the placing of our hands in the wounded palm of our Savior and at one hundred per cent believe what he says, do what he requires, submit to his authority, render the obedience demanded by this great King and High Priest, and lovingly trust him for the promise. We should understand that he demands of us to obey from the heart that form of doctrine which has been delivered unto us under the ceremony, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, as a result of which, salvation, forgiveness of sins, deliverance, translation from the kingdom of darkness unto the kingdom of God's dear Son, certainly is the promise of God's everlasting truth.

Faith and obedience to the law of Moses in all of its forms and phases produces a certain product as the natural and the logical result. Will you stop and think just a moment what was the effect of believing and obeying in all of its phases the law that emanated from Sinai? As a matter of fact, faith and obedience to that law made Jews, and Jews alone. it made no peculiar types nor varied kinds nor diverse sorts; but they were simply Jews, without addition, without subtraction, because the law of Moses, when faithfully carried out and loyally obeyed, produces but the one thing everywhere. Every one stood on the same plane, the same level, believed the same thing, practiced the same thing, and enjoyed the same benedictions from the hand of God Divine.

Faith and obedience to the gospel of Christ under the Christian age will produce but one thing, and that is a Christian—not various types nor shades nor kinds nor phases, not with addition, not with subtraction, but simply a Christian under the banner of Christ Jesus, our Lord. And now I must conclude. Wheresoever I chance to go, and the people, like you, so kindly lend their presence and their encouragement by their polite and patient attention, it is a pleasure to ask them openly and frankly and with a conscience void of offense on that line at least to accept the gospel of the Son of God Divine. My friends, if I had it absolutely in my power to-night and all the authority unto me granted, I would not have any man in all this splendid capital city of ours become and be anything under the shining heavens above except simply a child of God—a Christian. I would have you become identified and related to no body except the body of Christ, the church of God, of which I read in the New Testament Scriptures. I would give to him no creed, no confession of faith, no church manual, no church directory, other than God's book, and bid him to believe what he is required to believe in obedience to his will, and, having done that, to trust him lovingly for the promise that when life's fitful dream shall have passed, God will send a company of angels to gather round about him and as pallbearers conduct his spirit home to glory to nestle in the bosom of a Father's love while Eternity rolls her endless ages on. May I ask to-night that if there are those who understand what the will of the Lord is and have the purpose of heart and mind to render obedience to it, as we sing the gospel song, will you press your way down the aisles and give me your hand?

2.03 - BELIEVING A LIE

BELIEVING A LIE A company of people like this, gathering together from time to time, can but serve as quite an inspiration and an encouragement to any one who attempts to address public assemblies. I want you to know, ladies and gentlemen, that I appreciate your presence and hope all things may be pleasant and helpful.

I have promised to speak to you to-night on the subject, "Believing a Lie." In speaking of certain characters, Paul said (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12) : "And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a He: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

There is a very, very popular idea extant that if a man believes a thing to be right, honestly follows out his convictions and his sincere purposes along that line, such a platform will ultimately land him safely home in glory. The principle here involved is not accepted by anybody on any other item except in matters of religion. To use some illustrations which I have heard, let me suggest that there might be a bank in the city of Nashville on the verge of destruction and ready to be closed. I do not know that, and, believing it to be a sound financial institution, I gather up the last dollar I have and deposit it with the cashier. Now, I want to ask, does the fact that I believe that bank to be sound guarantee me against the loss of the money I put therein? Such a question carries its own answer.

If some designing man were to seek and finally gain the hand and heart of a young woman, I want to ask you, does the fact that she loves him, believes in him, and has confidence in him secure her against the misery, the woe, and the wretchedness that is certain to come from one of that designing nature and character? Again, to ask such is but to answer. In all the affairs of life the belief of a proposition does not guarantee the safety thereof. That does not work in our State government. it does not apply in the realm of science or of warfare. Many a battle has been lost because the commanders believed a lie. Many a ship has gone down to the bottom of the mighty ocean because of the fact that those who had it in charge believed a lie. I recall just now the great Titanic on her wonderful maiden trip, characterized by the very elite passengers of the land, and in the midst of revelry and joyful festivities they believed that the mighty ship was unsinkable; and, notwithstanding the fact that the news was flashed by wireless suggesting that icebergs were coming from the North, they turned a deaf ear, passed it by, and continued in the belief of a lie. The result was that more than twelve hundred went to the bottom of the sea.

I signed a man’s note once for a sum of money at the bank. I verily thought that when it became due the man would pay it. I believed a lie.

Ladies and gentlemen, Paul did not subscribe to the doctrine that the belief of a thing is a guarantee thereof; and so it is said in our text that because certain ones received not the love of the truth (he did not say because they did not receive the truth, but because they did not receive

the love of the truth), God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that all those might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

There is something or other connected with the belief of a lie. Paul, what is it? Not salvation, but damnation. In this splendid, goodly land of ours every man and every woman has access to the truth of God, but the very fact that a person has the truth is not a guarantee of his eternal salvation. it is not enough simply to have the truth, but a man must have the love of it in his heart, or else God will send him a strong delusion. I do not think that by any direct communication God would send that delusion; but he would allow the man who does not love truth to be worked upon by error until he becomes satisfied, lulled to sleep, and his conscience eased. Then, drifting upon the bosom of time, prompted by opinion and personal preference, the man rests in the belief of a lie, which, if not arrested and if not in some manner changed, will result in his damnation. In the Bible. there is a fine story told expressly to demonstrate the principle herein involved. The record of it is found in 1 Kings 13:1-34; and now I want you to follow and to study with me as best we can the story related and then see if the application be legitimate and worthy of our most serious concern.

After Jeroboam had established himself as king of the ten tribes, he decided that if the people continued to go to Jerusalem for to worship, by and by they would renounce their faith in him and their allegiance to the government he sought to maintain and would seek to go back under the rule of David’s descendant; and so he said: "Let us build us two calves of gold. Let us set one of them up at Dan, and the other at Bethel." And then he went to the people and said: "it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. I am too much interested in your taking such a long journey when it is wholly unnecessary. it is much more convenient otherwise. Look upon your gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt." In the course of time Jeroboam, assuming the place of a priest, planned to burn incense upon the new altar thus erected at Bethel. In the meantime God appeared unto a young man, a prophet that dwelt in Judah, and ordered him to go down to Bethel and cry against that altar, and told him what to say: "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out." Now, that is the command of God thus far unto the young prophet. "And when you go, young prophet, eat no bread, drink no water, nor come again by the way that you went." The young man understood perfectly well what God declared. He never even raised the question as to whether or not the declaration was clear; but, understanding thoroughly just what God wanted him to do, he made ready, responded to duty’s call, and went down to Bethel. As Jeroboam’s people were gathered round about to witness the burning of the incense, this young man broke through the crowd close up to the altar and thus proclaimed the prophetic declaration as announced by God. Upon hearing this, Jeroboam’s anger was kindled, his wrath was great, and he said to those round about him: "Lay hold on that young man, that we may kill him." But as he stretched out his arm to carry into effect that kind of an order, the God of heaven interfered and wrested the same, made his arm stiff, so that he could not draw it back again to his body. Jeroboam was not unacquainted with Jehovah, and understood quite well that God’s hand was in it all; and immediately the king changed his tune and said to the young prophet that stood by: "Entreat the Lord thy God for me, and ask his favor upon me, that my hand may be restored." And the young prophet, glad to accept the suggestion, took the matter unto the

Lord in prayer, and Jeroboam's arm was made like it was at the beginning. Then what? Instead now of the king's despising and having murder in his heart, all the wrath was changed to admiration; and so he said: "Young man, I want you to come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." A wonderful, wonderful temptation, such a strange trend of affairs, such an unexpected reply from what the young man had right and reason to look for! Instead now of the king's wanting to curse and to kill, he takes the side of the young man and says: "Sir, I want you to come unto my house, into the royal palace. I want you to have a royal dinner and be my guest, and I will give you out of the overflowing treasures a splendid reward." I want to ask you: Had you been in that young man's position, how would you have treated an invitation of that sort? Were you ever invited by a king to come and dine with him? If so, did you have a disposition to turn it down? Were you ever asked to come into the home of royalty and there be laden with riches galore and with rewards supreme? Immediately the young man spurned the invitation and said to the king: "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place." Well, why? "For it was commanded me by God not to do that."

I submit to you, my friends, that there never has been pictured to mortal man a finer type of humanity thus far — a young man who is not afraid of the wrath of the king, a young man so mindful and so respectful of God's commandment that he is not moved by flattery, a young character so reverent for the word of Jehovah that even the glittering shekels of gold and of silver have no attraction for him. And so he said to Jeroboam: "I could not go, not if you were to give me half of thy house." Well, why not? Was there any reason especially for not doing it? From a human point of view, absolutely none. Well might he have accepted the doctrine of expediency and reasoned after this fashion: "Perhaps if I go home with old Jeroboam, I may have a splendid influence over him and may cause him to return to the fold of God. Therefore, I will feast in the royal palace myself; I will have my name to go abroad that I was a special guest; I will receive the rich reward, and, at the same time, I will gain a soul for God." But had he done that, as you well know, he would have been in violation of the will of the Lord.

Now, there is another side presented. Down at Bethel there was an old prophet of the Lord—a man who knew quite well that Jeroboam, in the offering at Bethel on his new altar, was doing the wrong thing; but this old prophet of God, while his heart was against the act, lacked the courage of his convictions. Propriety and expediency suggested that he had better keep quiet and to hold his tongue against the doings of the king. And so this old prophet at Bethel did not attend Jeroboam's inaugural offering of incense. But the old man had some boys, and one of them was down at Jeroboam's meeting. Let me say to you, fathers and mothers, that you and I may be too religious to go to certain places, we may be too good to be defiled by contact and association with things that are unscriptural and ungodly; but bear it in mind that, unless we are exceedingly particular, our boys will be there and our girls not far away. So when this young lad, the son of the prophet, had witnessed all that transpired, he went back home to tell his father of the things that had come to pass down at Bethel— how that a young man stood there and cried against the altar, how they beheld that the altar was rent and the ashes thereof poured out. The old prophet was exceedingly anxious to meet the man who had the courage to speak the truth and to condemn the wrong, even if he himself had been lacking and cowardly in the affair; and so he said to his son: "Saddle the ass. Let me go out after that young man, that I may fetch him back home with me." The boys saddled the ass, the old prophet rode thereon, and hastened down the road toward which the

young prophet had gone. He soon found the young man dismounted and sitting under the spreading branches of a mighty oak. When this old man approached him sitting under the oak, he said: "Young man, I want you to come back to my house. I want you to share my hospitality and enjoy my feast. Come and eat with me and refresh yourself." The young prophet told him just what he did Jeroboam. "Why," he said, "I can't do that." "Why can't you? Why not?" "Simply because God told me not to. That is sufficient; that is enough. God said for me to eat no bread, drink no water, nor return the way that I came. I cannot do it." The old prophet was so anxious and so determined to carry his point that he framed up a lie—not a story, not a falsehood. it does not take that many letters to spell it. The Bible says that he told him a lie. Well, here is what it was. "Young man, I also am a prophet of the Lord, as thou art. We belong in the same class. And an angel of God hath appeared unto me, and told me to come down and fetch you back, and refresh you by giving you something to eat and water to drink." Friends, the man that had been able to withstand the invitation of the king, the man who had had strength of character and resolution enough to resist the temptation of flattery, the man who had been so unselfish as to overcome the desire and greed for gold, fell upon the plausibility of a lie. Mark you, he wasn't a bad man, but a brave character and a true soul, and hitherto a loyal one; and when he could not be trapped by fear of the king's wrath nor by the flattery of being invited as a guest at the palace, when he could not be bought with money, he yet failed and was overcome by the plausibility of a He that was told. So the record says that the old prophet carried him back, during which time the wife of the old gentleman was seeing to it that a bounteous feast was being prepared. And as thus they sat around the table richly laden, even in the midst of their enjoyment the word of the Lord came to the old prophet and caused him to say: "Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers." That solemn announcement was well understood by the old prophet, who was conscious all the while that he had lied to the young man and was the cause of his wreck and of his ruin. He was then just as anxious to get rid of his guest as he was to have him in the first place; so once more he said to his boys: "Saddle the ass; let the young prophet ride thereon and hasten away." As the young prophet, conscious now of being deceived by the He, starts on his way home, a lion meets him face to face. I have tried to feel as he must have felt when the lion comes and gets hold of him with his terrible claws, when he sees the glare in the eye of that ferocious beast and is dragged from the ass. As the lion pulls the man to him and his life is being crushed out, I wonder what is uppermost in the mind of the young prophet. Is it the fact that he sees the lion's glare or feels the terrible paws? Is the predominant idea with him now that his life work is ended and he must die? I think there is a weightier matter than all that. Friends, it was not the fact that he was dying, but it was the terrible idea that he was passing out in open disobedience to the voice of God.

Some men came along where this wonderfully strange scene was enacted, and went into the city where the old prophet lived and told the sad story. They said that there was a man lying in the road, a lion standing by, which had not devoured the body, and also an ass gazing upon the seen" " wonderful testimony to passers-by that every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward. When the news thus came to the old prophet, he said: "it is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord." He bade his sons: "Saddle me the ass." The old prophet went and found the carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by. So

he "took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother !" After the burial, he said: "Sons, when I am dead, I want you to bury me beside this young prophet. Let my bones He side by side with his." That was the best atonement he could make, and yet it was wholly inadequate and not to be compared with the wrong and the wreck that he had wrought by causing the young man to believe a He.

You doubtless say and reason now, just as I am disposed to do, that the old prophet was guilty of the greater sin. Sometimes we reason about it after that fashion. Let me ask you: Why didn't God kill the old man, who told the He, rather than the young prophet, who believed the He? I think the answer lies here. There are other passages in the Bible that have to deal with the teller of the He. There are plenty of other scriptures and examples that deal out the punishment and portray the destiny of those who misrepresent and who are guilty of lying. But the special reason for this story's being written is to impress upon you and me the danger of believing a lie, and I don't doubt but that in due time that old gentleman received his share of condemnation for having told the He.

I want to ask this just now: Is every He that a man believes detrimental? Does damnation follow the belief of all lies? If so, my friends, we are upon exceedingly dangerous ground, for deception and delusion are abroad on every hand. I am frank to say to you, because I firmly believe it, that there are lies which a man may believe and not be condemned. I can think just here if that old prophet had told this young man sitting under the oak almost anything else, it might not have resulted in the young man's death. Suppose the old gentleman had come to him while he was sitting under the oak and said: "Sir, a cyclone is coming, the storm is raging. This tree will be uprooted. Flee for your life, and stop not until you reach your home at last." 0, the young man might have been scared wonderfully; he might have run until he was almost out of breath; but the chances are that he would not have met a lion in the way; and while that would have been a lie, it was not of that type the belief of which brought damnation unto the soul. To make the matter short and without extending the lesson to-night, let me suggest to you this, which I think is in harmony with God's word and teaching in general: Any kind of a lie on earth which would cause me to sin or to fall short of doing God's will or to go beyond that which God demands is the type of a lie that will condemn the soul and rob it of a blissful crown.

There are certain things religiously that I can believe, which may be a lie and yet not subject me to condemnation. There are many problems and questions about matters pertaining to Christian duty and things in general about which there are conflicting beliefs. Some think the Holy Spirit in person dwells in the heart of a Christian; others think that the Spirit is in the Christian only through his teaching and his word. One or the other of these theories is a lie, but I think that the belief of either of these theories would not damn a man. Why not? Because neither would cause him to sin; neither would hinder his obedience to the will of God. There is but one thing, my friends, that will keep you and me outside of heaven's splendid mansions, and that one thing is sin. Whatever might cause me to commit sin, either in thought or in deed, if not forgiven, will result in my condemnation rather than my salvation.

There is one lie, ladies and gentlemen, that is the most popular and most prominent and that has to-night more victims than all others of which I can think. That lie is expressed in these terms: that

in our pathway along through life there are duties to be performed, there are obligations to be met and problems to be solved; but for all of these there is time enough yet. This idea has brought condemnation to more people than all things else. Thousands of souls have been led into failure to do God’s will and submit to his authority on the belief of this lie. Believing this He causes men to be guilty of a sin—not of commission, perhaps, but of omission, in that they fail to respond to duty’s demand. On every hand and in the realm of religious discussion we are told that penitent believers ought to be baptized. All people so agree, and so much so that outside of the Quakers there is not a church in America of which you can become a member without some form of baptism; but it is said to be a mere external rite, a mere ordinance; that there is nothing specially obligatory about it; and, therefore, there is plenty of time, and, in reality, it is nonessential. Forgetting that the Savior said the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, in that they refused to be baptized at the hands of John, many are thereby deceived.

Then, again, when I encourage you and others who favor me with their presence to respond to duty’s call and obey God, and remind you of what Peter said when a vast multitude cried out and asked, "What shall we do?" there are some people who will discourage obedience by saying: "That is water salvation." Why, friends, who said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins ?" Peter. What did he know about it? Guided by the Spirit, he knew all about it. Who says to the contrary? Some uninspired men, who by their utterances seem to advertise how little they know regarding the teachings of God’s word. Any declaration that you and I to-night might make, which would cause a man to hesitate in responding to the call that God makes binding upon him, would lead such a one to believe a lie, be guilty of the sin of omission, and be damned at the last great day. And now there comes to us a very practical question: How can we be sure that we are not blindly guided? How can you, my friends, who are engaged in various activities of life, be certain that you are walking in the light? There lives not a man upon the earth but that might be a blind guide, and so it is said: "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

I submit to you that there is but one set of men who have ever lived on the face of the earth whom you and I can afford to follow. I refer, of course, to the apostles of Christ. Hence, I bid you listen to no man per se, nor to accept anything from any uninspired man which you cannot turn to the book of God and read for yourself. Otherwise you might honestly be led to the belief of a lie, and thereby lose your own soul. The young prophet made this terrible mistake. God had told him exactly what to do, but instead of heeding it he listened to the old prophet. He ought to have respected and continued in obedience to God’s command. He should have said to the old prophet: "You claim to be of like profession with me. You say that an angel has come and told you to bring me back; but I have direct authority and commandment from God, and I will allow neither prophets of earth nor angels in heaven to countermand God’s order; and if the Lord wants me to come back, he must tell me himself."

Hence, Paul, in commenting on a line parallel with that, says (Galatians 1:8-9): "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man ["I care not from whence he comes; I care not," says Paul, "regarding the attitude or the bearing that he assumes; if any man"] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

There is but one safe course, therefore, for you and me to pursue, and that is, individually and personally, to go to God's word, there turn and investigate for ourselves. And when God says a thing, let all men be liars, but let God's word be true. Let us accept it, believe it, obey it, rely upon it, trust God for the fulfillment of the promises made therein, for it is right and cannot be wrong. If I yield to the philosophies of men, if I acquiesce in the vain fancied theory drawn by some uninspired man, I am treading on dangerous ground and may forfeit my right to the tree of life transplanted in the paradise of God beyond. I beg of you, my friends, to believe the truth. That alone will make us free. I bid you become and be just what God requires, live as he has directed, and then earnestly, patiently, and lovingly trust him the remnant of your days for the fulfillment of his precious promises.

If there are, therefore, any of this company now who believe the truth as revealed in the Bible, who will repent genuinely and thoroughly of all your sins, publicly confess the Christ, be buried in baptism, and rise to walk in newness of life, I beg you to respond to the call to-night.

NOTE.—This sermon is based upon one preached by Brother J. W. McGarvey, and is largely a duplicate of the same.

2.04 - MAN'S ACCOUNTABILITY

MAN’S ACCOUNTABILITY

I must thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the very great pleasure I have because of your presence and the interest manifested in our noonday services. I trust that they may be pleasant and profitable to all. The very fact that man is man carries with it the idea of responsibility; but those unfortunates of earth in whose mind reason has been dethroned and judgment has fled away, we think not of responsibility connected therewith. A machine, if turned loose upon the streets of the city of Nashville, would not be accountable for any detriment or damage that might result therefrom. But the very fact that you and I are individuals and not simple machines implies upon its face that we are amenable and responsible. Our accountability implies also the recognition of a power supreme unto whom I owe allegiance and to whom I must render a report at the last great day.

Any doctrine or theory whatsoever that tends toward the elimination of the idea of a Power divine; any doctrine that smacks of atheism, agnosticism, or any of the various phases of infidelity, is destructive of the idea of responsibility; and the consequence of said doctrine would necessarily be a rule of anarchy—a state of lawlessness on the part of humanity.

Throughout all God’s teaching, in every age gone by, he has sought to impress the human family with the fact that it stands above the animals of the earth; that there is something about man that links him to divinity, that gives him dominion over all things created. God has given to him a sacred charge and trust. He has left him free to think and to act, and at the close of his earthly career the Lord expected him to bring a full report and receive according to the things done while here upon the earth he dwells. Throughout the various ages and dispensations there has been no exception to that general principle. In the very starlight age of man’s existence God held him responsible, personally and individually, for the deeds by him done. When that was merged into the moonlight age, the age known as Judaism, the same demand and the same requisite on the part of Jehovah was made. Christianity but enlarges our opportunity, widens the doors before us, and with that comes an increased responsibility which you and I must bear and share. One of the finest characteristics of any man’s nature is to be fully alive and consciously aware of the responsibility that is intrusted to him that he may be enabled to measure up to the fullness of all the obligations and all the demands that duty imposes in his journey from time to eternity. In Romans 2:6, Paul makes the statement that in the final round-up of human affairs God will render to every man according to his deeds. I am not, therefore, personally and directly responsible for you, for those who have gone before, or for those who are to follow after; but standing as I do, demanding the privileges and the benedictions that come my way, I must assume life’s obligations and responsibilities and recognize that at the final close of human affairs I will stand or fall upon my own record and upon my own relationship to the demands that are made upon me by Him who has the right to speak, by Him who has the right to command . In Galatians 6:1-5, Paul has this to say: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the

spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."

I think that in Galatians 6:2 Paul must have observed life from the viewpoint of its sorrows, of its shadows, and of its troubles and sighs, and from that point of observation he said: "Brethren, bear ye one another's burdens. Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those that do rejoice."

Then in Galatians 6:5 I think he observed life from a viewpoint of our individual acceptance of duty's demand. When it comes to the rendition of that service that God makes obligatory upon me, there is no man on earth that can step in and substitute himself and meet with the approval of God Almighty in my behalf. I cannot possibly believe the gospel for you, I cannot possibly repent of your sins, I cannot acknowledge the Christ in your behalf, I cannot render that obedience demanded by the God of heaven for you, neither can I live the Christian life in your stead. My hands are full; the obligation rests upon me to measure up to Heaven's demand to the extent of my ability; and hence from that viewpoint every man must bear his own burdens, assume his own obligations, and stand upon his own deeds. But perhaps the most serious thought in all of the Bible is the fact that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." A few times in life I have been summoned to appear in the courts of our land. There is something about such that, to me, is a little bit embarrassing, something that makes me feel like I would rather be somewhere else. But there is one occasion from which there is no escape. There is one summons that must be answered. No excuse will relieve us. We must answer to the roll call of the great Judge of the universe and render our account according to the deeds done in this body, regardless of whether they be good or bad. My friends, if you and I would really believe that statement, if it could strike in and go home to our hearts and to our conscience, I think perhaps we would halt in our sinful course and thoughtless career. We would reflect more seriously and perchance correct our way while time and opportunity are afforded.

There has always been a disposition on the part of humanity to shirk its obligations and its responsibilities. We endeavor to shift the burdens on to others, with the expectancy that we may ride into places of prominence and into pastures green upon the goodness and activities of our kindred and special friends. There are plenty of young men and young women all over this land to-day conscious of their own lack of intrinsic worth and merit, and yet they are looking for preferment, for prestige, and for prominence. On what ground? Not upon the ground of their own individual value, not because of any merit per se, but on the ground that father was a prominent man, mother was well connected, and uncle was Governor of the State or a great benefactor to humanity; and out of regard for what these have done they expect the world to tip its hat and to bid them come up higher. But that is a false conception of life; and just so long as that idea prevails, there will not be $t the head of the various departments of this government that type of men best fitted to render service to their fellows and to add honors to their country.

Time was in certain countries when it was impossible for a boy to rise above the caste or estate in which he was born. Regardless of his ability or lack, his station was fixed by birth. I thank God that in America no such principle prevails. We never stop to ask: "Who was your father? Where were

you born? Under what kind of circumstances were you reared?" The questions in America are: "What can you do? Can you solve the problems and the perplexities that are bearing down upon the people to-day?" It is a matter of individual service and personal responsibility. The Bible has warned us against the idea of relying upon the other fellow. In the parable of the virgins, ten in number, five were wise and five were otherwise. Those who were wise took their lamps, and also vessels with oil therein, while the others simply took their lamps and left the oil behind. At midnight, while they all slumbered and slept, the bridegroom came, and the cry was made: "Go ye out to meet him." The virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, but the foolish said to the wise: "Lend us of your oil; our lamps are going out. We want to go in now upon the preparation that you have made. We have not done that ourselves, we have not assumed our own responsibilities; but we want to pass in to the marriage feast and share its joys upon the preparation others have made." Then the wise said to them: "Not so. You cannot do a thing of that sort. Go to them that sell and buy for yourselves." And while they went out to further their preparation, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. The foolish came later and knocked for entrance, but they were too late.

Then the Savior added another parable, in which he said: "The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." It was a personal, individual distribution of his goods to his servants. The five-talent man went individually, traded therewith, and gained other five. The two-talent man, likewise. The one-talent man, of his own individual matter, went and digged in the earth and hid his talent. In the course of time the master returns and demands of them a rendition of their report. They do not come up Collectively and say: "Now, Lord, here is what we have done." You have all heard persons who talked that way. "We killed a bear." But the Lord will have none of that. He says: "Mr. Five-talent man, let me hear from you." "Well, wife and I have done so and so." God never asked about the man’s wife. "Well," he said, "mother was a splendid, fine woman." Never mind about your mother. The question is: "Sir, what have you done? I want to hear from you individually and personally." So the man rendered his own account. Likewise the two-talent man. To them the master said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee [individually, personally] ruler over many things." But the one-talent man was consigned to the region of outer darkness, where there was weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Why? On the ground that he personally failed to measure up to duty, to appreciate the responsibility obligatory upon him. He was weighed and found wanting, and hence was cast into outer darkness. Ladies and gentlemen, there is not a parable, there is not an illustration, there is not a reference in all of God’s Bible but that teaches individual, personal responsibility. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." At the judgment it will never be asked of N. B. Hardeman: "What did the church do of which you were a member?" That is not it. But the question is: "What did you dol" I must stand or fall in the presence of God Almighty at the last great day upon my own record, my own obedience to the will of God, disregarding what the good people of ages gone by and forgotten have done. I am the only human being in this world to meet my own obligations. I must meet the issues of life and death day by day. Hence, if I believe the gospel of the Son of God, if from the depths of my heart I repent of all my sins, if I publicly and before men confess my Savior, obey him in every phase, follow all his demands, and live faithful unto death, I

will be saved, though every other person on the face of the earth might be sent to hell. On the other hand, if every other man, woman, boy, and girl on God's green earth were ultimately to be saved, that doesn't argue that I would be included in that company. it all depends upon whether or not I personally and individually accept the obligation resting upon me, meet duty's demand, respond to the call, and walk faithfully in his footsteps until my work on earth is done.

I appeal to you, my friends, to assume your own responsibility, discharge your own duty, and stand approved in Heaven's sight. Why not do so now while we stand and sing?

2.05 - THE GOSPEL

THE GOSPEL

I can but be encouraged from day to day by the presence of so many people interested in that which may be said. I am especially impressed with the very simplicity of our services, and it is my chief desire to present to you what I believe to be the truth, and to do it in the most simple manner that I can possibly command. I realize the fact that I am not dealing with trivial affairs, but that a responsibility rests upon me to declare unto you God’s counsel as I verily believe it to be recorded in his book. I have no disposition whatever to think less of any of you who may see fit to believe contrary to me. I just want to express my appreciation of your willingness to hear what may be said, and then bid you to accept or reject it, according as you find it to be in harmony with the teaching of God’s word.

I want to talk to you to-day about the gospel. In the short time allotted, only a few things can be said, but possibly enough to get some elementary ideas before you. All preachers talk about the gospel and preach things connected therewith, but it is positively certain that all do not proclaim it as the Lord requires. Let me ask: What is the gospel?

First of all, I want to call your attention to the fact that it is something God wants preached to every creature upon the earth; and when heaven is interested in a message being told to the people, it is sure evidence that there is something wonderfully worth while in it for us.

After the Savior had taught the disciples for about three years and had done many, many wonderful things in their midst to demonstrate his superiority, he died on the tree of the cross. He was raised the third day from the dead, and before his ascension he bade the apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." So much was dependent upon this that he was unwilling for them to go unaccompanied. He, therefore, said: "Tarry at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Wait until the Holy Spirit comes. This is no child’s play upon which you are entering. it does not have to do with the ephemeral issues of life, but the eternal destiny of the world is suspended upon the acceptance or rejection of that which I bid you proclaim. So go to Jerusalem and wait till the proper time—until humanity’s frailties are provided for by the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit—and then, commencing at Jerusalem, go throughout Judea, thence to Samaria, thence to Galilee, and finally to the uttermost parts of the world.

Later on Paul was converted and became one of the apostles. He said (1 Corinthians 9:16): "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

Now, every man that rises in the pulpit to-day ought to feel that responsibility. I have no fight to make against those of modern times who preach about matters that are purely social, secular, and governmental in their nature, who spend the time in playing upon the emotions and passions of humanity; but I am impressed with the fact that such is not my business in life. Woe is unto me if I

preach not the gospel of God’s Son. I might entertain you splendidly and possibly appeal to a great majority by some kind of a series of LECTURES, but that would not be the gospel of the Son of God. When I speak in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it ought to be such as will stand the test of the everlasting judgment of God Almighty.

Now, the gospel is something that God wants men to preach, and it seems that woe is unto every preacher who does not proclaim it. There is another side to it. The gospel, ladies and gentlemen, is something that God wants men to obey. It comes to you and to me with its attractive promises, and likewise with its solemn, sacred warnings.

I want you to listen to Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, where he said: "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus." Now, ladies, gentlemen, and friends, who becomes a subject of God’s wrath and of God’s vengeance? it is the man who obeys not, who sits passively and idly by, who may be a splendid hearer and may give mental assent to the correctness thereof, but who does not move in obedience to the gospel. That class shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of his power.

Friends, do you believe that? Can a sensible, sane soberminded man, knowing the wonderful affaire of life and how brittle is that thread granted to us here, and knowing the certainty of death, refuse obedience to the gospel of the Son of God and thereby invite to himself everlasting punishment from the presence of God and the glory of his power? Such seems almost impossible, and yet there are thousands who still refuse to heed his call. The gospel is not only something that God wants preached unto all men, not only something that you and I must obey; but, to be definite regarding it, I want to tell you what the gospel is, and I might preface that part of it by suggesting this: The word "gospel" simply means "good news." it does not make any difference as to the character of the good news; it would be gospel to us. For instance, if some of us had an exceedingly wealthy relative and in his will we are incorporated as beneficiaries, when the news is dashed over the wire and we receive the telegram that he is dead, there might be some phase of gospel connected therewith, but it is not the gospel of Christ.

If I could go to a great rally and make a big Democratic speech, a thing I could not do, numbers and numbers in the old Volunteer State would receive it with gladness. They would clap their hands and rejoice. And then, if, on the other hand, I should lambaste Democracy and uphold the banner of Republicanism, to another class that would be gospel.

I am not talking about simply good news. I am asking: What is the gospel of Christ? What is the glad story connected with him? In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul makes this statement: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I. delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Now, Paul’s word for it, these are the fundamental, basic facts of the gospel of God’s Son; and in that declaration he declares that this is "the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have

received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved."

Now, if a man is saved by the gospel, then what would be implied as a negative proposition? That without the gospel there can be no salvation. That follows as certainly as the light follows the darkness. Ever since Christ raised aloft the banner and swayed the scepter of authority as our High Priest and our King it has been announced to the world that salvation is based upon obedience to the gospel, which is the thing by which they are saved.

Now, I can do many things for my fellows to help them and to relieve them. I could, if I had the ability and the financial bearing, go through the city of Nashville, visit the tenements, administer to the needy, and help humanity wonderfully. I could give articles of wearing apparel to those who are almost nude, to the hungry I could give food, and to those in sorrow I might be able to lift them up and help them. This is my duty to do as far as possible. But I would be but rendering to them temporal service, but giving to them that which benefits the body; and though I were to give all of my goods to feed the poor, and though I were to lend every possible assistance, if I did not carry to those souls the gospel of Christ, they would die and go to hell at last, though they be clothed in silks and satins and dwell in palaces magnificent. The gospel is God’s power to save. So Paul said to the city of Corinth, with its 400,000 population: "Brethren, I preach unto you the gospel, wherein you stand and by which you are saved." Let me say to you good people of Nashville: it matters not about your political or social standing, nor your financial prominence, nor your prestige as a business man; you may live in a palace and exercise authority over your fellows; but if you do not hear the gospel, believe it, and obey it, you will never sweep through the gates of pearl nor walk the streets of gold in that blissful home beyond. God does not have class legislation; there are no distinctions; and every man, if saved at last, according to God’s word, must be saved by obedience to the gospel of God’s Son. When I render obedience to the gospel of Christ, I stand saved in this sense. Past sins are blotted out. I am a newborn babe, clothed upon with a garment spotless, laundered in that fountain filled with the precious blood of the Son of God. Then what? As a child in the service of God, I must take up my line of march and live faithful unto death. I must keep my garments spotless by continually repenting of the wrongs, praying God to forgive whatever sin I may be guilty of; and if I continue faithful in obedience to the gospel of God’s Son, by and by I will be privileged to enter the gates that stand ajar and to hear it said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." So the gospel as to facts represents and suggests the death of Christ for our sins, and therein is the element of the glad tidings. I do not rejoice this morning simply because Christ died. I never heard of a burial in my life that brought especial joy. Wherein is the element of good news? If you were to leave out of that just three words, you would rob it of the very essence of gospel fact namely: Christ died (now watch the glad tidings) for our sins. Therein is the occasion for rejoicing. I do not rejoice, therefore, simply because the spotless Son of Mary tasted death; but when I remember that humanity was lost and ruined and consigned to eternal death, that Christ Jesus died a felon’s death on the tree of the cross in order that you and I might have life, be rid of all the condemnation hitherto characteristic, and have a pathway opened up by which we could pass through the gates at last into God’s paradise, I rejoice with joy unspeakable. The gospel, therefore, as to facts, represents the great pillars, three in number, upon which the bridge from time to eternity is suspended and upon which it must forever stand. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried in a borrowed tomb, and on the third day burst the bars and came forth in glad triumph. But let me say

to you, friends, that the gospel not only is made up of facts, but in connection therewith there are commandments based upon the same; and then, following those commandments, there are the splendid promises. So I suggest to you that the gospel is made up, first, of facts; second, of commands; third, of promises. Three facts-the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ; three commandments—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, genuine repentance of all of our sins, and burial with him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit upon a confession of our faith. Following these, there are three splendid promises—namely, the forgiveness of all of our sins, the reception of the Holy Spirit, the hope of everlasting bliss and of a glittering crown. Did you ever stop to think how splendidly and how fittingly that analysis and that outline corresponds to our nature? Here I am, a human being, made up of certain characteristics. Suppose Christ did die and was buried and did rise the third day, what can I do with that? Can I obey that thing or those things? I cannot. Well, can I rejoice and enjoy those facts? O, no; there is a misfit. What may I do with the gospel? Let me suggest that there is about it every department suited to my need. Humanity has a threefold character—viz., the power to think, the power to reason, the power to believe. Then, in addition to that, there is what we call the "will power," the executive department of our nature, that which takes hold of a thing and makes it go, that which walks out and forces the decision, and caps the climax of the issue in doing it. it is the power to obey, or to execute. Furthermore, we have something or other about us that is called the "sensibility," or the affection, or our emotional nature.

Now, to what part of my nature do the facts of the gospel appeal? Without question, they come as a challenge to my intellect. I can think about them, reason concerning them, and at last accept them as facts. I can believe that Christ died; I can believe that he was buried; I can believe, and I rejoice that I do believe, that he was raised from the dead. Hence, the facts of the gospel appeal to my intellect.

Now, the commandments of the gospel come as a direct challenge to my will power. They beg of me to yield to their demand, to respond in harmony with my intelligence, and thus be able to stand upon his promises. Last are the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, which appeal to my sentiments and my emotions. There is not a man on the earth who with all of his heart believes the gospel, repents of his sine, acknowledges the Christ, and obeys him in all of his commandments, but that feels good and rejoices because of the fact that he is now able to read his title clear to mansions over there. He feels assured of the fact that God’s word is true, that his sine are forgiven; and hence he rejoices in the hope of everlasting bliss.

If a man or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which Paul has preached, let the very curses of heaven rest upon him.

I come to ask of you again to-day: Are there those in this company who believe the facts of the gospel? Are you convinced thoroughly that Christ died for our sine, was buried, and rose again? Are you willing to render obedience to his commandments? Are you willing then to spend the remnant of your days in the enjoyment of that religion that is pure and undefiled, in the relationship of a branch clinging to the vine? If you will follow in his footsteps here below, he will at last take you home to glory and give you a crown that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. While truth instructs, mercy pleads, and heaven waits, won’t you come?

2.06 - EVOLUTION OF THE GOSPEL

EVOLUTION OF THE GOSPEL

After the strenuous day of yesterday, followed by the sweet repose during the passing of the shadows, all of us have so many things for which to be grateful, not the least among which is the opportunity granted for further study and recognition of the Power Divine and of the destiny toward which we are rapidly and surely passing. I am so glad that you are interested in the study of the very simplest lessons that I can possibly get up, based upon what I believe to be the genuine facts and the real truth of God’s word.

I want to present to you this morning a lesson that is the very embodiment of simplicity regarding things that are sometimes considered wonderfully mysterious and hard to understand. I presume a fitting subject for it would be "The Evolution of the Gospel." Sometimes people are scared at the mention of that first term; but, rightly applied, it is not dangerous, but really expressive in many respects of a great truth with which all ought to be acquainted. As a basis of this morning’s study, I call your attention to Mark 4:26-29. Just after the Savior had taught the lesson regarding the parable of the sower he said: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

It was a peculiar phase of Christ’s teaching to base the lesson upon things with which people were acquainted; and unless you and I can talk about the gospel in terms familiar to us, it is a matter simply of speculation, and even declarations without much profit.

Now, Christ presumed that all of his hearers and subsequent readers would understand about the nature of vegetable life, and he said, "So is the kingdom of God"—that is, it is like this. Now, look what it is. You have a man who took seed and cast them into the ground. Well, I think I understand that much of it. After having cast the seed into the ground, then he sleeps and rises night and day. While thus he is doing, the seed springs up and grows, he doesn’t know how; and that is also a fact, for the earth bringeth fruit of herself. Well, what is the order? First, the blade; second, the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear. When the fruit is brought forth, immediately we put in the sickle, because the harvest is ripe unto gathering. That illustration was given for the express purpose of teaching the truth regarding the development and unfolding or the evolving of the gospel plan of salvation.

We are, just about this time of the year, ready to pitch our crops; and I want you to note the different stages in which a crop of con, for instance, exists. Every good farmer, and those that look after matters as they should, last fall, at gathering time, selected their seed corn. How came them to do it? They had in purpose the 1923 crop, and the seed selected has been kept in a state of purpose and preserved all during the winter months, sheltered and protected and guarded. But

along about now, at least in a few more days, there is going to be a second state of the 1923 crop of corn. The seed will be taken out of the granary and put into the ground, committed to the kindly bosom of Mother Earth. And when the farmer does that, casts his seed into the ground, he does not sit up all night and watch it, but, just like the Savior says, he goes ahead, sleeping and rising, night after night, day after day; and while he is going ahead with his ordinary routine of life, that seed germinates, springs and grows up, and he does not understand exactly why it does it; neither does Professor Morgen up at the University of Tennessee; but it will do it all right enough, and then the earth brings forth fruit of herself.

Now, what is the first thing that is evidenced? Why, after that corn has been committed to the ground and there slumbers for a time, during the second stage, when about ten days or two weeks have passed, you go out, as some farmers do and some careless brethren on Sunday morning, and sight down the corn row and begin to prophesy regarding the kind of crops we are going to have. Why, there are blades coming up; the corn is a fine color; the leaves are broad; it is the finest prospect that we have had, at least during this year. Well, after that, what? There is the blade. Well, time rolls on. it begins to develop, gradually unfold; and away after a while it begins to silk and tassel, and the first thing you know the ear is beginning to form. Then laying-by time comes, and the farmer starts out and takes in all the big meetings of the country during July, August, and September. After a while, Jack Frost comes along and makes it brittle; and he decides again from examination some Sunday morning that the corn is just about ripe. He opens the shuck, and finds it filled out to the end of the cob. The next thing then is to gear up the mules, hook them to the wagon, and start out to gather in the crop. The process continues year after year along that line.

Now, the Savior said there is something in it that represents the kingdom of God. Well, in what way is an ear of corn, for instance, like the kingdom? An ear of corn has a shuck around it, but I do not expect the kingdom of God to be thus clothed. Well, there is another thing. Every ear of corn has either an even number of rows or an odd number. I have forgotten which, but it is a fact that it has one or the other. You can just put that down. I don’t expect, my friends, for the kingdom of God to be like it in that respect. And so, passing many phases, I submit to you this: The point of comparison is in the progress made, in the development of the crop.

Now, first, that crop existed in purpose when the grain was back yonder in the crib, garnered up; and, second, it was committed to the soil, and there was a state when the crop was in promise—when the blade came up. Then there is the stage at which point we begin to predict, to forecast, and to prophesy. Then, when it begins to form the ear, there is the state called the "preparatory;" and after that has passed and all things have been conducive to its full fruition, the corn is full grown, fully ripe. Then is the time to go out and gather the harvest. There never was a crop of corn but that existed in five different stages; and, based upon that, all things else are similar thereto. In West Tennessee, leading from Jackson down to Mobile, Ale., through the western part of the county in which I live, there is now a railroad. I want you to study its history with me just a moment, since I happen to know some things about it by virtue of close touch with the various stages in which that road has existed. First of all, there was one man, or a company of men, that began to think respecting the building of this road. Weighing all matters connected therewith in their mind, considering the feasibility and the practicability of the proposition, by and by there was firmly fixed with them a definite purpose for a railroad to be built. Now, there is the

first state of it. We had at that particular time a railroad, but only in purpose, in the mind of those who were to project the same. Well, after they had fully settled upon that, they gave announcement regarding it, and they promised that district of country, rich in natural resources, that there would be a new trunk line connecting the North and the South; and hence the promise is that there will be a railroad. Now, that is the second state of it. it is no longer in purpose nor hidden from the people of our land, but now that purpose has been transmitted into a promise. The folks are promised a railroad. Well, you know what happened next. The very minute that the promise came, prophecies began to be heard on every hand. They talked about the wonderful development of the country—chat wonderful and superior advantages it will give us, how it will enhance our section of the country, and promote the interests of this part of the country in every economical and industrial way. So there were prophets galore and on every hand.

Now, there is a railroad that existed, first, in purpose; second, in promise; and now in prophecy. But there wasn't a lick of work done on it. Finally the engineer came along and blazed out the way; then teams of men and machinery came, and the work was actually begun, clearing the right of way, digging down the hills, filling up the valleys, hauling in the crossties, bringing the rails, and driving the spikes. Now, there is a road in existence; but in what state? In a state of preparation. Why, there is not a train upon it. I could not send anything over it nor get anywhere, except by the two-cylinder machinery which all of us have been given.

Now, there is a railroad that existed, first, in purpose; second, in promise; third, in prophecy; fourth, in preparation. And after the preparatory state of it, the last spike was driven. I happened to be close by when the first engine ran over it. When the firing was completed in the Are box of the engine, steam gotten up, and the train of care hooked on behind, and when the great iron horse began to move down the track, breathing out pure fire, there was a railroad completed and perfected for business. Then they said: "Come ahead now; put in the sickle; all things are ready; make a trip with us." This railroad existed in all of these five states; and there is not an institution in the city of Nashville, nor a manufacturing establishment, but that passes through all of these five processes. My friends, to that process of development the gospel is not an exception. Now, just as briefly as I can—because I talked too long respecting the first part-let me suggest to you that the time never was when the gospel of the Son of God was not in existence. Long, long ago, in the very morning of time and of creation, God purposed a great gospel scheme for humanity, and that is what Paul had in mind in Ephesians 3:11-12 : "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Ephesians 3:9-10 : "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Note: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Long, long ago the gospel which we preach to-day was in existence in the mind of God, in a state of purpose; but as yet no mortal man knew one single thing about it. There was the purpose, and then there was, perhaps, a faint promise when the first pair had sinned in Eden, when the Master said that he would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head and the serpent should bite the heel of the seed of the woman.

Then God gave to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-20) the promise regarding the literal seed and a land inheritance; and finally, transcending things temporal, he made the declaration that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. Now, there is the gospel, if you please, not only in purpose, but now in promise. Hence, Paul, commenting upon that (Galatians 3:8), said this: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

What kind of a gospel, what stage of the gospel, was preached in Abraham's day? A gospel of promise, not in completeness or perfection, but in promise, saying: "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

After that from the hilltops of Israel prophets stood with the index finger pointing down the line to Him and made numerous, divers, and sundry predictions regarding the coming of the Christ and the glorious gospel which shall by and by burst in its fullness and grandeur upon the earth. Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3) predicted the coming of the Christ, preceded by John the Baptist, when there should be the cry, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"-make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Hence, in due time, after the third or prophetic phase, there came John the Baptist, Jesus in his personal ministry, the twelve and the seventy, laying the rails, putting down the ties, driving the spikes, getting all things ready and in shape, until at last the Christ died on the tree of the cross, arose triumphant from the dead, the Spirit came to fire up the machinery; and then, with Jesus Christ set upon the throne of God, the Father, the steam, so to speak, was turned on, all things having transpired, and there came the glad gospel of the Son of God in perfection, in completeness, as announced unto us on the day of Pentecost.

So, then, the gospel of God's Son, or the church of God, if you please, has existed in all ages, but in different phases; and the contention that exists among so many people is due to the fact that they fail to appreciate, perhaps, the respective stages or conditions in which a thing may exist. Before the morning of time began God had the gospel in mind, in purpose. To Abraham he committed it in promise, hence the blade; then came the time when the prophets made predictions regarding the final fruitage. After that, in the days of John, there came the formation of the ear upon the stalk; and by and by, in the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, under the law, that he might consummate the great objective of God's everlasting purpose. When the Savior thus bowed his head upon an aching heart and said on the tree of the cross, "It is finished," there was the sealing of the glad purpose of God, of the splendid promises, and of the prophecies and of the preparatory stage by the blood of Christ in his death. It was only after he came forth from the tomb that he said to Peter, James, John, and all the apostles: "Harness up the teams; the fruit is ready to be gathered in; put in the old Jerusalem sickle; and go out from Jerusalem throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, unto the uttermost parts of the earth, and gather in the grain, because the fullness thereof is come." The gospel, friends, as we have learned, in a state of purpose might embrace the death of Christ for our sins, his burial and his triumphant resurrection, all according to the scriptures; the gospel in its fullness could not have existed, therefore, previous to the facts therein having transpired.

After Christ arose, after the Spirit descended, there has been no new fact added, there has been no new commandment given, there has been no new promise of facts. It was in all of its fullness, its grandeur and glory; and hence after the sad scenes in Calvary—glad to us, however-Peter

stood oil Pentecost and proclaimed for the first time in all the ages salvation—absolute and genuine remission and forgiveness of sine in the blood of Christ; a completed, perfected, and finished product, developed in God’s own good time and "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." In harmony, therefore, with these splendid commandments, appealing, trying to allure and attract human beings, God wants you and me, friends, to believe that gospel that is developed. He wants us from all of our sins to turn away. He would have us stand before our fellows and acknowledge the Christ as our Leader, Prophet, Priest, and King. Then, throughout the remnant of our days, he would have us to trust him for the promise, lean upon his everlasting arms, assured of the fact that though we pass through the valley of the shadow and the charnel house of death itself, he will initiate us on the other shore, into scenes sublime, incorruptible, and glorious, which shall burst upon our vision over there. Is there one, are there two, are there any in this company this morning who have the consent of sour minds that you no longer desire to travel in rejection of God’s will, but have the courage and that magnanimity of purpose, that fixedness of resolution that will rise in the strength of Israel’s God and flee to the outstretched arms of the Son of God Divine, relying and resting upon him, trusting him for the fulfilling of every promise, until by and by he sees fit to call you home?

2.07 - THE GOSPEL IN EARTHEN VESSELS

THE GOSPEL IN EARTHEN VESSELS

I am firmly convinced, my friends, that the great mass of humanity constitute an honest, earnest body of people, and that numbers and numbers there are upon the earth who really want to do God’s will; but we are in a rather sad state of affairs, due to the fact that so many theories are extant. Too often we fail to appreciate the proper division of God’s word, the various covenants and dispensations under which people have lived, and the result is that many honest souls are confused. it is my ambition and chief purpose to try to deal with lessons that are elementary, with principles that are primary in their nature, to help you who I have right and reason to believe are interested to see the simplicity of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

I want to read to you 2 Corinthians 4:1-7 : "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

2 Corinthians 4:7 expresses a great truth that would help so much to relieve us of a state of confusion and vain expectancy, in which state numbers and numbers of human beings are still lingering. it is a very popular idea that in the matter of conversion one must wait until supernatural agencies move and powers Divine separate and apart from things of earth be brought to pass. Hence, the great mysticism, the miraculous conception, and the "better-felt-than-told" ideas that so many good people have.

Now, if you and I could just study this statement as we would any business proposition, I believe the scales would fall from our eyes and the clearness of God’s manner of dealing with the people would dawn upon us. Let me hope that such efforts shall be ours. Paul has in mind something or other which he styles a treasure, a thing of great value, of wonderful price, and he says that we have that treasure in earthen vessels. Now, I believe that statement, rely upon that in tote, and want to do my very best to understand just what is signified thereby. A treasure, my friends, is something to be appreciated, greatly prized, and that toward which the hearts of men are ever directed. In Matthew 13:44-46, Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Why? He wants the treasure in it. Or: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." He is ready to sacrifice, give up, sell, and part with all

that he has that he may buy just that one pearl of great price.

Now, that is what the word "treasure" signifies, and Paul said that we have just such a treasure. I wonder what it is. it is not a gold mine; it is not a great oil field; nor is it any of the precious minerals and the natural resources hidden away in the bosom of Mother Earth. But the context of this very declaration is exceedingly clear as to what Paul had in mind when he said we have this treasure. Listen at 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 : "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." We have this treasure, this gospel, this scheme of human redemption, in obedience to which men are saved, washed and cleansed and made even whiter than the snow.

Now, that is what Paul is talking about when he styles the gospel a great treasure, and he would have us get the idea that if necessary we ought to be willing to Bell all that we have, make any sacrifice necessary in the way of financial affairs, earthly ties, or human relationships, that we might come into possession of this great treasure, this wonderful gospel, by which, and by which alone, men and women can be saved. But Paul said that we have that treasure not in heavenly vessels, but in earthen vessels. Now, what did he mean by earthen vessels? The word "vessel" is a container. it might be a bucket; it might be, by the way, a little brown jug; anything that is capable of containing something and by which it may be carried from place to place.

Now, that settles the question of what a vessel is. Well, what does the word "earthen" mean? it simply means pertaining to this earth, abiding upon or connected therewith; not heaven; terrestrial rather than celestial. So, then, we have this treasure, we have this gospel, in earthen vessels. But I do not think Paul meant that it was to be carried around in buckets, jars, etc. The word "vessel" is used figuratively; and so I want to point out just what he meant, and so clear is that presented there can be no doubt respecting it. In Acts 9:1-43, when the Lord God Almighty appeared unto Ananias, having first appeared to Saul and directed him to the city, he said to Ananias: "I want you to go into the city of Damascus, into a street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus; and here is how you may know him: Behold, he is praying." Ananias said: "Why, Lord, I cannot do that. I have heard of that man — how much evil he hath done to the saints at Jerusalem; and I understand that now he has letters of authority to bind men and women and carry them back to Jerusalem that they might be executed." Then the Lord, reproving Ananias, said: "Go thy way: for be is a chosen vessel." I understand now, when he said "in earthen vessels," he meant in the hands of men, chief of whom was Saul of Tarsus, a "chosen vessel." Well, for what? To bear. That is what a vessel is for—to carry things in, to bear it about. Now, Saul is a "chosen vessel" to bear my name, to carry the glad tidings, to carry this great treasure, this gospel, unto the earth’s remotest parts. And so, my friends, when the text said we have this treasure, be it remembered that it is the gospel. When he said we have it in earthen vessels, appreciate the fact that it has been delegated into the hands of men—to those who dwell upon the face of God’s earth. The time was when God communicated with the people direct—by visions, shadows, and signs. But when the Christ appeared upon the scene, he said (John 9:5): "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." "Bring all your troubles and all your problems; I am the light of the world." But having stayed with them for quite a while and having taught the disciples respecting the future status of affairs, he finally said, by way of anticipation, in the wonderful Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:14) : "Ye are the light of the world." When by and by he was

crucified and rose from the dead, he led them out to the heights of a mountain in Galilee and said to them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Let me tell you: From that very moment until this hour the gospel plan of salvation, being transferred from the Ring and from the Prince Immanuel, has been in the hands of men. The apostles were guided into all truth. We are now commanded to follow in their steps, preach the same thing, and thus, as earthen vessels, carry on this priceless treasure.

Now, that explains and makes it easily understood why it is that in every single case of conversion under that commission the gospel is preached previous to the promise enjoyed by those who would become heirs of salvation. Now, then, if God Almighty under the gospel age carries on his work in bringing conviction and conversion to men separate and apart from human agencies or from the Bible, which is itself an earthen vessel, why is it that men cannot find just one case, just one, in all the Bible where some man was converted in the absence of God’s power, the gospel? Friends, there is not a case.

Now, I am about to make to you what would be considered by thousands some very radical statements; but here they come, without any hesitancy and without any fear whatsoever of any living man’s being able to contradict the principle therein involved. Listen: If an angel fresh from the courts of glory were to visit the city of Nashville to-day and a sinner upon the public thoroughfare or street of your city were to suggest to the angel, "What must I do to be saved?" that angel would not and could not give the answer thereto. There are people that would not believe that if they knew it were true, I am sorry to say. Well, now, why not? I appreciate the radical statement therein made; but upon what ground do we thus announce it? First, the angel is a heavenly being. Paul said we have this treasure in earthen vessels; and, therefore, the angel could not bear the glad tidings, or else that would upset, thwart, and turn topsy-turvy the entire philosophy of the scheme of redemption. But that isn’t the only reason. There are examples that clearly demonstrate the correctness of the principle announced. The angel of the Lord once saw an honest man who wanted to be converted to the truth and become interested in that man’s salvation. But instead of going direct to the man to be converted, I want you to watch just what the angel did. Now, here was the man to be converted. He started from Jerusalem, went southwest down toward Gaze, and the angel, interested in that man, went thirty-six miles away to Samaria and said: "Philip." But who is Philip. An earthen vessel. "Philip, arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaze, which is desert." That earthen vessel arose and went, and the angel at Samaria bade him good-by. What is the point? The angel understood the principle of the text—that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. His purpose was to get Philip, a gospel preacher, in direct touch with the man to be converted. And when the messenger of the Lord, a man of earth, came in direct touch with the man to be converted, the gospel was preached, obedience was rendered, and a soul was saved.

Again, in Caesarea there was a man called "Cornelius," a splendid, good man, sailing on a sinking ship known as the "patriarchal dispensation;" and the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said: "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: * * * he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." But wait a minute, angel. You are right here now. it is thirty miles to Joppa, and, according to our mode of travel, it will take me four days to send and to get that man up here. Angel, why don’t you tell me and not defer my salvation? The angel said: "The time was when I might have

revealed this to you; but when Christ, as the great Maker of the will, sealed it with his blood and turned it over to the hands of his executors, we have this treasure from that time until now in earthen vessels. So I bid you good-by. Send for Peter, a man of earth; and when he comes, he will tell you." Thus is the principle demonstrated. Well, if the Holy Spirit in person were right on the spot, the same results would follow; for when the angel bade Philip go from Samaria to the road leading toward Gaze, and Philip went, the angel's command had been obeyed. But the Holy Spirit was interested in that conversion; and instead of the Spirit's going to the sinner, the Spirit went to a preacher, an earthen vessel, and said: "Philip, go near and join thyself to the chariot." And so -the Spirit worked upon the preacher rather than upon the man to be converted. His purpose was identical with that of the angel.

Now, in order for a man to be converted, an earthen vessel must be present and the gospel, God's power to save, proclaimed.

Saul of Tarsus, on the way to Damascus, was arrested by Christ Jesus, our Lord. Of all men on earth that ever needed conversion, Saul was that character. When Jesus said to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," without delay Saul cried out and said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Was there ever a finer time for Christ to have given an answer? No preacher anywhere round about, out upon the public highway, a man whose hands had already been stained in the blood of Christian people and now on a death mission clothed with letters of authority, in direct contact with Christ Jesus, and the sinner put the straight question: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to dol" I want to ask you, friends, why didn't the Lord tell him s Let some man who believes in direct contact, in separate-and-apart conversion from the gospel—let some man in Nashville answer why. But the reason is evident. "Time was when I would have told, but I have given the power and the authority and the commission into the hands of men. Therefore, Saul, instead of my telling you direct, I bid you arise and go into the city, and there—not here, but there—it shall be told you of all things that are appointed." Led by the hand, Saul went on; and then the Spirit took part in bringing about his conversion. But where did the Spirit go? He went to Ananias, an earthen vessel, and said: "Ananias, I want to get you in contact with Saul. There is a man to be converted. The gospel is in earthen vessels, and hence go and tell him what he must do." When Saul was found by Ananias, he was a prayerful, penitent believer. So Ananias said: "Saul, why do you tarry? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sine, calling on the name of the Lord." Paul said he was buried in baptism and rose to walk in newness of life; and instead now of being Saul, the persecutor, he became Paul, the persecuted, the remnant of his days.

What about it? We have this treasure in earthen vessels. My friends, you and I need not hesitate to-day and wait for God to manifest some supernatural power. The glorious gospel by which men and women are saved has been delegated to us. it is in the hands of faithful men. it is God's word, a vessel or a bearer of this treasure. The word of reconciliation has been committed to men of earth, and in Christ's stead, I pray, be ye reconciled unto God.

If there be any, therefore, in this company who believe the gospel, who are willing to repent of all wrong, publicly acknowledge the Christ, and further that obedience in the name of the Trinity, to you we gladly extend the gospel cell while once again we together stand.

2.08 - THE LOST CHRIST

THE LOST CHRIST

I bid you listen this noon to a reading from Luke 2:40-511 : "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." The writers of the Bible have a way of saying much in the fewest possible words. This is a little story that gives an account of a mere incident, ordinarily considered; and yet I am certain within my own mind that it was not written just to tell us a little personal incident that occurred on one of their trips up to Jerusalem, but that in it there is both interest per se and also lessons possibly based upon that which may be of practical benefit and concern to those of us who now live and wheresoever the Bible shall be read.

There is suggested to us in this the idea of something lost. In its very announcement there is created that anxiety on the part of every person regarding individuals or articles that may be lost from view, which anxiety will ever be characteristic of humanity; and to the very limit will we ordinarily go in search of those things which we prize that get from under our relationship and away from us and become characterized by that state which we call "lost." The Bible pictures our experiences in Luke 15:1-32. The Savior presents a man having one hundred sheep, and raised the question that if one of them be lost, will he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go and search out and seek for that which is lost until he find it? Then he pictures a fine rejoicing that will be upon the return of the sheep thus lost, from which he passes to higher things and suggests that just so there is joy in heaven over the return of a human being that was lost and is now rescued. Then he said: "What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" Then he relates her rejoicing over the same. From that he passes into a more serious strain and gives us a picture of a lost boy who had wandered sway from the relationship of parentage out into the affairs of the earth, and, having squandered all that he had inherited, finally comes into the very lowest state of human existence, and then by and by finds himself. Upon his return there is great rejoicing.

Now, is it not strange that attention is called to the fact that our Lord himself, at the age of twelve years, was lost — and that, too, ladies and gentlemen, by the one least expected? And so I submit to you that human nature, human carelessness, and human conceptions have been largely the same throughout all the ages. We ought not to be surprised at the reading of this story. Jesus was lost by his mother— not because of the fact that she failed to love him or to appreciate him or to be interested in him as much as any other mother, perhaps, ever was in her boy; not because she was a bad woman; not due to the fact that anything uncomplimentary might be said respecting her; but such is characteristic of human disposition and ways. The record says, therefore, that when they had gone up to Jerusalem and had fulfilled the purpose of their going, they finally set out on their way back, and went a day's journey, and then found that their precious boy was not in their midst; and the record says that they knew it not until the close of the day.

Now, it was not because they could not have known about it. That good mother could have found out as they started early in the morning as to whether or not the Christ was in their midst; but, engaged in other things and interested in associations and topics possibly other than that, she simply went an entire day's journey; and as the evening shadows began to lengthen, then, as a mother's disposition is, she began to look round about to find her boy.

Now, I suggest that the very fact that she knew not regarding him was another matter of carelessness and of indifference, or rather traits of our doing and of our action along the pathway of life; and all the worries subsequent to her having found out at the close of the day that the boy was not there were due to the fact that she had not investigated early in the morning and made certain that all the members of the family were in her company. Many, many times have we experienced long hours of anxiety, labor, pain, and regrets of various sorts over a failure to do a thing earlier in life that would have prevented some calamity, unpleasantness, or sadness from coming upon us. But the record says, and I think it speaks that which is characteristic of all of us, that the mother of Jesus supposed that he was in the company; and in that, I think, is a suggestion that has its duplicate many, many times along the pathway of life.

Ladies and gentlemen, with all due respect to our intelligence and our ability, I want to say to you this morning that I really believe, religiously speaking, moat of the human family are walking along the pathway from this to the eternal shore on the ground of supposition. We never stop, amid the varied affairs of life, to investigate, to make certain, and to find out beyond the possibility of a doubt, but just take it for granted, and, on the general ground of supposition, presume that Christ is in our crowd, one of our company, and not very far away, and that, in case of a calamity, he is right there to comfort us, to bear us up, and finally to conduct us home to glory.

Now, that is one of the great and fatal mistakes characterizing human conduct and human affairs in matters that are purely religious. Do you know that we go not on the ground of supposition regarding other matters of less moment? In any kind of a business deal in which you gentlemen here in Nashville might engage, when money is to be paid out and your future financial success is at stake, you do not carelessly pass along and just suppose that the thing is all right; but you are more interested than that. If it be the buying of a piece of real estate, you don't simply write your check or count out the money and suppose that the fellow will Ax the deed all right, and just take that for granted; and yet you do not mean to insinuate that he is dishonest. But here is a matter in which I am interested. it vitally affects me with reference to temporal affairs. There is some money

involved in it; and hence what is my attitude regarding it? Instead of doing as did the mother of the Savior, supposing that all is well, I go and personally investigate that thing; and if I be not able to comprehend the magnitude thereof, I will go and secure an expert—a man trained and tutored in that particular line of business— and I say: "Sir, I want you to go with me to investigate and see if this thing is all right and in good shape, because I am deeply interested in it and my welfare is at stake."

Why, many, many times have you gentlemen, perhaps, since you purchased your bonds, your stamps, your certificates and securities, and your pieces of real estate, gone through these papers and investigated again to just see if there is anything lacking. This is no reflection upon the persons who made you the deed or signed the papers, but it is just a matter of self-satisfaction and of real interest. You want to know about it.

Therein lay the trouble with the parents of the Savior. They supposed that he was in their care. Religiously speaking, do you think there is a denomination on earth today but that supposes the same thing? On what ground of reliance are they marching on to the shores of eternity? Why, supposing that Christ is with them. Have you ever stopped really to investigate? Have you ever made a personal canvass of the crowd in which you are traveling to find out for certain that the Lord was even acquainted with that crowd?

It would pay us, if we are really interested and are conscious that our soul is at stake, to stop and to begin to find out if the Lord is in this crowd of ours. Indeed, is he with this company, or is he with that one? Physically, of course he could not be in two different ones at the same time; and I think mentally and spiritually that it would be a reflection upon our Lord to imagine that he is with any two bodies that are different in origin, doctrine, and practice. I cannot conceive of a Christ who would walk on both lines and in contradictory ways. My friends, there is too much at stake in this matter of religious relationship for us to go on the ground of supposition. When the mother of Jesus found out that her supposition was wrong, just like numbers and numbers of us might be led to find out, she got wonderfully busy, and she acted quite naturally. Where did she go? After having found that he wasn't in her company, she said: "Surely he is among my kinfolks. I know he is not with me, but he is with Uncle Sam or Aunt Susan, one or the other. There is no doubt about that." So she began her investigation for her lost boy by searching first among her own crowd. Disappointed in that, she turned and went to her kinspeople and her acquaintances, believing surely that he was in that company. But what was the result? She didn't find him there.

Now, this story wasn't written just to let us know that little personal incident. But today suppose that I were to do just such a thing as to stand a member of a human denomination and actually upon investigation find out that Christ never even heard of my crowd, much less was with them. Then to whom would I go? I would say, "Well, assuredly he is among my sister denominations and acquaintances;" and I spend a whole lot of time, but my experience at the last would be exactly like that of his own mother—she found him not there. Why, he wasn't in her company and he wasn't with her kinsfolk nor her acquaintances. And then what? The fact dawned upon her: "Let me forsake my company, let me forsake my kinfolks, and go back to Jerusalem." Backward she turned her steps for three days. Mark you, the neglect and the carelessness of just a moment caused her an anxiety, and a mother's anxiety at that, of three days' duration. But when she cut loose from her company and cut loose from her kinsfolk and from her acquaintances and went

back to Jerusalem, there she found him. I wonder where? Just a lad, of course; but he wasn't in the pool room. 0, no! He wasn't in the dance hall. She didn't find him around the card table. She didn't And him in any place of vice or that is disreputable in any respect; but she found him in the temple, talking with the doctors, answering questions, astonishing them by the profoundness of his mind and the ability with which he discussed the matters presented; and as she found him in the temple, she expressed her thought. "Why," she said, "son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee in sorrow."

What had the Lord done? Which one did the departing from the other? The Lord had not left them; they left him. That is the sad state characteristic of so many of his disciples. I remember that John (6:37) once said that from a certain time many of the Lord's disciples went back and walked no more with him. God will not forsake us. The Lord will not, unless, first of all, we forsake him; and if we deliberately do that, then he will forsake us and cast us out forever. So was the declaration in 2 Chronicles 15:2.

Now, friends, to make the second thought of it, as time suggests a closing, let me submit to you that the religious world today has lost Jesus, the Christ. I think it generally said, especially by those on the outside, and with too much truth in it, that our services do not partake very much of the Christ idea. We have become cold, formal, and ritualistic; and the worship of God today is a kind of religio- operatic performance, when genuine old-time Christianity and spiritually have been eliminated, until some of the very best men and women on the earth to-day, because of fashion's dictates and of style's decree, are absolutely shut out and driven away and cannot walk into many of the meetinghouses of this land and country and feel at home and there breathe out a genuine spirituality of worship to the God of their being. Before I can go to meeting at many places I have to be tutored and drilled and trained just to know exactly how to act. I must correspond to fashion's demand and act according to modern social requirements and various decrees, or else be denominated an old "mossback"— out of date and behind the times. Now, isn't that a shame? That is a thing, ladies and gentlemen, that is robbing this world of the Christ and the spirit characteristic thereof.

Now, what is to be done? When Christ has been driven out, so to speak, we have gone on into worldliness, into formality, and into cold-blooded ritualism. We have left the Christ. What has happened? Preachers and all others are hunting about trying to find him, and, first, they search in their own ranks and then in that of their religious kinsfolk and acquaintances.

Why, about the beginning of the sixteenth century the world began to recognize that Christ wasn't reigning in the religious institution then prominent, and they undertook to And him; but, be it said to their detriment and as characteristic of their failure, they went to the wrong place. Martin Luther thought he could dig him out of Catholicism, but he wasn't there. Likewise, Henry VIII., John Calvin, and others. And after the sad experience of all of these men, in which they but formed other parties, then what? The time ultimately came when men rose up above the clouds of Catholicism and denominationalism and said: "Jesus Christ is not in Catholicism; Jesus Christ is not in denominationalism. Let's cut loose and do just like the mother did; let's forsake all of this and go back to Jerusalem." That is where they went. "Let's go back where we left him, in the temple of Jerusalem, and go back with him there and walk along the subsequent path of life in daily company and association with him."

Friends, if you and I get to heaven, let me tell you one thing. it will not be by virtue of the fact that we catered to the world, it will not be because we have our garments cut according to certain fashion plates, it will not be because of the fact that we are drilled and tutored in all manner of conduct and social demands; but it will be because of the fact that we love the Lord Jesus Christ to that extent that we are interested enough and are nonpartisan enough and unbiased and unprejudiced enough to cut loose from all things characteristic of humanity's doings and just simply fall down humbly at the feet of the Savior and say, "Lord, speak; let me hear; command, I will obey;" and we must put our hand in the palm of his, and, regardless of what the world says, with the Bible as our guide and Christ as our leader, we must commence to practice and live the principles of old-time religion. If we will do that and be faithful unto death, God Almighty will touch us gently at last and call us into joys supreme and mansions sublime in fairer fields and brighter climes. That is the hope of the world today. Let us cut loose from and get rid of all of our cold formalities, our search for Christ out in worldly affairs, catering to the demands of those things that appeal to the flesh and to pride and to worldly show. Let us leave all that out in our religious relations and, as humble disciples of the Lord, worship him "as it is written" and as the God of heaven requires. But are there any in this company now who have it in their hearts to really find the Christ? If so, I bid you cut loose from all things human, simply start back to God's word, the old record and the old deed, to the calls that are found therein, and once more run again those lines first started by the apostles. Believe the gospel, repent of your sins, publicly confess your faith in the Christ, be buried with him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That will make of you nothing on earth but a Christian, and right there stop your religious affiliation, and then, as a child of God, desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby, strengthened day by day by exercise and labor in his vineyard, and the time certainly will come when the reward will be yours to share.

2.09 - THE RICH FOOL

THE RICH FOOL In Luke 12:13-21, I read to you as follows: "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

I think that the story illustrates very forcibly the disposition of humanity, and I am certain that throughout the Bible there is not a phase or an attribute, a passion or a characteristic, of human beings but that has been portrayed in the life of some one delineated by inspiration for our consideration and instruction.

Here is a man who is wonderfully interested in receiving a part of an earthly estate. He wants his brother spoken to, that the inheritance may be divided so that he can have his part of it, doubtless to spend in gratification of his own lust; and he was so anxious about the matter that he wanted Christ to take a hand in the division and distribution of the estate. Because this is such a universal trait and so widely applicable unto men and women, Christ took the occasion to teach us a wonderful lesson; and just at that point he set up a signpost and on it inscribed these words, to be perpetuated down the ages: "Beware of covetousness." That element, that trait, was paramount in the life and disposition of him who made the inquiry; and Christ being able to analyze it and reduce it to a plain, simple matter, said to them: "Beware of covetousness: for [get this principle] a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

I am just as certain, friends, that most of us have the wrong conception of life and duty as that in your midst I stand. it has scarcely dawned upon but few of us that the great summum bonum of life’s possibilities and realities is otherwise than centered in the things that are temporal and transient in their nature.

I know of no sin in all of the catalogue portrayed to human beings that is so detestable in the eyes of the Lord as is that general characteristic of humanity known as "covetousness." The Bible has so much to say along that line. We claim to believe the Book, and in certain passages, and especially when they are applicable to the other fellow very largely, we bear down on them heavily. I feel and appreciate in common with you the great truth expressed by Paul in 1 Tim. 6: g, 7, when he said: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Now, I would believe that statement if I were to read it in an almanac. Why? Because I know that it is so. I know that a person has never been born on the

earth that brought anything into it, and out of the teeming millions that have been called upon to change worlds, they have taken nothing out; and hence with his conclusion, having fact as a basis, let us therewith be content.

I read in one of our journals or papers right after the death of Mr. Pierpont Morgen how his body lay in state in New York City and was visited by throngs of people, who came to gaze upon the remains of the great multimillionaire and the financial wizard of the land. According to that story, some one, in passing, raised the question to a fellow passer-by as to how much Mr. Morgen left, and the other fellow hit it exactly when he said: "He left it every bit." And that tells the tale. We bring nothing into this world. it is certain we can carry nothing out. "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

Paul said (Galatians 3:5) : "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, [now note] and covetousness, which is idolatry." Now, you would not have to leave Tennessee and go into foreign lands that we style "heathen" in order to And idolaters. All over this fair land and country of ours there are souls that are blinded, deceived, and deluded by the love of money. Every man who puts something else before God in his life is an idolater. it is "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" and the man who puts his business and financial interests and worldly affairs first and Christianity and religion second, I think, is treading upon dangerous ground and is unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Christianity, ladies and gentlemen, must be chiefest and first, or else not at all. God is a jealous God, and you cannot serve two masters. He will not accept a fifty-fifty service; but, paramount and First of all, his work and his service must be the chief end and aim of life.

Paul said in the same connection (Colossians 3:6) that because of man’s uncleanness, evil concupiscence, inordinate affection, and covetousness, "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." Then, later, the warning again (1 Timothy 6:9-11), when he said: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money [not money, but the love of money] is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things [as you would a poisonous serpent]; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." Then listen at the climax reached when Paul argued in Ephesians 5:5, making what we call in logic an ed hominem argument, an appeal to the brethren: "Ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Why, friends, that just settles it. No use to argue about a thing of that kind. Paul just simply classifies the characteristics as manifested and exhibited by this rich man in Luke 12:1-59 among those that are positively forbidden, absolutely prohibited, from the possibility of entering into the kingdom of God and of Christ.

All through the Bible there are warnings against covetousness, penuriousness, close-fistedness, stinginess; and I think, brethren, these, perhaps, are the greatest sins of which professed Christians to-day are guilty. A covetous man, a miserly soul, a stingy character, is the most unlike Christ of any soul imaginable; and, so far as I am concerned, I would rather die a hundred times the death of a drunkard and expect God to pardon me than to go down to my grave conscious of

the fact that I have been stingy, penurious, and covetous, when the very mainspring of God's attributes and characteristics was giving unto mortal man. The richest jewel of heaven, the Son of God, was given through love and mercy that you and I might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Now, from that I would not have you draw the conclusion that I am against a man's making money. Exactly the reverse. I wish to-day, if it were not perhaps vain, that every child of God on earth had an abundance of this world's goods. But there is a danger attached to riches. Brethren, just as long as you can keep money your servant and you be the master, all is well; but the chances are, and the temptations are, and the realities are, so many times, that money becomes the master, riches the dominating factor, and the possessor thereof becomes the servant; and when this is true and a man comes to rely upon his riches and to trust therein, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for such a man to enter the kingdom of heaven. I am not stopping to split hairs as to whether or not that meant that a camel must bow down and crawl under the gate, which is low, or whether it be a plain, old-fashioned needle, having a little eye that I could not put a thread through. it is just as easy for a camel to go through that eye as for a man that trusts in riches to enter the kingdom of heaven. That is the thought that Christ wants to emphasize, and that is the writing upon the signpost, brethren: "Beware of covetousness."

If there were no danger, there would be no signpost. When I pass along through the thoroughfares of this country and see warnings, it always suggests to me that there is danger; and I never look out and see the red light but that it suggests that there is a possibility of wreck and ruin. Beware ! Who beware? Men of earth, professed Christians, as well as all others. To get the right conception and the proper philosophy, life does not consist in the abundance of what a man possesses. In a quotation used so often by Brother T. B. Larimore let me say: "Man needs but little here below, nor needs that little long." I think that is expressive of the great and Divine truth. But if my life be right and my practice be right, I haven't the shadow of a doubt but that, as I come toward the close of my career, I may be able to voice the sentiment of David, who said: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Now, Christ illustrates this by saying that there was the ground of a certain rich man that brought forth plentifully, so much so that the man didn't have a place where to bestow his fruits and his goods; and after thing on the matter for a while, he ultimately reached this decision: "I will tear down my barns, and I will build even greater ones in which to bestow my goods and my fruit; and when all this is done, then I will sit back and say to my soul:'Now, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; all is well at our house. it does not make any difference about the rest of the world, but you have plenty for a long number of years. Let there come famines and pestilences and droughts, let ware and rumors of wars or what not come; but just simply eat and drink and be merry; have what the word calls a good time.'"

Now, that is the way the man reasoned and soliloquized over the matter. Plenty of this world's affairs; new barns and new buildings, literally filled, absolutely overflowing in luxury and abundance; and then he fancied he could say to himself: "Take your ease as you journey along the pathway of life."

Now, when the young man made this request, Christ turned to those around and gave to them and to you and me a wonderful lesson. "Thou fool." O, he wasn't a fit subject for the lunatic asylum; he

didn’t have to have a man to go around with him over the streets. He could carry on business affairs and make fine trades and run a manufacturing establishment or own a fine car, but yet—I didn’t say it, but God did—that man was a fool. They are not all dead yet. Some of them are not even sick.

Well, why is the man a fool? "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Now, I think it would be a reflection upon you and me if we were not able to see why Christ called that man a "fool." Every other one that has walked in his steps, rested upon his wealth, and had that conception of life is subjected to the same characterization by the God of heaven.

Watch the final application: "So is he"—watch the spiritual point. That man was a fool because he laid up treasures and then proposed to rest easy the balance of his days. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." There is the application to you and me.

I would rather be stripped to-day of all the treasures of earth, robbed of its wealth and luxuries, pass along the streets in tattered garments clad, and be rich toward God, than to be one of the wealthiest of the earth and yet be poverty-stricken with reference to God and Christ.

Now, this man furnishes some fine examples of two or three things that I want to suggest to you. His first great blunder and remarkable error was in the fact that out of all of his planning and deliberation God Almighty was left out.

I want to say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that man makes a fatal mistake who goes into business and does not take as a partner, as a counselor, as an adviser, the God of heaven, when the Lord has laid down in the Hook of books the greatest of all business maxima, rules of life, principles of economy, and every phase conducive to our temporal as well as spiritual benefit. That man is a fool that goes out upon the platform of the world’s affairs and does not take God into partnership in his business. This man made another great blunder when he thought the human soul could be satisfied and provided for with material things. There is something about the soul of man that cannot be satisfied with the things that are transient and perishable in their nature. All the wealth of the earth fails to satisfy the longings of the human soul, and I put it down as a principle to-day and challenge a study of it: The greatest happiness and the sweetest associations of earth are not among those that are clad in purple and Ane linen, that fare sumptuously every day, and dwell in palaces decorated and adorned, all of which suggests the idea that love and quietude and peace of mind are not dependent upon wealth or our station in life. Many a man living away up at the head of the creek, in a little box house, with a stick-and-dirt chimney, pillows his head at night and sleeps in gentle slumber and sweet peace; while, on the other hand, many of the rest of the world, with all their wealth and luxury, are experiencing a regular hell on earth. Hence, the social and domestic troubles, trials, and discords are a direct denial of the idea that the soul and the best that is in man can be satisfied with the perishable things of earth. A third thought, and the last one, is, this man thought that he had a perpetual lease on life; and God wants to show him that it is not so. What we have has been given us as trustee and only temporarily. After a while we will be snuffed out, and some one else will take our place and be loaded with our responsibility. Hence, we must use our blessings wisely or lose them in the by and by.

I trust, my friends, that none of us will fail to stop in our onward rush to meet the busy concerns of life and meditate upon our duty. First of all, we ought to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, believing confidently, being absolutely assured that all other things will be added. If I conform my life to the conditions and requirements that Heaven has laid down, trusting him for guidance and direction evermore, at last he will guide my footsteps up the glittering strand into the heights sublime, into the joys which alone can satisfy the anxieties and longings of the human heart.

Chapter 42

2.10 - THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART

THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART

"Day by day," my friends, "in every way," indeed, ought we, as a people, to be grateful for the wonderful blessings that God in his providence continually showers upon us. We are the recipients of so many favors and so many blessings that come from God, and I trust that there may ever breathe forth a spirit of gratitude unto "Him from whom all blessings flow" as we are thus permitted to assemble together from time to time in this sweet association and unite in hymning praises and studying that which, I trust, may prove always helpful and beneficial. In the first part of the Bible there are some interesting stories told, and I want your attention this morning, by way of introducing the thought for the evening, to be centered upon the story of one prominent character, the king of Egypt during the time that God’s people were in subjection and bondage. I refer, of course, to Pharaoh, who lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ, the ruler of one of the greatest nations of the then civilized world. He held under his dominion, first of all, a body of people numbering just about seventy-five, and kept them in his custody and under his control until they multiplied to the wonderful number of something like three million souls, at which time, in the providence of the Lord, Be saw fit to call them out under the leadership of Moses that he might, with them and of them, establish a national system of religion and a theocratic form of government pursuant to his chief purpose and the objective previously had in mind.

I know that there are many things connected with Pharaoh and his relationship to them that are possibly hard to understand as to all the reasons that are connected with the same, but that particular phase of it to which this talk is to be given is the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. Connected with that there is a doctrine that is considered exceedingly mysterious, absolutely indefinable; and yet it is possible of understanding by the human family.

Forgetting all other things for the time being, I want you to think about Pharaoh-the hardening of his heart and the results that came to pass. But, first of all, what is meant in the Bible by the hardening of Pharaoh’s or any other man’s heart? What constitutes the hardening of a man’s heart? I think that I would speak the sentiment of you all when I suggest that such a state would result in a man’s becoming stubborn and rebellious sad not inclined to yield to Heaven’s demands and invitations. Stubbornness, rebellion, willful opposition, are but synonyms of the term "hardening" as I conceive it to be here used.

Now, the Bible has a great deal to say on the subject; and so I raise the question for consideration as to how came Pharaoh’s heart to be hardened, and, therefore, his wonderful obstinacy and his great hesitancy in granting the request ordered by God through Moses and Aaron. The book of God declares in Exodus 7:3, Exodus 7:13 that God Almighty hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and I must accept that is a fact in the case thus far; and hence when anybody suggests that God hardens the hearts of men, students of the Bible cannot deny that, for the proof is not wanting nor the example lacking.

Well, the Bible also says that the magicians that attended the court of Pharaoh hardened Pharaoh's heart; so I have at least two factors in it—the Bible specifically says that God did it, and then the Bible in the same connection (Exodus 8:15) suggests that the magicians did it. But that is not all. Right in those same chapters the Bible just as definitely and specifically says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and so you have a multiplicity of causes that result in the same thing. Now, the ultimate result is that Pharaoh's heart is hardened in that he becomes stubborn and rebellious and in opposition to the demands of the Lord.

How came his condition to be such? Well, God had a hand in it. There is not any use denying that. Those magicians were a party thereto. Then, equally important, the record says that Pharaoh himself hardened his own heart. Now, if I were to be so one-sided this morning as to run off after the idea purely that it is all God's work, I think you know I would reach a conclusion that would be foreign to the truth and dangerous. If I were to leave Jehovah out of it and say that man hardens his own heart, and he alone, I would do equal violence to the example herein given; but when I combine the effort and suggest to you that God and the magicians and Pharaoh all had a part in bringing about that state of stubbornness and rebellion, I but speak the sentiment as was expressed by Moses in the book of Exodus.

Well, that brings us to the next point. I wonder if it is possible for you and me to find out just what God did the result of which was the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. What did the magicians do that tended toward the same condition, and what did Pharaoh do? The actions of all three brought about the same results.

Now, rapidly I want to suggest to you what each of them did. First of all, God's part in it. What did Jehovah do in connection with Pharaoh that would harden his heart? Just this: He made a demand of Pharaoh that was against his political and financial interest and against his pride as the king of a great country. Now, Jehovah did that in these words, when he bade Aaron say: "Pharaoh, let God's people go out across the Red Sea a three-days' journey unto the desert, that they may serve and worship God." Now, it is not good politics for a king to let slip from under his control something like three million souls. It wouldn't add to a man's financial standing to let three million slaves escape, who were fed upon the commonest things of the land, and whose very life, service, and labor went to fill the already overflowing coffers of the great Egyptian king. To let them go would be a bad financial deal; and then, as a king, it doesn't look well to have your subjects march out from under control; but the Lord asked that, and hence that is one thing that God did, which I trust you will remember. He made a simple demand upon Pharaoh, which demand was admittedly against Pharaoh's political and financial interest and against his pride as a king. Now, what else did God do? When Pharaoh would become thus rebellious and stubborn, God sent plagues upon him to bring about a recognition of a supreme hand; and then as Pharaoh would relent and seemingly repent, God would withdraw and remove the plagues.

Now, there is not anybody in this audience, I think, who can tell anything else that God did the effect and the result of which was the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Jehovah did just two things—first, the demand to let the people go; next, the removing of the plagues as Pharaoh would relent for the time being. That is what God did about it, and the Bible said that in so doing he hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Now, what did the magicians do? When the Lord Almighty would bring a plague upon them, one of which was the frogs, for instance, after that miracle was done by Moses, the Bible says the magicians did so with their enchantments, and Pharaoh's heart was hardened because he considered that it was not God back of the frogs when he saw that his magicians could do it also. When the water was turned to blood by Moses or by God through Moses, the magicians undertook the same and likewise did so with their enchantment; but when Moses took of' the dust of the ground, threw it round about, and it became a great swarm of lice over all the people, the magicians did not do that, and the reason is a fine one, I think. The Bible says they could not, and I think they ought to be excused from any further participation. So note now: What did the magicians do? As far as they could, by their enchantments or sleight-of-hand performances, they followed and imitated Moses, and the effect was that it hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Well, what did Pharaoh do that brought about that same result and had an important part therein? Well, I think it can be summed up in a very few terms, and I shall try to do that in the very fewest possible words. Pharaoh studied self-interest rather than duty. Be looked to his own interest and his own prominence and his own advantage and progress rather than what duty would demand and what justice would suggest. Now, that is one thing he did. A second thing, he yielded to the promptings of pride and of prestige and of superior power. Combining all of these elements, I think, friends, you have the truth as expressed in the Bible regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. With one accord we ought to be able to eliminate all miracles and mysticism and things that cannot be understood, and just simply put it upon the basis of human fears and relationships into which it is possible for every one of us to enter and be surrounded.

Pharaoh knew nothing about the God of heaven. Unto him there was a great missionary work to be done by the God of the universe, and hence Pharaoh raised question after question as to who is this that hath spoken unto Moses and made such requests. He threw the matter off lightly and ridiculed it, and suggested that the people are idle, and that is why they think of such things as getting out from under his control. He tried to pass the thing by as though it were a trivial matter; but God kept impressing the thing upon him and insisting upon the demand, notwithstanding the suggestions that Pharaoh by and by made, until at last there was nothing to be done but to accept God's declaration for it or else be swept off the face of the earth. Now, had he but arrived at the proper conclusion, the effect of all of God's dealings and of all the things connected therewith ought to have been exactly the opposite of that which it was.

I submit to you, friends, to-day, that under the gospel reign and under the Christian dispensation the same principles prevail, and shall as long as human nature remains the same. All down the line the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God has upon many, many souls exactly the same effect as did the Lord's demand to Pharaoh back in the days gone by. God made a demand upon him. That demand was in behalf of humanity, for the benefit of those Israelites. God makes a demand upon you and me to-day for our good, for the blessings of the world, for the benefit of humanity, and ultimately for his own matchless glory.

Now, that demand is contrary to our physical desires; it is contrary to our animal nature; it is contrary to the appetites and the pleasures in which we love to revel and to engage. Yet that is God's demand, and it is just as iron-clad and just as strong and just as urgent and insistent as was the demand upon Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go.

I want to ask to-day: What shall be my attitude, what shall be yours, toward God’s demands? Are you going to let it come to pass that your heart became hardened rather than softened by God’s wonderful appeal and God’s demand that you forsake the passions and the lusts of the flesh? You ought to make the sacrifice if any there be, take up your cross, having denied yourself, and follow after the Christ. That is God’s demand.

Now, my attitude toward it will depend upon whether or not my heart shall be hardened or softened and attuned unto him. Hear it: If I study what the world calls a "good time;" if I study the gratification of my own lusts and the satisfaction of my own animal desires; if I am determined to live upon the common sphere of the brutes and of the beasts of the field, the results will be identical with that of Pharaoh. My heart will be hardened, and it could be truly said that God did it. 0, not by the performance of a miracle, not by something superhuman, but by making a request that is contrary to my desires, that is against my worldly ambitions, that is in opposition to my animal nature; and if I do not yield, I am to be hardened day by day, as I postpone, stubbornly refusing the gospel of the Son of God. Hence, Paul said (Hebrews 3:13) : "Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Here, friends, the very thing that we call "sin" has the effect upon us to harden our nature, to blunt our perceptive powers, and to stultify our consciences until it is possible for you and me, as human beings upon the earth, to hear the gospel, sit under the glad sound thereof, and refuse it, reject it, until by and by our consciences will be seared over as with a red-hot iron, until the penetrating appeals of God’s Son will not be effective, and hence we have reached that point in the downward path of human possibilities where it is impossible for us to be saved.

I am certain that Paul had that in mind when thus he spoke in 1 Timothy 4:2 of certain characters having their consciences seared over. Did you ever see a branded ox or branded mule, where the red-hot iron burns into the very flesh and immediately underneath the nerve is billed and there is a scab and a sore that is left? You may touch that and prick it any way you may want to; but it is dead, and there is no flinching that comes therefrom. Why? There has been a red-hot iron applied, and underneath that the feeling has been destroyed.

Paul, what are you talking about? "I am talking about the time to come, of which the Spirit speaks expressly, when some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to insidious spirits and doctrines of devils, having their consciences seared as with a hot iron, so that all the sensitiveness and feeling of the nervous system thereunder has been destroyed, until to that man the gospel may be preached time and again and it becomes ineffective, because he has hardened his heart, stiffened his neck, become stubborn and rebellious, and hence the power of God to save is ineffective unto him." The gospel, as Paul said to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:16), is either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. If you and I, brethren, are determined to live our own way and be governed and guided by the dictates and passions of the flesh, the gospel of the Son of God will be a means of condemnation, of death, unto us. But if, instead of studying my own side of the question purely and laboring and living under the false conception of life that seemingly moat of the human family have, I will but forsake that and turn unto God, the gospel story of the cross has its softening effect, melting all hardness, removing all stubbornness, driving out the spirit of rebellion by the love of Christ and God’s wonderful mercy, and the result is that by and by I am led to the full acceptance of the glad terms thereof.

There are a number of things that tend to harden and also to soften. For instance, I just think of it that heat is an element that will soften wax, and at the same time it will harden clay; and that is exactly the effect of the gospel. To those of you, ladies and gentlemen, who have listened patiently and studied thoroughly as I have been trying to talk to you from time to time—perhaps you have been studying the Bible, also reading and reflecting upon the sermons that appear in the public press—I would ask this question: What effect is it going to have upon your lives? If you but merely appreciate them as a mental product, if you but merely enjoy them and do not translate them or transcribe them into your own life, the result is that you may be, perhaps, worse than if you had never heard them.

Opportunities, joys, and privileges come to us with the invitation to use them and not abuse them. Every one that comes is characterized by the declaration, "Use me or lose me;" and so with all the opportunities along the pathway of life that you and I may have. Every soul this morning in this presence who rejects the gospel call once becomes harder to reach next time. You may go through the entire series possibly convicted of the righteousness of the cause presented; but if you are studying business interests, worldly affairs, things material rather than things that are sacred, holy, and high, the result will be that your hearts will become hardened, and the chances might come to pass that you will reach that point where the gospel has lost its power upon you and you are doomed to destruction and damnation at the last great day.

So, then, brethren, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as it is written. it is within my power and yours this morning to determine what shall be the effect of God’s demand upon us. By its rejection the effect is the hardening of my perceptive powers and my conscience. If I but yield, it will have a melting effect and ultimate conversion of a soul to God.

I want to ask again, my friends: Will you respond this morning to God’s call when he demands that you submit unto his authority and obey him, be translated out of darkness into the light? Take upon yourself the armor of the Lord, raise aloft his splendid banner, and march under his unsullied flag, I beg you. If you refuse to do so, you are acting the part of old Pharaoh; and the result becomes day by day the hardening of your heart, of all those elements that go to make up the heart of which the Bible speaks.

2.11 - PRAYER

PRAYER

I think this a very fine Saturday noon audience, especially in view of the fact that there are attractions, many of them, within easy reach of us all. In James 5:16 there are these words addressed unto Christians: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

I am just wondering if we really believe those statements. Are we ready, brethren and friends, at all times to confess our faults? Are we ready to pray for one another that we may be healed of our transgressions? Do we really believe that the effectual, earnest prayer of a righteous man availeth much?

Sometimes I have thought that the matter of praying at services like this is largely due to formality. We have been so accustomed in our service to have, say, two or three songs, and then a prayer, and then another song, that perhaps we have grown into the idea that it is just a mere matter of form; and hence we are not ready to commence to worship Cod or to put our souls into it until after the formalities are over. I frequently think, therefore, that it would be a fine lesson for our children especially to vary that particular order. Perhaps if we should have the sermon the first thing, the singing at the close of the service, and then the prayer, it would counteract the impression that it is a cold, ritualistic, and formal affair.

Now, Christian people believe in the efficacy and duty of prayer. Always has it been an important obligation resting upon men, and those of whom you read with favorable comment in the Bible were men who ever breathed out the sentiment of prayer unto Jehovah. Abraham was a man of prayer. Jacob stopped on the way in which he traveled and offered a prayer unto God. Moses, amid cares and responsibilities the equal of which no other man ever had, often went to the Lord in prayer. His successor Joshua, likewise David, prayed most earnestly and fervently unto God. Solomon, as well as Hezekiah, one of the best kings of which we have a record, carried his troubles and his anxieties unto God in prayer.

We are sometimes skeptical about matters of this kind, because we fancy that God is the same unchangeable being, and that according to natural laws things have been fixed, and that nothing can be done by even Jehovah to change the affairs connected therewith. But the Bible suggests to us quite the contrary. In connection with the very text I have read, James says that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as are we, emphasizing the fact that he was just simply human, and not due to the fact that he was a prophet, but as a man, subject to like passions of life as we are, and that he prayed earnestly unto God that it might not rain for a space of three years and six months; and God Almighty—not by a miracle, but in a way characteristic of himself and of his own affairs—answered that prayer. I do not know whether he would do that for me or not, because it might not be best. I shall not, in this morning’s discussion, enter into all those things that were characteristic of Elijah’s day, but suffice it to say that the object was sought and the

demonstrations anxiously looked for on the part of Elijah that the people might be called to their senses and to a recognition that God reigns over the destinies and the lives of men. In a word, all our skeptical ideas regarding God's answering prayers of the right sort are due, friends and brethren, to our shortsightedness. We are so limited and finite that sometimes we find ourselves doubting even the ability of Jehovah to override the obstacles. We imagine that things are insurmountable; and, therefore, we grow doubtful and skeptical in mind as to whether or not God will pay any attention to earnest, profound prayer.

Let me submit to you that the object of prayer is twofold—first, the effect that an earnest petition of a child of God may have upon the Father, and, second, upon the one who prays. I walk by faith, not by sight, in announcing to you that there is much that results from an earnest prayer. But I am reminded, further, that the word "much" is a relative term, and it is hard to determine just what is meant by it. A thimbleful of water is much compared to a drop, a glassful of water would be much compared to a thimbleful, and Cumberland River down here would be much compared with a pitcherful; but through every phase of life's affairs, put it down that James said: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." He did not say how much, nor in what way, nor go into the details regarding it; but the point made is, as I get it, there never has been a really fervent, earnest prayer, meeting all the requirements that God lays down, to which I will later refer, that was ever spent in vain. Now, it is true it might miss the definite and precise object toward which it was centered, or it might hit somewhere else, but its force and effect will be felt upon the earth.

I read an illustration of some one just along this line in which he said that you may take a rifle and level the aim upon a spot, and that you might miss the very thing shot at, but the force of the bullet is not spent in vain, that it will accomplish something or other somewhere.

We may marshal our soldiers upon the held of battle and go against the enemy, and numbers and numbers of charges may be spent apparently in vain, and yet there is something effected somewhere and in some way as the result of the same. So, then, let Christian people take courage that while we may pray for one specific thing and not get it, if there be a profound, earnest prayer, it will accomplish something or other somewhere if limited and bounded within the restrictions that God makes regarding an acceptable prayer.

Now, there is another thing, another fine feature. Aside from the effect that an earnest effectual prayer would have upon our Father, who loves and pities us as every father does his own child, there is a subjective influence that is exceedingly fine and not to be overlooked. You never saw a man in all of your life who lived in the true spirit and atmosphere of prayer, whose custom it was to frequently, not perhaps publicly, but in the quietude of his own relationships, approach the throne of Jehovah and pour out the anxiety of his soul—you never saw a man of that kind but that he was meek and humble and recognized his dependence upon the Power supreme, upon the "Rock that is higher than I."

Moses gave a very fine warning unto the leaders of Israel, a record of which is found in Deuteronomy 6:12, when he said: "Now, then, you are about to cross the river Jordan. You will drive out the enemy; you will have your possessions there and occupy houses which you did not build; you will pluck of the fruit of orchards and of vineyards which you did not plant; you will drink water out of wells which you have not digged. You will come into the enjoyment of all these things

as a matter of inheritance. Now, let me tell you, brethren, beware, lest thou forget the God that has led thee from bondage and has overshadowed thee, showered down these blessings upon you."

Don’t you know that is our disposition? it is mighty hard to appreciate things that come to us upon silver platters and for which we never toiled. We know not how they come. It is so unfortunate to-day for boys and girls to come into possession of a vast amount of wealth without having been thoroughly trained and acquainted with the fact as to how dollars are earned. They literally scatter and sow it around them until it is all gone.

Now, another example that is rather a sad one. In Deuteronomy 32:1-52 the record tells us that the Lord found Jacob in a waste, howling wilderness, in a desert land; and he took Jacob up and kept him as the very apple of his eye, and nurtured and tutored him and bore him aloft and bore him up, says the record, on eagles’ wings. He made him to eat of the very best of the land and to ride upon the high places, and the record says that Jacob in the course of time waxed fat; and if you will just read about what good things he had to eat, you will not be surprised at that. Then came the danger. The voice of Jehovah said: "Jacob, thou art waxen fat; thou art grown full with fatness." Then what? Then Jacob kicked and forsook the God of his being and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. What meant that man’s ruin? Going into pastures green and beside the still waters with the wrong attitude and with an improper disposition. The best thing that ever happened for the great masses of us upon the earth is the fact that we have been up against the hard places of earth; that we know what it means to suffer and to sacrifice and to be denied. 0, it was so unfortunate for that rich young fool whose ground brought forth so plentifully until he said within himself: "I know not what to do with all my harvests and fruits." Then finally he said: "I will tear down my old barns and build bigger ones, and there will I store my goods; and then I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry." God said to him: "Thou art a fool." He never would have done that, would not have been overtaken in that fault, if he had been taught and had understood that he must pray day by day unto the Father, "Give us this day our daily bread;" if he had recognized that every benediction and every blessing that we are the glad recipients of "cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." May God forbid that the time should ever come that any of us should grow bigoted and puffed up and filled with such despicable egotism that we raise our heads above common folks and act as if we thought we were better than ordinary mortals. Man is in a wonderfully dangerous condition when he reaches that light, flippant, frivolous conception of life. A prayerful man never does that; but he is all the time clad in humility, regarding and recognizing his dependence upon God.

But, to hasten over the matter with some things that need to be said, there are certain conditions with which I must comply if I have any assurance of my prayers being acceptable unto God. It must, first of all, be asked in faith, as the Savior so plainly said in Matthew 21:22 : "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" James (James 1:5-7) says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and teased. For let not that man [what man? That man that does not ask in faith, the man that is wavering] think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

So, then, if I approach the throne in the attitude of prayer, I must approach it as a believer—a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, in God Almighty.

Now, another suggestion is this: Unless I make my prayer or petition according to God's will, there is no possible chance of its being heard; and hence it implies intelligence and preparation, for prayer implies a study of the Bible and a knowledge of God's will; for, as 1 John 5:14 says: "This is the confidence that we have in him, [now watch it] that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us."

Now, there are thousands of prayers prayed by very earnest, honest, conscientious souls that never reach higher than the ceiling of the building. Why? They are not prayers according to God's will. They are not prayers that are based upon faith that comes from hearing God's word. Now, I might go out, independent of God's will, from a selfish point of view or from my personal anxiety, and pray with all of my being for God to bestow or pronounce blessings, and it would not come to pass. Prayer must be first, in faith; second, according to God's will. Therefore I ought to study, as a Christian, and learn the will of the Lord, and then fashion and form my utterances in perfect harmony therewith. But that is not all. A man must be righteous himself before there is assurance given unto him, for Peter (1 Peter 3:12) said: "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." Now, whose prayers? Unto the righteous man's prayers. "But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

There is but little comfort in the book of God about any man's praying unless he is willing to do God's will, which is the embodiment of righteousness itself. Then, furthermore, there must be the disposition on our part to forgive the other fellows—those who have sinned against us. I am not prepared to approach the throne of God Almighty if I bow down in all the earnestness of my soul and yet have final ice and bitterness and hatred and envy and backbiting and all manner of guile in my heart. I may pray until Gabriel sounds his trumpet, and there is no assurance granted unto me. The Savior says in Matthew 6:15 : "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses I now note: Who? If you and I, that approach the throne of God in prayer, forgive not men, here upon the earth, their trespasses), neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." So you may put it down that we must ask our Father to forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us; and unless that is characteristic of us, our prayers are weighed in the balances and found wanting.

Then the next requisite is that our prayer must be an answerable one, and I am positively certain, without a doubt, that most of our prayers partake of the very thing herein condemned. James (James 4:3) says: "Ye ask, and receive not." Why? James knew that many prayers were unanswerable. "Ye ask, and receive not." Well, why, James? "Because Ye ask amiss." Wherein is the "amiss?" "That ye may consume it upon your lusts." What is the element of it? Selfishness, purely. Do you think that if I approach the throne of God and ask him for anything that may be consumed for the gratification of my fleshly passions and lusts-do you fancy that God would give me that thing? If he were thus to do, it would not be for my good; and I speak that with all reverence, due to the fact that God has forbidden selfish prayers. If I were like the old gentleman of whom you have heard—just simply circumscribe myself and be content to pray for "me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more"—I do not think that my prayer would be worth the time spent. Unless the general welfare of humanity, the uplifting of the race, the spreading abroad of the principles of the gospel of Christ, are included and all humanity are to be

benefactors, there is little assurance granted in the book of God that my prayer will be heard. And so, with all of these characteristics peculiarly true of prayer, then comes James' statement: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man [prayed in faith, prayed with a spirit of forgiveness, prayed according to God's will, prayed not to be consumed upon his own lust] availeth much." Every child of God on earth ought to believe this statement and show his faith by his practice along that line.

Some one said: "Brother Hardeman, do you pray for sinners?" I do, but not for sinners short of obedience. I could but pray that opportunities may be multiplied, that circumstances might be such as would be conducive to their rendering obedience to the gospel of Christ, and never ought I to pray for God to save a soul short of having done his will. Instead of the apostle's spending so much of his time in pleading with God to save the sinner as he is, the apostle rises to the dignity of the occasion and says (2 Corinthians 5:11) : "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, that they may render that service that God demands of them. We are ambassadors for God's truth, we are God's eat-then vessels, and we pray unto God for you to do something." What is it? To meet God's requirements, to be reconciled to God's will. Our time, therefore, is spent in persuading, in begging, in pleading with men to render obedience to Christ.

Friend, I do not have to-day to stop and beg God to be ready to save the sinners of Nashville; I do not have to spend the time pleading with Christ to be merciful or longsuffering toward them; I do not have to pray for the Spirit to make known the plan of salvation. God is willing, Christ is anxious, and the Spirit is pleading. What is lacking? Simply for you, when the opportunity comes, to accept the salvation which God has provided, Christ has executed, and the Spirit made known. The only thing that will ever hinder universal salvation is the fact that all men will not accept the gospel of Christ. I pray you, therefore, friends, to-day, be ye reconciled unto God. In that Bible is God's word of reconciliation. Believe it, obey it, comply with it, and that prayer will be answered. If you will be reconciled unto God, initiated into his family, then you can address him as "our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

Now, finally, let me call your attention to the model the Savior gave us. It is direct, pertinent. The model prayer that our Savior taught the disciples to pray is not one of those great long-spun-out ones in which men display a repetition of phrases. Sometimes you have heard a prayer for ten or fifteen minutes, and then the one who prays it apologizes by saying: "Lord, since we are not heard for our much speaking, we had better bring our remarks to a close." He could have done that several minutes ago just as well. God does not want us to use vain repetitions, on and on and on, but to bring forth the direct sentiment of thanksgiving, which ought to occupy a large per cent of our prayers. God has lavishly blessed us with the good things of earth, and the burden of our prayers ought to be that of thanksgiving, of gratitude, and of praise. We ought to pray for a continuation of Heaven's richest blessings to be upon us, that the result may be the uplift, the benefit, and the welfare of all the race.

I am praying this morning, my friends, that those of you who have not as yet done so may have it to-day in your hearts to respond to the gospel call. The prayers of brethren and friends and loved ones all over this country that have been ascending toward the throne of heaven in your behalf have been, not that God would save you as you are, but that the occasion may be yours to hear the glad sound of the gospel, to believe it, to repent of your sine, to acknowledge the Christ, be

buried with him in the name of the sacred three, and then rise to walk in newness of life as God's child and follow in his footsteps until he sees fit at last to touch you gently and bid you come home. If you will do this, while we stand we give you the opportunity.

Chapter 44

2.12 - THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK

I want to speak to you at this time, my friends, regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, especially as it relates to the apostles in their respective work. As a text this morning, 1 John 5:7 will answer, in which John says: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

I think, perhaps, that there is not anything connected with the plan of salvation considered more mysterious, perhaps less understood, than is the Holy Spirit and his work in the accomplishment of the purpose in view. Permit me just to suggest to this audience that the Holy Spirit is a person, such as is God, the Father, and Christ, the Son, and that these three make up what we call the "Godhead," or the "Trinity," and the Bible says they are one. So that settles that point. They are one in nature, each of them being infinite, eternal. They are one in design and one in purpose. The object ultimately to be attained is the same with each of them.

Now, there seem to be people upon the earth who cannot appreciate how these may have their own personality and yet be one. In the marriage relationship the husband and wife are one when thus their lives are blended and together they agree to travel in the onward journey. Now, that does not rob them of their individuality nor of their personality; neither does it deny the fact that they are one. Well, how one? One with reference to their purpose, one with reference to their aim in life and to the object to be accomplished. While that is true, there is a special field of operation for each of them. it is the business and the place of the husband to look after outside matters, business concerns, and solve the problems of support and a livelihood along the pathway of life; and it is the place of the wife to look after the home, assume the responsibilities that naturally come upon her. But in each of these fields both are equally interested and are one in their purpose, intent, and objective.

Now, can we view this Trinity after that fashion? Can we understand that God and the Lord and the Holy Spirit are one, looking ultimately to the salvation of the souls of men and the adornment of the Father’s house with souls redeemed from the earth? While that is true with respect to them and in that sense they are one, let me submit to you that there is a special realm and field of operation for each of these. For instance, when man had wandered sway, having transgressed God’s law and forfeited his right to the tree of life and the prospects which he had a right and reason to expect, God and the Lord and the Holy Spirit all were interested in his ultimate redemption, in his rescue, in his final salvation; but in the accomplishment of that ultimate objective there are numbers of things to intervene.

Necessarily first of all is the drafting or planning of a great scheme of redemption whereby God could be just and save mankind. After the plan is suggested, the next step necessarily following is that the plan must be carried out and executed. That having been done, the world must know respecting it and get acquainted with all things connected therewith.

Now, don’t you think that such would cover the ground? Taking man as he was in his fallen state and the ultimate object on the part of these three to be his rescue and final reinstatement into God’s paradise, there are three things of magnificent character to be accomplished. First, the getting up of a plan by which he may be saved; second, the execution of that plan; and, third, the revelation of that plan. Now, neither of these could exist with profit to man without the other; and so, in the very simplest way of thinking, let me submit to you that it was God’s special part in this great working out of man’s redemption and restoration to originate the plan, draft the scheme, outline the policy, and furnish, if you please, blue prints, together with certain specifications as to how the matter should be finally executed upon the earth. In the infinite purpose of Jehovah the plan was formed, the scheme was drafted, and the specifications were outlined. For forty centuries God led and tutored humanity until in the fullness of time Christ came, and to him as the great master mechanic were delivered the plan and the specifications, with the express understanding that not his will, but the Father’s, should be done. it was his to execute what Jehovah had drafted and to carry into effect heaven’s will. A third of a century was spent by our Lord in preparation and execution of his work. Scorn, ridicule, and contempt were heaped upon him. Death on the tree of the cross, the opening of his side, and the pouring forth of the last drop of blood in his body constituted a part of the coat. His last expression was: "it is finished." What is finished? "My special part in the great scheme of redemption. I have walked in obedience to the declarations of the Father; I have followed the draft and the scheme to a dot; and now it’s all over, it’s finished; and hence I commend my spirit back unto God Almighty." That having been done, God’s purpose, together with that of Christ and the Holy Spirit, was for you and me to learn the way of life and the path of duty. Hence, the Holy Spirit’s special function and special work was to take up just where the Lord had left oil and make known to all the sons and daughters of men what God had planned and Christ had executed. When the Spirit thus guided the apostles into all truth and the will of God was made known, there was a perfect, a complete, and a replete system of salvation. The responsibility was shifted from God and from Christ and the Spirit and placed upon human beings. Jehovah-jireh, the Lord, has provided, the Christ has executed, the Spirit has revealed; and hence throughout the two thousand years since the proposition has been for us to accept what has been provided and be saved or reject it and be damned.

Now, I want to ask this splendid audience: What do you think about the completion and the perfection of each of these respective parts? When God Almighty in the morning of time had hashed before him the whole outline and possibilities of man’s redemption and had finished it, I wonder if there is anybody that thinks that it was not a matter complete. Have you faith enough in God to believe that his scheme is adapted, that it is adequate, that it is complete? If you have not, of course what you need is faith in God Almighty to begin with. Now, in the second place, are you satisfied to-day with what Christ did in his particular field and relationship with the scheme of redemption? When he lived for thirty-three years on the earth, suffered, sorrowed, sighed, bled, and died on the tree of the cross, are you content with that? Or do you think something else ought to occur? Do you have faith to say: "Lord, I accept the provisions and the wonderful sacrifice that thus was made as adequate to my salvation and to my ultimate redemption ?"

Now, third, do you believe this morning that when the Holy Spirit guided the apostles unto the proclamation of the truth and they finally penned all of that Bible before us— do you believe the Holy Spirit finished his work with reference to the plan of salvation? Is it not strange, friends, that

people will be inconsistent and illogical in their reasoning and in their attitude? Now, I am going to say plainly what I have in mind. I have nothing to conceal. Friends, I want you to hear it. There is just as much sense in my falling upon my knees at this hour and asking God Almighty to get up, to design, and to draft another scheme of redemption as there is for me to ask Christ to come to earth again, suffer, and die. Either one of those would smack of infidelity and skepticism. But, further, friends, there is just as much sense, just as much reason, and just as much Bible in my praying to God to get up a new scheme of redemption, and that Christ suffer, sorrow, and die again, as there is for me to ask the Holy Spirit to perform his work a second time or to send some other means to do that which already the Holy Spirit has done. I do not care who it is, the man to-day who is not content with God's plan and with Christ's execution and the Holy Spirit's revelations needs faith in his heart and trust in God Almighty. Hence, the great petitions and the pitiful pleadings of God's Spirit, in some special manner, in some new and untried means, to do something wholly different from that which is revealed, portrays a lack of faith and smacks of skepticism.

Friends, I am glad to announce to you that I accept at one hundred per cent the entire plan. I have perfect confidence that it is adequate for the purpose intended, that there is not one single thing lacking, that it needs no supplement or subsidiary support or new orders in this the twentieth century for the accomplishment of the end in view.

I believe that God provided for all the race, that Christ tasted death for every man, and that in the Bible, through the Holy Spirit, there is a perfect revelation. I accept the responsibility to believe and obey the gospel and be saved or to reject it and be damned. The gospel is to me a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. In addition to enabling them to perform miracles, let me suggest that the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the apostles was threefold in nature. First, the Holy Spirit was promised them (John 14:23) for the express purpose of bringing to their remembrance all things whatsoever that the Savior had taught them. Be it remembered that for about three years they had been students under the tutorage and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. During that time they had forgotten many of the lessons taught. These things were too important and too serious and there was too much at stake for God to rely upon the frailties and imperfections of humanity's memory; and so the promise was that when the Spirit, which was the Holy Ghost, shall come upon you, which shall proceed from the Father, he will bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever I have commanded you. He will go back to the past, to the very beginning, and review it and keep it ever present before you as an open book so that you will not make a mistake. Hence, the past was provided for by the coming of the Holy Spirit unto the twelve.

Now, second, for the present, God said the Holy Spirit will guide you unto all truth. The apostles were standing there with the way before them never having been gone over, the vast wilderness, the vast territory stretching out in the great future, and they are to carry out and to blaze the path in which all the rest of the gospel preachers are destined to follow.

Now, the Spirit says: "My relation to you as apostles shall not be simply to remind you of the past; but I will guide you unto all truth, and hence see that no mistake is made. For the future I will draw aside the curtain that intervenes and show you things to come."

Now, I stop to ask: Do you believe, friends, honestly and candidly, that when the Spirit thus appeared to the apostles and guided them, he did a complete work, or was there something

lacking on his side of the great gospel plan of salvation? I am glad to-day to say that I believe confidently and thoroughly that the Holy Spirit went back into the teachings the Savior had given and gathered them up and turned them over to the apostles, and thus they were endued with his power, were enabled to draw upon the great storehouse of information that the Christ had taught them for the three and one-half years; and when they started out from Jerusalem with the old sword in hand to blaze the saplings along the path, I have perfect confidence in the all sufficiency, in the absolute perfection, of that guiding; so that there is not a single, solitary thing God would have you and me to do to-day but that the Spirit guided those apostles unto the proclamation of that truth. The man who feels otherwise needs to bow down to God and say: "Lord, increase my faith in the Jerusalem gospel and in the provisions of the Holy Spirit."

I used to drive oxen back on the farm, and many times hauled from the woods and the bottoms timbers round about. Sometimes workmen would go out and make rails, split posts, or cut our winter's wood where there was no road. I did not know the way, and the first trip—mark you, the first trip—one of the workmen who knew it had to come and go with me; and as we drove along, he, in front, with ax in hand, peeled a sapling here and skinned a beech yonder. Thus a path was blazed all the way. I want to ask: Do you think that workman had to go with me the next load? it would be a reflection on me if I could not go there the second time. There were the wagon tracks, there was the bark knocked off, and all I needed to do was to just follow the same road. I could have hauled fifty loads thereafter unaccompanied by the workman direct. Do you know, that is what the Holy Spirit did. He said to these apostles:"I will go with you down the old Jerusalem path." So he started out, blazing the pathway of human redemption; and upon the pages of God's word the bark is peeled off of a sapling here and a blazed tree over there, and another is marked on down the line; and when the whole territory had all been traversed and all the plan revealed and made known, God simply says to you and me to-day: "Follow the blazes, for the Holy Spirit in his miraculous power will not accompany preachers of this age; but follow the PATHS, the old tracks, and the old lines. If you will do that, the same results will follow, as certain as the night follows the day." But the Spirit guided them unto all the truth, and they taught sinners to believe the gospel with all their hearts, repent genuinely of their sine, and publicly confess the Christ, the Son oh God, and to be buried with him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and arise to walk in newness of life, and then walk out in that path until by and by Heaven sees fit to claim them as his own. That Is the truth, friends, unto which the Holy Spirit guided the apostles.

I bid you now, while together we shall stand and sing the hymn, to walk in wisdom's way.

2.13 - THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

There is indelibly stamped upon my memory a photograph of this magnificent audience. it is made the more impressive, friends, when I remember that you have assembled out of regard for Jehovah, out of respect for his word, and conscious of the fact that you are rapid passengers upon the stage of action, hastening with lengthened strides toward that "city which hath foundations."

I am very glad this afternoon to acknowledge the presence of Sister Ryman, one of the charter members of the church of Christ of South Nashville, whose influence was largely responsible for the erection of this magnificent auditorium, which is quite historic because of the scenes that have herein transpired. I am also glad to have with us all visitors, many of whom I do not know, but especially to welcome my friend, as well as yours, Governor Taylor, whom all Tennesseeans gladly know.

Let me call your attention to what I hope to be one of the simplest and one of the most practical thoughts that I have tried to deliver to you thus far. I want your attention fastened and your thoughts centered upon a study of the blood of Christ in its relationship to mankind. A very fitting text is found in 1 John 1:6-7 : "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we He, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

I take it that every professed Christian upon the earth recognizes the efficacy and the power of the blood of Christ, without which we count ourselves indeed hopeless and helpless as along the pathway of time we move. I wonder, friends, if all of us are intelligently appreciative of just what is said by the beloved disciple: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

There are just a few men upon the earth that are striving to reach heaven independently of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is a lamentable picture to see fine citizens, good business men and splendid women, in their negligence, indifference, and carelessness, blinded, deluded, and deceived, thinking that they can leave behind them evidences of their acceptance with God when they have not been washed in that fountain filled with the precious blood of his Son.

There are some other texts that I want to get before you early in the talk. John (1 John 2:2) says: "He [CHRIST] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Thus is the universality of the scheme of redemption announced to man. But Jesus said in connection with the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:28) : "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Hence, you can see the connection some way or other between the blood of Christ and the remission of sine, as well as making propitiation therefor.

But, again (Acts 20:28), Paul bade the elders of the church at Ephesus to "take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

These scriptures, when translated into common English, simply mean that Jesus Christ, our Lord, died as a ransom for lost and ruined humanity; that as man's life was forfeited by his betraying the trust committed to him, it took life, which is the blood, to make the atonement, or propitiation, for man's redemption and restoration. In a very brief statement let me say that when God created man of the dust of the earth, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and there man stood, the culmination of Heaven's creative power, bearing the impress of divinity upon his brow and the very stamp of God's image upon his heart. So far as the record shows, man was perfect in body, in mind, and in spirit; but being a man rather than a machine, he was clothed with the power of freedom to act and to decide and to elect his course as along the aisles of time he was destined to go. God Almighty turned over the government of this earth unto man that all the universe might be blessed and subsequent generations might evermore receive heavenly benedictions showered down upon them. But the sad story is that man proved untrue to the trust, magnificent as it was, committed to his care; and instead of heeding the counsel and the advice of the God of his being, he lent an attentive ear unto the archenemy of mankind and yielded to the counsel of His Satanic Majesty. He chose the devil to be his God and the God of his kingdom, rather than the Lord of heaven and earth: As a result, death entered. Thorns and thistles sprang up in the world. Sin, sorrow, sickness, and sighing enveloped the earth in darkness. Hence it was that God's Spirit was withdrawn from the earth, and the spirit of the devil—mischief, wickedness, vice, and sin—blighted the hopes of mankind and cursed this earth with its various scars until glad redemption was announced in the subsequent years. When man proved unfaithful, when he betrayed the trust delivered unto him, God saw fit to make an example of him for all who should follow. Not to punish a rebellion of this sort would be but an invitation to similar scenes and would put a premium on treasons of the basest kind. At that time some kind of propitiation had to be made in order that the laws of heaven might be satisfied and that the honor of God might be vindicated. Jesus Christ, therefore, interposed his precious blood and stood as a substitute for man on the condition that man should become his servant. In thus satisfying the Divine law and propitiating the offended majesty of heaven and in allowing man to return to God, Jesus was as "a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world."

God Almighty wanted to give to man that which would be the means of overcoming the sad plight into which his acts of disobedience had carried him. God wanted something to be done because of his matchless love that might overcome the thorns, the briers, and the thistles that had grown upon the earth as a result of sin. He desired to transform this earth into another paradise and make it possible for man to put forth his hand once more, partake of its fruit, and live forever in his holy presence. Man's journey was to be from one paradise unto another paradise. Just as the great enemy of mankind triumphed in the first great battle, wrested liberty and association with God from man, caused him to be driven out and the gates of paradise closed behind him, so the second Adam, the substitute, the one to make propitiation for our sins, voluntarily proposed to be our mediator, with the earnest hope that he might wrestle with the powers in the Hadean world, come forth triumphant from the tomb, pluck the rose of immortality therefrom, and through the merit or efficacy of his blood might swing wide the gates of paradise once more and grant us to eat of the

tree of life and thus live forever. And thus is flashed the entire program and principle of salvation from first to last, drafted by God, executed by Christ, and by the Holy Spirit revealed unto the sons and daughters of Adam's apostate race. We ought, therefore, to congratulate ourselves to-day, if we would be thoughtful in our deliberation over the possibilities of the restoration that is to be made through Jesus Christ, our Lord. By the gift of Christ, God has purchased the church. But remember that it takes two parties to complete a purchase, to consummate a gift. One provides and offers the gift, the other accepts. Those who accept the offer of the Lord enter in and constitute his church. Hence, the church alone is ransomed and redeemed by the blood of Christ. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Only those who believe and obey the gospel have part in the blood of Christ, and apart from his blood there is no forgiveness.

Now, permit me to say that while Jesus Christ stood as a substitute for man and purchased a respite for him, he should lend himself to his set-vice. The coming of the Lord was stayed for a period of four thousand years, during which time God instituted dispensations that were purely symbolical and typical of that which finally culminated in the gospel age. But, further, let me say that in no period of the world has God Almighty been approachable only by and through the shedding of blood, which is the life. Hence, in the patriarchal age we have the story of Abel and Cain. The former, walking by faith, offered an animal whose blood was shed. Thus was his sacrifice accepted. The latter, representing a class of humanity wise above what is written, substituted the fruit of the ground and was rejected. This first sacrifice of blood was but typical of the blood of Christ, the perfect sacrifice for sinners made. Grandfather Abraham, following in perfect accord, walking in the counsel of God Almighty, offered sacrifices of a bloody nature unto God. Thus the patriarchs did while twenty-five hundred years of the history of the world sped by.

Moses then led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, and God instituted a national system of service and of worship known to us as the Jewish theocracy—-a government both civil and religious in its nature. From the very time that they encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai until the close of that period—fifteen hundred years—there was not an approach, there was not the presentation, favorable, of any act or of any service unto God other than through the sacrifices of blood, typical as they were of Him by whose blood our sins are cleansed to-day.

Hence, Paul said (Hebrews 9:22) : "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood." So there was not an ordinance, there was not a commandment, there was not a single, solitary thing ordained of God to Moses, and through Moses unto the people, but that it was sanctified and dedicated by the blood of an animal. When God gave the constitution in the form of the Ten Commandments, he told Moses to get a book and write a law based upon these statements. Having so done, "he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." When the tabernacle was thus erected and the altar made, the lever and the candlesticks, the table, the mercy seat, and the ark of the covenant—all of it God had sanctified and sealed by the blood of animals. Not only these, but the tongs, the pots, the pans, the shovels, the flesh hooks,

and all of the articles used by Moses in the administration of the service had to be dedicated and sealed by blood. So, then, there was a system of government in which sacrifices galore were offered; and if you will look back through the changing scenes of these fifteen hundred years, you will observe a great incline down which there has come the blood from the days of righteous Abel on through patriarchy through the Jewish age, picturing, symbolizing, and typifying the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the immaculate child of Mary and the Son of the living God.

During these forty centuries there was no sacrifice, no blood, that could possibly take away in the absolute a single sin. Those being typical ages, the blood being typical, the remission was only typical and partial. From Hebrews 10:1-4 I bid you listen: "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never [watch it] with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sine every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." But, my friends, that is all they had. They had only the blood of animals. Every Jew who was faithful to the law of Moses came at the stated period year after year, bringing his victim to the altar, and there at the hands of a priest offered that victim as a sacrifice. What did it do? Blot out his sins? No, no! it simply rolled those sins forward one year at a time, at the expiration of which those sins, together with others accumulated, were piled upon him as before. Hence, it was then necessary for that act of sacrifice to be repeated for another year, and thus it was on down for the fifteen centuries. Every Jew, however, who was faithful in the observance of these annual sacrifices of the blood of bulls and of goats unto the coming of Christ was redeemed—had all sins wiped out, never to be remembered again.

Hence, you and I ought to appreciate what Paul said in Hebrews 8:6-12 : "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Now note: "They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord." Why? "For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The time was, under the Jewish age, when the Lord did remember their sins every year; but under the shedding of the blood of Christ, our Lord, under the gospel of the Christian dispensation, he will blot out sins, and, in so doing, they are remembered no more.

Paul said, "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" and from this, coupled with the statement that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin, it follows as certainly as the night follows the day that without the shedding of the blood of Christ there can be no remission of sin. This fact is generally conceded. it is also true that no debt was ever paid absolutely by mere paper

currency; but thousands of obligations have been practically canceled by notes, bonds and similar documents. Just so God issued to the patriarchs and Jews promissory notes based on the infinite value of the blood of Christ which he knew would in due time be shed. By means of these notes he was enabled to meet for the time being all the claims of justice, and still to treat as just and righteous all who became loyal subjects of his government. But no one could "read his title clear to mansions in the skies" until all promises had been redeemed by the one atoning sacrifice. But let me submit to you further, my friends, in connection with a fact of that kind, what Paul said in Hebrews 9:15 : "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

I think there are none of you who would be so thoughtless or so lax in your studies as to imagine that the beneficiary of the Mosaic dispensation had to have the literal blood of the literal bull or goat applied to his body. That was not the way the Jew gained the benefit of the blood of animals. But when Moses had ordained the book of the law and had sealed that book by the blood, then every Jew on earth who accepted that law and obeyed the direction of Moses received the benefits of the blood of these animals, and thus the blood of the animals was applied to the Jew.

Just so to-day in the atonement made by Christ, in the propitiation and the reception of the benefits of the blood of Christ, it is hard to believe that any one of ordinary intelligence, who has studied the Bible with the least particle of profit, would think that the physical, literal blood of Christ was to be applied in a literal way to the immortal, the immaterial spirit and soul of man. But some there are who would actually have you believe that in some mysterious, miraculous manner the Holy Spirit literally sprinkles it upon the heart of the sinner—a thing that is absolutely and ridiculously impossible to be done.

Before Christ Jesus, our Lord, left the earth, provision was made for the writing of a book of the law of the Spirit, by which his people were to be governed and by obedience to which they were to become beneficiaries of his will. The constitution of that law was the great world-wide commission. Christ dedicated, consecrated, and forever sealed the great principle and the law of salvation, not with the blood of an animal, but by his own precious blood. Hence, a testament is of force after men are dead. it must be sealed by their blood. Many of you, perhaps, have your wills written out; but they are not of force. You have the right to go to the vault, get them, tear them up, and write others altogether different. But when you die and leave a will correctly made, no court on earth can change the terms or benefits therein found. it is then sealed by your blood.

Just so Christ Jesus, our Lord, gave the great constitution to the apostles, who were guided by the Holy Spirit in proclaiming to the world his laws, sealed by his blood. The blood of Christ sealed the law of the new testament and purchased the church of God.

Acts 20:28 : "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the dock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." For what was Christ’s blood expended? The answer is: The church of the living God. How much of the blood of Christ went into the church of God? The last drop flowed from his pierced side, and all of that went to the purchase of the church of which we read in God’s book. So, then, it stands axiomatic that if you and I get any of the benefits of the blood of Christ, we must get it by virtue of our relationship to that institution into which Christ’s blood went. To illustrate, I have here

a five-dollar bill. Suppose today that is the only five-dollar bill that I have, and I walk into some store in your city and buy a hat—not for four dollars and ninety-nine cents, but I give in exchange for it five dollars. I put five hundred cents, every particle of that five dollars, into this hat. Now, then, no matter where I go nor how I act, if I ever get any benefit out of that five dollars, I must get it out of the use of the hat into which the entire Ave dollars went. Outside of the hat there is no benefit, there is no purchasing power of the five dollars possible to be rendered, for all of it is there. So if I ever get one single, solitary benefit, I must get it out of the hat.

Very well. Jesus Christ, our Lord, purchased the church of God with his blood. Therefore it follows beyond the shadow of a doubt that if you and I ever become beneficiaries of Christ's blood it will be due to the fact that we have become members of his church. Why? All of Christ's blood went into the purchase of his church; and when you and I render obedience unto him, become his children, he adds us to the church, and thereby we get all the benefits of the blood of Christ; and "if we walk in the light, as be is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." As the Jews received the benefit of the shed blood of the animals by virtue of their acceptance of the Mosaic law, just so to-day you and I receive the benefits of Christ's shed blood through obedience and in compliance with the commandments and the authority connected with the church of the living God, and outside of that there is no benefit. Our moat important duty, therefore, is to become members of the church of God, the body of Christ. When I talk about the church of God, I am not talking about some human denomination; for be it remembered that the church of God is not even the distant relative of human organizations, which are unknown to the book of God. I am talking about that institution for which Christ died, over which he reigns as head, in which the Spirit dwells— that institution that is guided by his counsel, that is filled with his Spirit, that is ultimately to be crowned with his matchless glory. I rejoice to think it possible for men and women to become members of the household of faith, of the family of God, of the church purchased with his blood, in which there is salvation by the blood of Christ.

So, then, when I ask a man to-day to believe the gospel with all of his heart and he starts down the aisle to extend his hand, friends, that man is not looking to faith per se as the cleansing power, but that man, prompted by faith, is looking to the blood of Christ. When a man turns from his sins, resolves by the grace of God to abandon the wrong and to face about to a holier, higher, nobler sphere, that man ought not to be looking merely to the act of repentance, but to be looking to the blood of Christ, which alone can cleanse from all sin. When a man walks down into the water, there to be buried in the name of the sacred three, he is not looking to the water. O, no. He is not looking to faith. He is not looking to repentance. But he is looking beyond—unto the entrance into the church of God, bought with the blood of his Son, through which alone there can come the cleansing power. Hence, his effort is to get into the merits and benefits of the blood of Christ.

But, friends, where did Christ shed his blood? The answer must come': In the tragedy of the cross, in the scenes inaugurated and enacted on Calvary's brow, when thus he tasted death for every man. Christ shed his blood in his death; and if I get the benefits of Christ's blood, I must get into his death, for there the blood was shed.

Hence, Paul said: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Now note: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were

baptized into his death?" In his death the blood was shed, and in the blood there is remission of sins. The hope of the world is in the blood of Christ. Without it you cannot be saved. No matter how moral, upright, and honest you may have lived, unless you have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, there is no heaven for you. I beg of you, therefore, to accept the call of the Lord, submit to his will, and be saved on his terms. While we all sing together, may the Lord help you to come.

Chapter 46

2.14 - THE CHURCH—ITS ESTABLISHMENT

THE CHURCH—ITS ESTABLISHMENT

I am quite conscious to-night, my friends, of the wonderful responsibility that rests upon me in trying to talk to you about things that pertain to the hereafter—not upon matters that are purely passing and earthly in their nature, but upon issues that are vital to the eternal happiness or eternal misery of mankind. Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel; for I am certain to make an impression of some kind, and all the worse for me, as well as for those upon whom it be made, if it be not in harmony with God’s great truth.

I want to begin to-night a series of talks regarding that institution for which Christ died, that which he bought with his own precious blood and Filled with his Spirit. For four thousand years God Almighty guided humanity through the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, and finally established that institution over which Christ became the glorious head. We ought to congratulate ourselves because of the firm belief that it is possible for us to become members of that organization. To-night’s talk shall have to do with the time of its establishment. The phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," is used in the Bible in different senses. The particular use of it is clearly determined always by the context. Sometimes that expression refers to the ultimate state in the glory land; again, it is used as characteristic of those attributes that belong to the people of God; and, again, it has reference to the church established upon this earth. That such an institution is in existence is scarcely questioned. Perhaps ninety-nine per cent of this large congregation here assembled believes that God does have now upon the earth an organization properly styled the "church." This institution, as viewed from different points, presents to us different phases. For instance, from the viewpoint of its government it is very properly called a "kingdom.’ it is not a government like Tennessee, which is a representative democracy. In the making of its laws the people have no voice. The church of God, from the point of law and government, is purely a monarchy. Christ Jesus is the absolute director thereof. In him are vested all the departments-legislative, judicial, and executive. So perfect is that organization with reference to law that it needs no council—State, national, or ecumenical—to revise, to amend, or to strike out any of the laws connected therewith. With reference to its organization, this institution is very properly called a "body," based upon the physical likeness of our human tabernacle in which we dwell. it has a Head, from which all the members get their authority and to which every faithful member must be in strict obedience and accord, as much so as any member of my body is subject to the head that governs and directs the movements of the same. it was intended, therefore, that perfect harmony and perfect symmetry, oneness, and unity be everywhere characteristic of it. As to its relationship to the world, this institution is very properly called the "church," which means the "called out," the "separated," the "distinct from;" and hence, friends, it depends on what angle you want to view it from, and from what consideration you desire to study it as to what it should be called.

Briefly reviewing, if you are interested in the government side of it, think about it always as a kingdom. If your interest is with reference to its organization, consider it as a body, with Christ as the head and Christians as the members. If you are studying it with reference to its relationship to the world, remember that Christ said that his kingdom, his government, or his church, was not of the world; and, therefore, it is an "ecclesia," or the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. With reference to the time of its establishment, there are various theories on which important issues depend .

I have had it suggested to me more than once that it makes no difference as to when the church of God was established; but I beg to differ with the man who thus thinks, for proportionate to the time rest some doctrines, either true or false, as determined by the origin of this institution. There is a theory extant that the church was begun long before the morning stars first together sang or ever the sons of God clapped their hands for joy; that back in the eternal purpose of God it was launched in all of its fullness and every member was determined, so much so that from that hour until this it has neither been increased nor diminished by a single soul. Growing out of that theory comes the doctrine popularly known as "Calvinism," or the doctrine of election and reprobation. Following this is another theory, a little bit more popular in this country, the advocates of which suggest that the church was established in the days of Abraham; and while they have been working at it for a long time, they have never seen fit to agree as to just when in the lifetime of Abraham, consisting as it did of one hundred and seventy-five years, the church was established. Now, then, based upon that theory and that assumption is the fundamental idea and ground of infant church membership. As there were infants in the family of Abraham and as the male infants were circumcised, so in the church to-night there is room for the babies, and all of them ought to be sprinkled. Just how they jump a cog and make the connection I fail to be able to understand, for be it remembered that circumcision in Abraham’s day was not an initiatory right into the fellowship of the family, but the male children born in his house were circumcised because they were so born. How is it, then, that they step from that to sprinkling and make it an initiatory rite by which the little ones are brought into the church and made lively members of the same? Just why the baby girls should be sprinkled is not quite clear, since back in Abraham’s days none of them were circumcised; but when a theory demands some kind of a support, the same is not wanting, and can be manufactured even though no ground for it exists.

There is another theory that the church of the New Testament was established in the days of John the Baptist. There used to be people who had courage enough to announce that and affirm it; but, for reasons best known to themselves, no longer are there men upon the earth willing to assume a proposition of that kind, for it has been tried, tested, weighed in the balances, and found wanting.

I announce to you, ladies and gentlemen, that the church of the New Testament could not have been in existence previous to the time when the New Testament itself became effective. Paul very distinctly says in Hebrews 9:16-17 that where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the man who made it, for a testament is of force after men are dead. It is, therefore, a contradiction of terms to talk about the church of the New Testament having been in existence previous to the effectiveness and force of the New Testament itself. Let us also bear in mind that the organization of which Christ Jesus is the head and in which the Spirit dwells is not a continuance of the organization back in Abraham’s day. It is something new, distinct, and separate from that congregation back in the wilderness during the days of Abraham and of Moses, for Paul said (Hebrews 8:6-13): "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he

is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

Therefore, that organization, that covenant, and that institution under Christ Jesus is a new affair and quite different from that characteristic of the days of the fathers when they were led out of Egyptian bondage.

Verifying the same thought, Paul said to those at Ephesus (Ephesians 2:13-16): "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off [alluding to the Gentile world] are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; [note] for to make [an expression which, expanded, means that he might make, for the purpose of making] in himself of twain [Jew and Gentile] one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." The institution, my friends, of which so much is said was established, inaugurated, and set up on the Pentecost following the resurrection of the Christ. So far as I know or have had right or reason to believe, practically every scholar who has written regarding the matter has come to acknowledge and admit that Pentecost marks the birthday and the beginning of the church of Christ.

There are many lines of argument that might be suggestive of this idea submitted. I call your attention, in the time allotted, to some very simple statements, believing that always they are the best for our consideration.

About 600 years before Christ, in the days of Daniel, old Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, dreamed a dream, but in the passing of the shadows forgot it. His magicians were unable to recall it and to make known the same. Daniel was at last brought into his presence, and made known to him that which he had formerly dreamed, together with the interpretation thereof. Daniel said: "Nebuchadnezzar, thou beheldest a great image, which stood before you. The head thereof was of gold, the breast and arms were of silver, the belly and thighs were of brass, the legs were of iron, and the feet and toes were part of iron and part of clay. There is the vision. The object of it is to make known unto you that which shall come to pass hereafter." As certain, therefore, as Nebuchadnezzar had the dream, we cannot go back of 600 B.C. to find the interpretation and the significance.

Daniel said: "I will tell you what it means. That head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar himself, the Babylonian empire. After that shall another rise, represented by the cheat and arms." This was the Medo-Persian empire, 536 B.C. After that came Alexander the Great, represented by the belly of brass. After seven years, his kingdom was divided among his four generals, but only for a time, until it merged into the Egyptian and Syrian, represented by the thighs of the great image. Then came the Roman army, which swept over all the earth and swayed the scepter from her city of seven hills. The Caesars are on the throne, and the Herods are over Palestine. Daniel Says that in the days of those kings—in the days of the Caesars and the Herods— shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Therefore, according to the chronology, according to the rise and fall of nations, God's government was established upon the earth, while the Romans held sway over the civilized affairs of mankind.

Then it is said that in those days—in the days of the Herods, in the days of the Caesars—came the forerunner and the harbinger of Christ, announcing to the world to make ready, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Thus John announced the approach of the kingdom.

After John was cast into prison and his labors ended, Jesus taught his disciples to pray as follows: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come" etc. Certain it is that Christ would not teach them to pray for that which already had come. Many people thoughtlessly repeat that petition, but now it should be: "Thy kingdom continue." In Matthew 18:3 we have an account of where the Savior rebuked the disciples, saying: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Surely they were not in it at that time, for the very simple reason that it was not yet established. When Christ gathered the disciples away from the multitudes, he took them to the city of Caesarea Philippi and asked of them what the people thought regarding his identity. They reported that some said he was "John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." He then asked what they thought about it. Being the speaker of the crowd, Peter said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, saying: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Upon what rock? Not upon Peter; for be it remembered that he occupies the position of gatekeeper, and not the foundation; but upon the great truth confessed— viz.: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Upon that solemn statement and sublime truth as a foundation I will build my church. it is, therefore, the church of Christ, the church belonging to Christ. it is his by virtue of the fact that he built it, that he bought it, and that he became head over it in all things. it is the church of the first-born.

Christ said: "I will build my church." If at that time he meant for us to get the idea that already said institution was in existence, he has deceived the human family, and in our English tongue there is no certainty or definiteness with reference to our speech; for if in the schoolroom a student should parse the verb "will build" as past tense, past perfect, or any other than future, I would suggest that very poor teaching, indeed, had been done. Every school-teacher on earth, regardless of his theology or his denominational prejudice, knows that "will build" is future tense. "Will build" could not refer to enlargement or embellishment, because Christ calls attention to the fact that "I will build" it right from the foundation. it does not mean, therefore, the adornment, the embellishment, the decoration, or the addition to some building, but refers back to the foundation; and upon that

as a great rock Christ said: "I will build my church." But note another line of reasoning presented by the Savior. In Mark 9:1, the Savior, talking to the disciples, has this to say: "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." There are two or three things necessarily implied right on the surface of that declaration. First, that the kingdom to be established is not in the very far distance; that some of you disciples to whom I am now talking will not have tasted death until the kingdom of God comes—that is to say, it will come in the lifetime of some of you now living; not only that, but when it does come, here is one of the evidences by which it shall be known: it will come "with power." Therefore, God's government, God's institution, upon the earth is to be characterized at its coming with power from on high.

Holding that thought for a moment, Christ said to the disciples in giving the world-wide commission: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." At the time, therefore, he said the kingdom would come they did not have the power, but were directed to Jerusalem, that there they might wait until power from on high came upon them.

They went after his ascension to the city of Jerusalem, and there tarried for about ten days; and when they were come together, they asked of him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israeli" He answered: "it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Now, watch the thought. The kingdom of God was to come within their lifetime. it was to be characterized by the power which accompanied it. They were to receive the power after that the Spirit is come upon them. Hence, if I can find when the Spirit came, I will thereby determine when the power came, and likewise settle the time when the kingdom came; for these three things—the kingdom and the power and the Spirit—were to be simultaneous in their coming. The day of Pentecost dawns, and the disciples are assembled of one accord in the city of Jerusalem. "Suddenly there came a Bound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues Like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Therefore on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came; with the Spirit there came also the power, and, with the power, the kingdom, according to the promise of Christ. As a matter of fact, on that memorable Pentecost, God's organization, the church of the first-born, was established upon the earth. On that day Peter stood in the midst of a great concourse of people and preached to them the gospel for the first time in the name of the risen King. After having explained the outpouring of the Spirit, he said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

Next he speaks of David: "That he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." Christ is, therefore, raised up to sit on David's throne. "Therefore being by the right hand of

God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The time has now come; the knock has been sounded; it is the time and the hour for Peter to inject the key, unlock the door, and swing wide the same. That he did when, in response to their direct query, he said to those believers, those who were already cut to their hearts: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Having continued steadfastly, that chapter closes with the announcement that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved;" and from that time on the church is spoken of in the Bible as a historic fact rather than a promised or a prophetic institution to be established.

I come to-night, my friends, and ask: Are you not ready, those who have not already obeyed, to do as did those under the preaching of Peter on Pentecost? Do you not by faith and obedience to-night desire to be added to the church of Jesus Christ? If such be the will and the wish of any of you who have not as yet yielded obedience, it is a genuine pleasure to me once more to extend to you the gospel call.

Chapter 47

2.15 - THE CHURCH—ITS UNITY

THE CHURCH—ITS UNITY In Ephesians 4:1-6, Paul said: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Thus is declared to us the oneness of things sacred, holy, and Divine. On last evening I tried to talk to you about the church of the New Testament with regard to the time and place of its establishment. As a preface to that, I suggested that various terms are used with reference to that organization, depending wholly upon the prominent feature discussed. For instance, if you view it as to its government, it is to be recognized as a kingdom, with Christ Jesus the monarch thereof. If you want to study it with reference to its organization and its make-up, it is most generally styled in the Bible a "body;" with reference to its relationship to the world, it is the "called out" or the "church." To many people that institution stands for but little, as one would judge from the casual remarks and the very light assertions made regarding it; but to a real student of the Bible, one who earnestly takes the matter to God in anxiety to learn Heaven’s will, the church for which Christ died is the greatest institution the world has ever known.

I regret that there is such teaching abroad as this—for instance, that a man does not have to become a member of the church in order to be saved; that there are just as good people outside of the church as there are in it. Now, I do not believe either one of those statements, and I am sure that there would be a controversy on the part of some one just there. Your standard of goodness when thus speaking is different from the standard of goodness that I have in mind. A person may be a good man with reference to his first duty toward himself; he may be a good man with reference to his fellow men—his treatment and kindliness toward them; but in God’s eyes no one is accounted a good man who has not done his duty to God as well as to himself and others. When I talk about a good man from God’s point of view, I mean a man that is not only good to himself, good to his neighbor, but is good to God Almighty, in that he has bowed in submission to his will; and when he so does, he thereby becomes a member of the church of the Bible and is saved by virtue of that relationship with the God of his being. Let us, therefore, be exceedingly thoughtful and careful and not make the impression upon our children and those round about that the church is a nonessential, unimportant, and worthless institution.

If one man may be saved on the outside as well as on the inside, then, of course, two men could also be saved; and if two men can thus be saved independent of the church, of course two thousand could; and if two thousand, why not two million; and if two million, why not the entire human family, and thus render the church absolutely useless? Why should Christ, to establish it, fill it with his Spirit and become the head of it, if the human family can be saved without it as well as with it? I am sure, ladies and gentlemen, that just such casual, thoughtless remarks as are frequently made are responsible at this hour for the unconcernedness and the indifference on the part of the great masses of the people and their failure to appreciate and value as they should this

institution so prominent upon the pages of New Testament story.

Let me submit to you this thought: The church of the New Testament is not a Jewish institution perpetuated from the days of Abraham. While the Jews do not think that, there are many professed followers of Christ who so declare. This is wholly erroneous and unsafe in the extreme. There is just one illustration that ought to forever settle a matter of that kind. In John 3:1-14 there is a story of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee, entitled by birth and by relationship to all of the benefits that would come to a descendant of Abraham. This man came to the Savior by night and sought an inter-view with him, which resulted in the Savior's teaching him the great principle of entrance into the kingdom of God or the church that was to be established. Christ said to Nicodemus practically this: "Even if you are a Jew and a ruler thereof, such relations will not let you enter the church I have come to establish; for except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Now, all of your affiliations and relationships with Jewish institutions are profitless; and, therefore, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." it does not make any difference if he is Abraham's son, no matter if he is a Jew, no matter if he is a ruler thereof, he must submit to a new rite unheard of and unknown to Judaism, or else he cannot be inducted into the family of God. So that settles a point of that kind.

Now, further, friends, the church of the New Testament is not a political organization, managed, governed, and manipulated by worldly methods, by popular vote, or by the majority of human beings; for the Savior said (John 18:36) : "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight: * * * but now is my kingdom not from hence." Therefore it is an institution separate from the world, subject to "the King of kings, and Lord of lords." This institution is guided by his word, directed by his Spirit, which dwells therein to make it a living institution, and in it Christ Jesus offers salvation to all mankind.

Now, I do not say, I do not mean, that the church does the saving; but I do suggest and positively state that Christ Jesus, our Lord, is the Savior, but that the place of salvation is in the church of God and in the family of high heaven; and outside of that family, God's church, or the fold, he has no children.

There are just two departments in life, two governments, to which I bow in obedience and yield myself. Either I am a servant to-night of His Satanic Majesty, I am under the dominion of the devil himself, or I am a child of God and a member of his family. I do not occupy middle ground. I am on one side or the other; and if I am saved, if I am a Christian, if I can read my title clear to mansions over there, it is evidence prima facie that I am a member of the body of Christ, the church of God, the family of the first- born. If, on the other hand, I stand to-night condemned, with sins unforgiven, and consigned to the regions of infernal abode, it is evident that I am a member of the devil's family.

So, then, every person ought to recognize just what the church of the Bible is and who compose it. In it are all the redeemed, all the saved, all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The thing I now want to emphasize is the fact of its unity and its oneness. That very statement of itself denies and opposes the idea of its being a denomination. I know it is as common as can be that wherever you talk with men and meet with people they apeak about different denominations all over the city, all over this land and country of ours. But put it down, friends, for further study and for earnest consideration, that when you are reading in the

Bible about the church, never get it in your minds that you are reading about some denomination; for no man ever did or ever can read from the book of God a single, solitary statement or even a hint at anything that smacks of denominationalism. That thing is modern, recent, and unknown to the book of God as certain as in your midst I stand, and there lives not a man in all the city of Nashville who can take God's book and turn to a single, solitary passage therein and find anything that even looks like a distant relation of modern denominationalism. My friends, when you turn to the Bible and hear the Savior say, "Upon this rock I will build my church," do you get the thought that the Christ was talking about some denomination? If so, which one? When he said through Paul (Ephesians 5:25), "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," what denomination was that? As a matter of fact, no man lives tonight who can trace denominationalism back any further up the stream of time than the year 1521, in the days of Martin Luther, and back of that both sacred and profane history is as silent as the stars. In Bible days, in apostolic days, Christians were known simply as members of the church. No one ever asked, "What church?" because there was but one—just the thing itself. Nobody talked about what "branch" the apostles and disciples were members of. They were not members of any church. They were branches themselves, members of the true vine; and until we get back to that point to-night, ladies and gentlemen, we need not expect other than confusion, infidelity, and embarrassment to confront us on every hand. Christ understood that quite well, indeed, when he said (John 17:20-21) : "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one [not forty, not one hundred and fifty, not two hundred, as we now are]; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." Now note the purpose that he had in mind: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The greatest curse on this earth tonight is religious division. The greatest hindrance to the cause of Christ is denominational rivalry. The greatest handicap and the greatest discouragement unto faithful, godly men is the fact that people who claim to be members of the body of Christ are torn asunder, riven, by human opinions, popular preference, rather than submit to God's will, all speak the same thing, and be of one mind and one judgment, as the Lord prayed and for which the apostles pleaded. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 there is this statement: "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Friends, in that statement what idea is emphatic, what point does the apostle stress? Evidently the unity, the oneness of the body, the church. As the body is one and has many members, and all members of the body being one, so also is Christ.

Paul, what did you say? "I have said that there is one body, and that by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Now, that is the way it was back in Bible times. But how is it, friends, in Tennessee? How is it in Nashville. All the religious organizations demand that the people submit to what they call "baptism," but into what are folks being baptized? One preacher is baptizing into one body, another preacher is baptizing into another body, and a third preacher is baptizing into a third body; and thus they go, while the devil rejoices exceedingly because of such a state of affairs. Does that sound like Scripture? Is that calculated to make believers? it does not sound as did the apostles' declaration, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body", not three or four or five or one hundred, as the case might be. In the text read to-night (Ephesians 4:4) it is said: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." The point emphasized is the oneness thereof. But when Paul says, "There is one body," do you get the idea

that he meant to imply that there might be one hundred and ninety-nine more? When he says, "There is one Spirit," I take it that the intention was to teach us there is one Spirit, and but one. When he said, "There is one Lord," I get the idea that beside him there is none other. In the same connection Paul said, "There is one body;" and the conclusion must follow, therefore, that there is one, and but one. But that is not all. In Romans 12:4-5, taking this physical tabernacle wherein we dwell as the illustration thereof, Paul said: "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." it is the office of the eye to see, of the tongue to taste, of the ear to hear, of the nose to smell, and so on. Just as there are different members, and yet when brought together they compose this one body, even so in Christ Jesus every child of God on earth is a member, and the sum total thereof makes up but one body, of which Christ is the head. But in 1 Corinthians 12:18-20, I beg you note this statement:

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." Note the statement. God, not man, not by popular vote, but God has set the members in the body as it has pleased him. "And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body."

Now, Paul said, "There is one body," and then climaxes it by saying, "There is but one." Jesus Christ, while here on earth, had one head, one body, composed of different members. Jesus Christ, at God’s right hand to-night, has one body, one head; and in that body many, many members there be. Therefore, God’s admonition is: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Now, I next wonder what that body is, as this is mentioned so many times. In Ephesians 1:22-23, where Paul was speaking about the glorious resurrection of Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his triumphant ascension, he has this to say: "And [God] hath put all things under his feet, and gave him [that is, Christ] to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Paul, what did you say: "I have said, air, that the church is the body of Christ. it is the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

But, again (Ephesians 5:23): "For the husband is the head of the wife, [watch the comparison] even as Christ is the head of the church." There the church of God is represented as married unto the husband. Just as the husband here on earth is the head of the wife, even so Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body.

We believe that it is wrong to be a polygamist. Our doctrine in this country is: one husband, one wife; and if a man be found guilty of violating that principle, he is dealt with severely. But I am sorry to announce that some of that same type who are so strict with reference to physical, earthly relationships wink at and permit, in their theory, Christ Jesus to be married unto about two hundred different bodies on this earth. Polygamy spiritually would be the result and the consequences appalling. True to every illustration, true to every principle, Christ is the husband, the church is the wife—one husband, one wife; one head, one body; one Father, one family. This is the truth of high heaven, the opinions of men and of popular public sentiment to the contrary notwithstanding.

I know, ladies and gentlemen, that things of that sort need to be told; and without any boasting whatever, but just as humbly as I possibly can say it, the man does not live on God’s green earth

that can get support from this book for any other thought than the unity of the people of God and the oneness of the church of the first-corn. But there is another thought demonstrating the same idea (Col. 1: 18) : "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Just as there is one body, and but one, and since that body is the church, then it follows that there is one church, and but one, recognized by the God of our being. My friends, what can you and I say, in the face of the onrushing tide of higher destructive criticism, against the wave of infidelity? What will be our defense in meeting the issue, in standing for God and for the Bible, while clamoring for institutions, hanging on to organizations the like of which are absolutely unknown in all of God's book?

Let me present to you a picture that is not wholly a matter of fancy. Suppose one of your]earned set, who boasts of the Bible's being but a mythical tale, denies many of the things that to you and me are sacred, comes up to a preacher with Open Bible in hand and says: "Sir, I am here to tell you that you do not believe it yourself." "0, why not?" Does the man offer an insult? "Why," he continues, "let me prove it to you. You claim to believe the Bible, Mr. Preacher?" "Yes, sir." "You claim to be governed by it?)) "Yes, sir." "You propose to stand for it against all manner of destructive work?" "Yes, sir." "Well, then, I want you to take that Bible and show me on the inside thereof where God ever made mention of any kind of organization of which you boast and of which you are a member and to which you are giving the very best of your life. Now, Mr. Preacher, there is your own Bible. Just turn to it and read it, and I will hush up." Friends, out in the country we sometimes talk about folks catching up with their work. There is a preacher that is "done up." He hasn't a word on earth to say—absolutely none. What can he say? "0," he says, "Mr. Infidel, I am bound to admit I cannot turn to the Bible and find even the name of that institution for which I preach and to which I ask others to subscribe." If infidelity has not won a victory and raised aloft its blackest banner in gay triumph, then I am unable to see an argument of any sort. "Why," he says, "furthermore, you do not even propose to wear the name that the Bible mentions. The thing under which you are sailing and the colors you are flying are unknown to God's book. Therefore, Mr. Preacher, as an infidel, I want to drive you to one of two positions. Either come back and take a footing on the Bible, be a member only of that institution mentioned therein, be characterized only by the name in the Bible, or else join hands with me and let's both march down the way publicly denying it." From all the destructive elements that are advanced tonight there is but one safe retreat and resort for God-loving men and women, and that is to recognize the oneness of God's people, recognize that we ought to be nothing, become a member of nothing, stand for nothing, uphold nothing, other than we can read from the book of God. When the Christian people of this country plant their feet upon that kind of foundation, then Infidelity will haul in her colors, furl her flag, and take to the tall timber, where she really belongs, and God's word will triumph in every phase of life. But some of my very best friends, those whom I love and whom I have right and reason to believe love me, think that such preaching is wonderfully, wonderfully radical, and they try to pacify even your humble servant by suggesting: "Hold on, Brother Hardeman; let me tell you how it is. Why, we are all one body. You take all of the various orders, and we are one. We just have different heads—that's all. No use being disturbed about the matter." Here he begins to tell me who my head is, and then acknowledges his, and so on down the line. "Now," he says, "let's not be disturbed. That is the way of it." Well, well, what a picture! One great body of all professed Christians, and from that body, projecting in various directions, about two hundred heads ! What a monster! Friends, I cannot accept that. The judgment and the reason that I have absolutely rebel

and cannot accept such a ridiculous presentation; and while I love to be kindly disposed toward my fellows and yield every possible point, I cannot accept such.

Then I have had them to try to justify it from a different point of view, and sometimes my very best friends suggest to me this: "Why, Brother Hardeman, this is the way: All of us have one common head—that is, Christ, our Lord—but we are just different bodies of people. Over here is one body, and over there is another good body, and over there another one." Friends, in all candor, what better is the picture when you present one head over about two hundred different bodies?

Every illustration in the Bible emphasizes the oneness of the church. Take the lesson of the vine and the branches, and it is in perfect harmony and in absolute accord with the oneness of heaven's truth. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. * * * I am the vine, ye are the branches." Between Christ and Christians there is that close, that unique, that identical relationship that exists between the vine and every branch emanating therefrom. Every branch is identical in character, in kind, in fruit, and in its prospect and hope in the by and by. There never was a vine from which there sprang out branches differing in origin, doctrine, and practice. That thing cannot happen. You destroy the simplicity that God intended to present if you have other in mind than the oneness of all the respective branches that cling tenaciously to the vine.

You tell me that the different religious bodies represent the branches. I beg to submit to you that at the time Christ thus said, such things were absolutely unheard of. Furthermore, Christ said to men and to women, his disciples round about: I am the vine, and ye are the branches. You—Peter, James, and John; Thomas, Philip, and Bartholomew— [now note] abide in me." Who is "me?" "I am the true vine" What is the duty of the disciples? "Abide in me." Friends, where are we abiding to-night? By public admission, are you abiding in some branch f God never said that, but he said: "You are all branches; abide in ma" Hence no abiding in any institution other than the Christ himself.

But, again, when the church of God is presented in the likeness of a family, Paul said (Ephesians 3:14-15) : "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." One family—part of the members thereof in the glory land; other faithful, godly characters still on time's side of eternity. But whether they be here or over there, Paul said there is one family and one Father thereof.

Ladies and gentlemen, God knowing my heart as I think I do myself, I do not want to be separated or different from any other professed Christian on the face of the earth; I do not want to give the enemy of Christianity the advantage of a divided front; and, just as far as God will permit me, I am ready to be broad and wide in yielding; but beyond his word I dare not go. Beyond the limitations of the authority of our King we dare not step. On the inside of the limitations fixed by the Christ himself we must plant our feet and simply become and be what God would have us be—simply his children, members of his family—and with that be content to rest our case.

But, again, when the church was spoken of under the likeness of the greet fold, the flock, Jesus said with reference to the Gentile world (John 10: 16): "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; [now note] and there shall be one fold,

and one shepherd." Hence, when Cornelius and his family were invited into the church of Christ, that statement was fulfilled. With the Jews, they became one; and Christ was the one shepherd over that fold, composed now of both Jews and Gentiles. There ought to be no consideration of any other matter whatsoever by professed followers of the Lord. That oneness is characteristic of every department of Bible teaching. Ye are God's building—singular. Ye are God's temple—not plural, but one. I would God to-night that all professed followers in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, and elsewhere, would be content to have but the Bible as their creed, their discipline, their church manual, their church directory, their rule of faith and practice throughout life. There would be oneness on the part of all the splendid people of this great country. I would that all were content simply to become and be Christians, and that alone, without those things that differentiate them, those things that distinguish them, those things that are not mentioned in the Bible, but just simply followers of Christ. That is ail that a "Christian" means. I would that all of us were followers of Christ, members of the church that you read about in the New Testament. it is not mine. I did not establish it. I did not purchase it. I had nothing whatever to do with its launching. Suffice it to say it is my privilege to become a member thereof, together with all others who love the Lord. Then we be brethren, we break down the barriers, we destroy the things that differentiate, we wipe out those things on which infidelity thrives and over which His Satanic Majesty rejoices.

Christ's prayer would, therefore, be answered when the people recognized the oneness of the body of Christ and the unity of the church of the first-born. There is, therefore, one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; there is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and who is through all, and who is in you all. My friends, is it too much to-night to indulge the hope that in the not far distant future all of us will be driven back to a strict construction of the word of God? Is it out of order to expect that because of the enemies of the book of God his people who claim to love him will be forced to take their stand upon the rock of truth sublime; that we will have to shear ourselves of our encumbrances, of all the extras, of all the superscriptions, of all the appellations, of 186 Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons all the man-made rituals and the human creeds, and follow the Bible, and the Bible alone—Christ, and Christ alone? This is the platform upon which I propose to stand as best I may be able. I would not to-night be guilty knowingly of standing for anything untaught by the Bible which would serve as a barrier to my Christian fellowship with you. I will appreciate it as a matter of kindness if any man in Nashville will suggest one thing for which I stand that serves as a barrier to unity and oneness. I pledge my word and promise myself to-night, if the man will thus show me that God's book does not plainly demand it, I will gladly surrender and give that up that the cause of division may cease. If, on the other hand, there be one solitary thing, I care not what it is, which God's book demands and authorizes, if I, N. B. Hardeman, am not practicing that to-night, you will be a friend of mine if you will point it out, and I pledge you my word that, if possible, before the rise of to-morrow's sun I will be glad to incorporate that into the service and into my worship toward God.

Why, friends, I want to stand with all of God's people, and yet I want that foundation upon which we rest to be based upon God's word. I cannot conscientiously, consistently, nor scripturally accept a human name unknown to the Bible. I cannot to-night, with my regard for God's word, subscribe to any creed on earth save the Bible. I cannot bear any name other than the names mentioned therein. I cannot, consistent with my regard for the truth of God, become identified with

any religious order the name of which is not found in God’s book. When I announce that platform, it is not narrow, it is not limited, it is not human; but it is big enough, broad enough, wide enough, and comprehensive enough for every son and daughter of God on earth to occupy and none feel that in so doing they have had to sacrifice a single principle of faith. To that oneness and to that unity and to that harmony taught in the book of God I gladly invite the people. But some one says: "Brother Hardeman, I understand that all you want is for us to come to you." My friends, that is not true, not true at all. I want you to come, not to me, no more than I come to you. That is not it. I beg you do this: Take your stand on God’s book and eliminate all things that are not plainly taught therein; and when you so do, I will gladly come to you and take my stand with you, if there be any preference as to which way the coming is done.

I want you to come to God’s book, come to Christ, accept what he said, believe what he taught, become and be what he requires; and if I am not there, at the very first opportunity I will gladly respond and stand with locked arms, and in Christ Jesus, our Lord, we will together march as a solid phalanx against all manner of spiritual wickedness until at last the righteousness and the kingdom of God shall cover the face of the earth as the waters cover the face of the mighty deep. In conclusion, if anybody in this company believes the gospel of God’s Son, if you will sincerely and earnestly repent of all your sine, if you publicly confess your faith in Christ Jesus and be buried with him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and rise to walk in newness of life, it will make of you a Christian; it will make of you a child of God; and if thereafter you will be faithful to heaven’s demand, loyal to God in his requirements, he will at last guide your footsteps safely home and finally introduce you and initiate you into the grandeurs and glories of our Father’s home of the soul, across which the shadows cannot come.

I have tried to present this cause to you plainly; and now if any are here who will make God their choice, you are gladly invited.

Chapter 48

2.16 - THE CHURCH—ITS IDENTITY

THE CHURCH—ITS IDENTITY

I am very glad to-night, my friends, to be honored by your presence and to receive the encouragement that necessarily comes therefrom. In Matthew 16:18 there is this direct statement on the part of the Savior in response to a confession made by Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my church." I want you to get from that statement just one point especially to-night, and that is the determination on the part of the Savior to build the church, to establish that institution of which he is to be the possessor and the head. In a text to which attention has been called several times (Ephesians 5:25-26) there are these words: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word." That thing spoken of in these passages is not referred to as a church among many of the same kind or sort, but it is spoken of as the church; and so I now want to ask every person in this audience tonight: Are you a member of a church, or are you a member of the church? Which is it, personally and individually, with you? If you are just a member of a church, I think you would have considerable difficulty in finding a thing of that kind in God’s book. it is called in the Bible the "church of God," the "pillar and ground of the truth," "God’s building," "God’s temple," the "household of faith," the "house of God." it is referred to as the "kingdom of God" or the "kingdom of heaven," carrying in every reference the idea of definiteness, oneness, and distinctiveness.

I want to ask: Is there such an institution in reality today? Is it a mere matter of fancy, existing only in mind and in our emotional nature; or, as a matter of fact, is the church of the Bible as much a reality as is the government of the United States, the republic of France, or the kingdom of Italy? Does it have a within and a without? Can a man be conscious of the transition and have definite knowledge that he has passed from outside of its pale and influence on to the inside, under the influence and flag and dominion thereof?

I suggest to you that it is an actuality—a thing definite, fixed by the God of our being, certainly established for the consideration of the sons and daughters of men. I want to ask you now: Is that institution in existence to-night? According to our Federal report, there are something like two hundred different religious bodies in our land. Now, out of them all, I raise the question for personal investigation and for individual satisfaction: Is there among all that number the institution to which Christ referred when he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church?" it would be a reflection upon this audience if I were to indicate, or even raise the suspicion, that you think all of these two hundred are the one thing mentioned by the Christ. We have so many conflicting institutions, differing in origin, in doctrine, in practice, in form, in ritualistic service, that all of them cannot be that thing mentioned by the Lord himself. But, as a matter of honest investigation, is there such a thing as the church of Christ upon the earth to-night? If so, it is ours to try to find out something about it. Now, it is not the point of this study to find something that resembles the church of Christ. I am not interested in that. I am not trying to find something that is like the church of Christ. I am not trying to find something that is more like it than anything else. That is not the

point of my investigation. I simply want to allow: Is the thing itself in existence upon the earth? Can we identify it and be certain of the fact?

Now, there is one thing that must be admitted—namely, that during the lifetime of the apostles and in the days of Bible account there was, as a matter of fact, an institution upon this earth known as the church of Christ. Christ was the head of it, the Holy Spirit was the life of it, and God's love was the governing power connected therewith. Christ was its King, and people who were born again, born from above, born of water and of the Spirit, made up the membership thereof.

Let me submit to you this very careful statement, and I do hope to-night that you will follow in the study with that degree of interest and unbiased consideration the theme demands. Hear it: Any religious organization whose history is exhausted before you go back to the days of the apostles could not be the church of which Christ Jesus spoke in the text of the hour. If, for instance, in the study tonight of the various religious bodies round about us they cannot trace back and identify themselves with the church of the Bible, they are certainly not the church for which we are looking, not the one planted by Christ.

Now, to make clear what I mean, it is necessary for me to be concrete and definite. I want to assure you that in referring to religious bodies I do it with absolutely the kindest and the very best of feeling, with no desire whatever to reflect upon or to discredit any organization under the heavens. Suppose you were to take up the Mormon Church. Let me say that I do not doubt the uprightness of character, the purpose, and the motive of those who compose it. But commencing to-day-April 11, 1923—the Mormon Church is in existence. I grant that fact. Now, then, as you begin to run back up the stream of time, I want to ask: Can you trace the history of the Mormon Church back and identify it with that institution built by Christ? Well, as a matter of fact, the Mormon Church was in existence twenty-five years ago. There is a history of it written by its friends, as well as allusions to it in the various literature of the world. Go back fifty years, and the Mormon Church and Mormonism still are in existence. Go on back up the line still further until you come to the year 1830, and you there find the origin, the beginning, of Mormonism. Beyond that, in sacred or in profane history, in any kind of reference in all the literature of the world, there is not a trace or a hint, there is not the slightest reference on the face of the earth, to Mormonism or to Joseph Smith, Jr., or to the book based upon the imagination that was wrought in his wonderful, fertile mind. So, then, as a matter of fact, with no unkindness, with nothing discreditable said, with no unfavorable reflections even hinted at, every student of history knows that previous to that date Mormonism—the Mormon doctrine and the Mormon book—was absolutely unknown, unheard of, unthought of by any man in all the world.

So, then, with all that you can say about Mormonism, it cannot be the church of Christ, because it was born eighteen hundred years after Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." This was in the year 33. So the difference in time between the establishment of the church of Christ and the Mormon Church is seventeen hundred and ninety-seven years. This is sufficient for any reasonable, sober man to draw the conclusion that certainly the church designated is not that of the Mormons. Mormonism is not the thing contemplated by the Christ when he said: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." But the study demands and the thought suggests that others likewise be brought to mind in a fair, honest, sincere investigation. Much more popular than the Mormons are others in this country. Among the

membership of these, even among preachers, I am glad to say that I count some of my strongest personal friends. The great Methodist Church, a splendid organization, which has done a great deal of good in the world, boasts of its vast numbers, of its wonderful zeal, and of its great enthusiasm. All of these are admirable traits; but, as a matter of fact, is the Methodist Church the thing that Christ talked about? Is that what he had in mind when he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church?" Now, that great institution, about which I have no unkind personal feeling of any kind whatsoever, is in existence in 1923; it was in existence one hundred years ago; it was in existence one hundred and fifty years ago; and they have written histories of it. I have read the story and the origin as told by the friends of that organization. References to it are to be found in the literature of the last two hundred years. Unfortunately for those who rest their claims upon it, when you drop back to the year 1729, you have traced up the stream of time and have come to the point beyond which the history of the world and references in all kinds of literature to that organization are absolutely unknown and unheard of. Previous to the days of John Wesley, previous to the year 1729, such a thing as Methodism was not and had never been in existence. Is that the church of Christ? it could not be, friends, for this reason—namely, it was born seventeen hundred years out of time. Paul never heard of a Methodist organization. In all candor and before God and the judgment, as you and I must stand and give an account for our deliberations even at this hour, I think you know that Peter never was a member of the Methodist Church in all his life. I think you will agree with me that none of the apostles ever knew anything about such an organization. So, then, friends, when Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," and when he said, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," he had no reference whatever to the Methodist organization.

Now, there isn’t anything in these statements to wrangle about, nothing over which to dispute. They are just plain, positive, certain facts, which no man dare deny if he has any regard for his scholarship or his knowledge of historic affairs.

Prompted by a desire to learn the truth, let us study another very prominent denomination and organization of people whom I appreciate as citizens and against whom I have nothing unkind to say. I now refer to the great Baptist fraternity of this country. When Christ said, "I will build my church," was it to be a Baptist Church? Every one should know that there is not the slightest reference to such an institution in all the book of God. The Baptist Church is a respectable body of people. Honest and good men are in it. But, as a matter of fact, is the Baptist Church the one built by the Christ? The time was within the memory of man when some Baptists undertook to establish a line of succession back to John; but, for reasons best known to themselves, they have abandoned that effort. The Baptist Church is in existence to-night in the city of Nashville, Tenn.; it was in existence one hundred years ago; it was in existence two hundred years ago; it was in existence two hundred and fifty years ago; but now, friends, you are nearing the beginning of the first Baptist Church in all the world known either to the Bible or to profane historians. According to Baptist historians, the first Baptist Church was originated in Holland in the year 1608. The man who thus initiated it was called a "se-baptist" which means a self-baptizer. John Smyth, therefore, baptized himself, Thomas Helwys, and thirty-six others, and hence began the first church. In 1639 Roger Williams, of America, came to believe that none save adults were fit subjects for baptism, and that nothing but immersion met the demands of the Scriptures. Ezekiel Holliman accepted the same idea; and so Williams baptized him, and he, in turn, baptized Williams. Eleven others were

then baptized. Thus, at Providence, R. I., was the first Baptist Church in America organized. Back in 1608. such a church is unknown and unheard of in all history, either sacred or profane. In vain will you search the Scriptures to find any reference whatever thereto.

Again, you may take the great Presbyterian fraternity, with its learning and influence and its human confession of faith. They are in existence now; but does their history go back unto the days of the apostles and the time when Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build my church?" You can trace them back one hundred years, two hundred years, three hundred years, and three hundred and fifty years; but when you get back to John Calvin (1535), you are at the fountain head of the doctrine and of that church. Back of John Calvin, previous to his time, there was never known such a thing to exist as the Presbyterian Church. Previous to Calvin's day there is no reference to it, neither in the Bible nor out of the Bible. The world never heard of a Presbyterian Church before 1535. Now, if this is not true, there is somebody in Nashville that knows it. Let him publish when it was, and I will suffer any exposure that may come. So, then, friends, when Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" was he talking about something that was born fifteen hundred years after that time and about which there is not the shadow of a hint in all the book of God? As Paul said to the Galatians: "Brethren, friends, fellow citizens, am I become your enemy because I tell you the facts about these things?

Let me now refer to the Episcopal Church characterized by many of the finest citizens of earth, whose lives are up right, honorable, and splendid in all their relationships toward their fellows. The Episcopal Church is in existence now. You can trace it back up the stream of time to the days of Henry VIII, but back of him no such organization was ever known. There is the origin and the genesis, according to the plain facts of history. But you ask, my friends: "What about the great papacy, the Church of Rome?" This organization, incorrectly known as the "Catholic Church" better known as the "Church of Rome" or the "Church of the Papacy," differs from an those others about which I have been talking. it has a distinct history for a thousand—yea, for twelve hundred-years before denominations were born. On every continent where it has gained a footing its history is as separate and distinct as is the history of England or of France or of Germany or of any other country. But as you trace back up the stream of time, the further you go, the dimmer becomes the historic features of the Roman hierarchy, until by and by, when you pass the fifth century A.D., you begin to lose sight of any reference thereto. Popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests are lost, and soon you are at the first council ever held. Back of 325 there is no council; back of that there is no pope; behind that there is no cardinal nor any of the ecclesiastical dignitaries that are eminent in connection with that organization. But as Catholicism fades away, grows dim and obscure, brighter and brighter becomes the path of the church founded by Christ and bought with his blood; and when in the backward trend Catholicism is absolutely unknown, there looms up on the pages of profane as well as sacred history this organization known as the "church of God," the "church of Christ."

But, my friends, let us take it from another point of view. The church of Christ was established in the year 33 and organized in the city of Jerusalem. Now, any religious body founded at any other time or at any other place or by any other person could not be the one designated se the church of Christ To illustrate, the Mormon Church was organized in 1830, in Illinois, by Joe Smith, Jr. This was a long time after Pentecost and a long way from Palestine and from Jerusalem. it could not, therefore, be the church of Christ, because it was founded by the wrong person, set up at the

wrong time, and established at the wrong place. The great Methodist Church of which I have spoken according to its friends and according to Bishop McTyeire's history, was founded by John Wesley, together with three other young men, in the year 1729, in the country of England. It could not, therefore, be the church of Christ.

Thus it is with all the other religious organizations originating with man. The church of the New Testament Scriptures was governed purely and solely by God's law. I think nobody would question that. But those denominations to which reference has been made are governed, guided, and controlled by creeds, disciplines, and rules not found in the book of God. As a matter of fact, the Methodist Church is governed tonight by its episcopal form of government, according to its "Discipline," all of which is man-made and of human origin. The Presbyterian Church is governed by its synod, by its diocese, by its general assembly, and by the rules laid down in the "Confession of Faith," written out, compiled, and legislated by uninspired men. The Episcopal Church is governed and guided by the prayer book and the rules laid down therein. But the church founded by the Christ of which the apostles and early disciples were members was guided, governed, and controlled wholly by the Bible, God's spiritual law and God's inspired ritual.

And, again, the church of the Bible was not governed by any council, assembly, synod, or conference. Each congregation, with the Bible as its guide, is an independent body.

But, my friends, I want to ask this very practical question: How can you and I know something definite, absolutely and positively certain, regarding the church founded by the Christ? Its history cannot be traced to Pentecost. A line of succession cannot be found. What is our hope? Let me answer that there is but one hope, and that is as to whether or not we have in our midst that which, when planted in the hearts of men, will produce a crop, not somewhat like, not resembling, but identical with, the crop produced in apostolic days.

Ever since God bade the earth to bring forth trees yielding seed after their kind, all vegetation and crops have come from the sowing of seeds. Our Lord once said that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. The apostles were bidden to go into all the world and preach the gospel—sow the seed. Let us ask: What was the product from this sowing? Men and women became Christians. Churches were built up and set in order. In this matter the apostles sowed the seed, literally preached the gospel; the people heard it, believed it, and obeyed it; and the Lord added them to the church. Is that same church to-day in existence? I care not if we cannot trace its history. I am not especially interested in its history. I am after its identity. Can we identify it?

Seeds buried in the earth for a thousand years have been brought to light, and, when planted, produced a crop as well as if they had been last year's seed. They brought forth their kind, which was in all respects identical with the original. The word of God—the seed of the kingdom—lay buried for hundreds of years under the rubbish of popery and denominationalism; but it was finally dug up, planted into "good and honest hearts," and resulted in turning them to the Lord, adding them to the one body. They are, therefore, the same kind of product as came from the same seed when planted by the apostles. Seeds of red clover have been covered under the earth for a number of years, during which time other crops have been grown and harvested; but in the course of time these clover seeds have been brought to the surface and produce a bountiful crop. The farmer at once identifies this crop as red clover, exactly like the crop years before. it matters not to him where the seed have been nor what they have been doing. He cares nothing about their

history. He knows the crop is the same, and with that he is content.

Friends, just as certain as it is that we have the same seed used by the apostles, we can have the same product and the same church. No one will deny that we have the same soil—"good and honest hearts." The crop produced then was Christians. The seed, the word of God, did not and will not produce Mormons, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Campbellite. These must come from other plantings. Let us cut loose from all such and stand on the original ground.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you will take God at his word, believe what he says, become and be what he requires, live as he directs, it will make you happy upon the earth and permit you to stand among the redeemed in the sweet by and by.

2.17 - THE CHURCH—ITS WORK

THE CHURCH—ITS WORK

I want to congratulate this splendid audience and also to thank you for the very fine rendition of these most excellent songs, singing, as I believe you do, with the spirit and the understanding. I am certain that God lends a listening ear and an approving smile upon such fervent and melodious praise. I cannot help but think, in viewing the audience, of how finely favored we are as a people, with no marks of God's displeasure resting upon us, with no special distress nor unusual disappointments disturbing us and that so many of us can gather together, prompted, I am sure, by the same spirit to learn more and more of his will toward us.

I want to talk to you to-night about a matter that perhaps shall not be so interesting as some other things might have been, and yet, coming in the line of study, I am sure is web worthy of our consideration. I refer to the work ordained by God for the church of Christ to accomplish upon the earth. Perhaps a very fitting text would be what the Savior said in Mark 13:34 : "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." I would not be true to those of you whom I invite to respond to the invitation if I should try to deceive you by suggesting that your coming into the church of God meant a place of inactivity; and so in advance of many of you having accepted the truth, I submit to you that the man who enters into the service of God blinded and deluded with the thought that it is a place of inactivity and passivity ought to have the sympathy and the most earnest teaching and exhortation on the part of all his friends. The church of God is a place of work. All the illustrations in the Bible demonstrate that fact.

Life is pictured to us as if it were a great race track, in which we are bidden to lay aside every weight, all the hindrances, the sin that so easily besets us, and to run the race Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons 199 that is set before us. It is pictured to us as a great contest. Hence, Paul said (2 Tim.2: 5) that every man that strives for the mastery is not crowned except he strive lawfully. "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6: 12) suggests the fact that in the service of God we are to buckle on the armor, raise aloft the banner, unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, and march out actively and aggressively in the service of Him under whom we propose to fight.

Christ himself set the example when he said (John 9:4) : r mast work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" Peter tells us (1 Peter 2:21) that Christ left as an example, and in his steps we should follow.

I think there is an old song that, perhaps, is deceptive. The name of it is, "The Old Ship of Zion," which has landed many thousands and can land as many more. I doubt, brethren and friends, that that represents correctly the church of God. While I have never had a trip on the ship, I have an idea that after paying your fare you can walk in, sit down, fold your arms, be taken across the mighty deep, and then simply walk into the haven that lies beyond. A better illustration of the church of God than an old ship would be an ordinary little rowboat in which there are two oars, one

of them designated as "faith" and the other one characterized as "works;" and if you expect to stem the tide and cross the current it means that yon must seize the oars, one in each hand, and in concerted action pull for the further shore.

I do not think the church is like a great Pullman car, whereon, after paying the price, yon can He down and again with folded arms be conducted safely across the planet and at last step out into the great depot at the end of your journey; but rather that the church of God is like unto an old-fashioned hand car, on which you may get and then by taking hold and bending your back and straining your muscles you can finally reach the end in view.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not re in my presence only, but now much more in my absence wort out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

(Php 2:12) "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6) ; and that is the only hope and the only security that you and I may possibly have. And, again, Paul said: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) The final reward at the last great day will be according to the service rendered and to the work done, for it is said: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according [mark it] to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Paul says (Romans 2:6),"Who [God] will render to every man according to his deeds," or to his works; hence, the text says, "to every man his respective place and his work." I suggest to you, friends, that the peace and the happiness, the success and the prosperity, of any church on earth are proportionate to the activity and to the working characteristics of the membership. A working church has no time for a great many things peculiar to others. When Nehemiah was building the walls of Jerusalem, old Sanballat and Tobiah on dye different occasions tried to get him to atop the work and to come down into the plain of One, into one of the cities thereof, and discuss the matter. Nehemiah said: "I am doing a great work here. Should the work cease while I come down to consult with you?" A working church would eliminate all quarreling, all strife, all backbiting, and all jealousy and envy, which, I am sorry to say, is characteristic of so much of human dispositions evidenced in the family of God and in the church of the first-born. But there is a great deal of worry to-day by preachers and elders especially over the worldliness that belongs to the membership of the church. Let me submit to you, friends, that if you and I could be influential enough and diplomatic enough to engage every member of the church of God in some kind of activity proportionate to his ability, it would settle the question about the dance hall, it would settle the question regarding card parties and all other matters of questionable propriety. "An idle brain is the devil’s workshop;" and let any man on earth get out of a job, have nothing to do but to pace the streets, and just as certain as the night follows the day he is going to get into something he ought not. He will be a talebearer, a meddler, a busybody, speaking things that he ought not, and, therefore, be an occasion of stumbling to others.

What is the remedy for all of that? Activity—something to be done; and be it remembered that the parable of the talents shows that there is something for me to do proportionate and in harmony with whatever capacity or ability or talent I may have. For the encouragement of most of us, let me suggest that the man who had but two talents and used them aright received the same recognition

at the hand of God Almighty as did the man who handled the five. If the one-talent man had used his talent rather than hiding it away, I doubt not but that there would have been that proportionate joy and commendation of the]ring as was characteristic of the others.

Friends, in fairer fields and in brighter dimes there are hundreds of persons now whose names are obscure, who never received any publicity, but by self-sacrifice they have gone about in the name of the Lord doing what they could. The prominence and glory that shall be theirs to share will be an astonishment unto possibly the universe gathered in the great by and by. Every man, therefore, proportionate to his talents, according to his work. But I want to ask you to-night: What is the work of the church of God? What is the field of its activity and the import and intention thereof? I submit to you, first of all, that charity begins at home; and as I come to study and outline the subject, I would put down as the first work of the church that of self-edification. I know that people are born into God’s family. There is no other way of becoming a member of the family of God except by being born into it, for the Savior said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." As newborn babes, we are weak and frail and largely helpless. The first duty, therefore, resting upon the membership is to build up, strengthen, and establish the respective members of the family. If in any of our homes there are children born, we want to see than start out in growth and development. We hate to see them dwarfed and delicate and fail to make the proper development. When that is the case, one of two things is always the trouble—either the food is not adapted and the exercise is unsatisfactory, or else there is disease somewhere in the anatomy and personality of that child. it has our deepest sympathy, and upon it we bestow the most help and the greatest anxiety. To what intent? That we may seek and find out the cause, that we may find food properly adapted, that we may give it just such environment such an atmosphere as will be conducive to its growth and development. Then we seek to remove the cause and to surround it with more favorable conditions. Why? That it may grow into a normal state and become stalwart and gigantic in body and in mind; and we ought to incorporate in it spirit as web.

Now, God has the sane anxiety regarding his children. All the members of the church of God to-night ought to be on the upward path of growth and development, be gaining strength, until when the great Captain calls upon ns for any service, Like a great band of soldiers, we ought to march out one hundred per cent, ready to take our place and fill our position. But sometimes, in looking around over a congregation, we find about half of the army are on the sick list, and about twenty-five per cent of the remainder have to care for them. What is the result? Perhaps ten, fifteen, or twenty-five per cent at most, are carrying on the work, bearing the load, fighting the battles, and making things go. What is the matter? There is a lack somewhere in administering the right kind of food, and others, perhaps, not taking the proper exercise. There is an Improper atmosphere. What about the others? There is disease somewhere lurking around the various members, and hence there is a weakened status that prevails. Work in God’s service tends to build us up spiritually, just as physical work builds us up physically, as mental work develops the mind. Just so spiritual work will develop the spirituality, and put it down in capitals that there is no other way by which it can or may be done.

Man may legislate all he pleases substitute any food that he thinks beat, and yet his efforts will be weighed in the balances and found wanting, because God’s word is the food on which to build. Exercise in his vineyard is that which will bring strength and spiritual development. These things

can come only from close contact and touch with the service of God and with the King himself.

Paul rather reproved the Corinthians when he said (1 Corinthians 14:12): "As ye are zealous [note the term] of spiritual gifts." O, you are very anxious to have something given to you! We are in a receptive mood, and, like Hambone said, if you will allow me to repeat it: "De parson say it is bettah to give dan to receibe, but receibing is good 'nough fuh me."' Numbers of us feel the same way about it. Now, Paul said: "Brethren, I know that you are exceedingly zealous of spiritual gifts but let me tell you: instead of that, brethren, seek to excel." In what, Paul? "In edifying the church of God." What does that term meant it means to strengthen and build up, to support and make stalwart and strong in its nature. Hence, it ought to be the ambition of every Christian and of every member of the church not simply to get the most coming to him, but to be able to give the most; and there is one thing about it, both in teaching in the schoolroom and in the service of God: the more you can give the other fellow, the more benefit you derive therefrom So Paul said: "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." In the infantile stats of the church the record says (Ephesians 4:8) that Jesus Christ, after he had descended also ascended far above all the heavens; and he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists ; and some, teachers. Now, note: what for? "For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God: * * * that we hence-forth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." In that primary or babyhood state of the church God administered to Christianity supernatural helps and powers; but after the church had grown and developed and been built up in the faith, then those things that were childish were done away. Paul illustrates that by saying, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things"—suggestive of the idea that, while the church was in its childhood state, these helps and supports were round about it; but God's purpose and intent was and is that the church be built up in the most holy faith and become strong enough to stand alone and take care of itself.

Paul (Galatians 2:6-7) says: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: [now note] rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith." That is what ought to be characteristic of every child of God on earth.

There are too many people who have to be carried like a baby in the preacher's arms, that are not able to stand alone, and have to have support and help, and require all sorts of assistance to make them more efficient in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said: "Brethren, first be rooted and grounded, and then be built up and established." When you take a young plant—a young apple tree, for instance—and set it out, it does not commence bearing the very first thing. 0, no; that is not nature's law. But, first of all, the growth is downward and outward. What is it doing? it is taking hold and fastening itself in the solid, kindly bosom of Mother Earth. it is sending out a rootlet here, fastening itself there, and another over there, and another yonder, and another back here, establishing itself so that it may not be driven hither and thither and teased by every wind. After it has grown downward and has gotten firmly fixed, what then? Then it grows upward and outward, and finally begins to bear fruit, firmly fixed, genuinely planted, definitely established. There are many people as yet but babes in Christ, immediately after birth, that want to begin and bear great fruit and do big things. Friends, that is not the principle. First of all, let the membership of the church of God be rooted and grounded in the faith, so that they may not be moved away

from the hope which the gospel of the Son of God gladly proffers to every one who embraces it.

Wherever I have opportunity to go, I love to establish the brethren and those who contemplate becoming such, root them and ground them, indoctrinate them, if you please, in the gospel of the Son of God; so that when the fine philosophy and the sleight of men and cunning doctrines sweep over the land, they are not caught on the breezes and wafted away from their moorings. So, then, the first work obligatory upon the church of God is to build up and make the membership thereof one hundred per cent efficient and ready for service. But there is another field of activity for the church of God—namely, the work of benevolence-its duty to the world about it in rendering physical and temporal service and help. Paul said to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:28): "Let him that stole steal no more." Fine advice. "But rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Friends, that scripture does not need any comment. If I have been guilty of stealing, what is my duty? Steal no more, but go to work with my own hands instead of sitting back and wearing good clothes and afraid to take hold and do things. Paul says: "Hardeman [and all the rest of His servants], do not be afraid to take hold. Whatsoever your hand Ands to do, do it." There is not a piece of work honorable on earth but that a Christian ought to be glad to engage in it. I rejoice to tell you that I would no more hesitate to hook up a team of mules and haul a load of coal down the streets of Nashville or anywhere else than I would to stand in your midst and try to preach the gospel of the Son of God.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good." Why, Paul? "That he may have to give to him that needeth" "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10) "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister [that is, to serve], and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, [watch it], to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27) But that is not all. That is a duty obligatory not only upon individual Christians, but upon the church as well, as shown by apostolic example in Acts 11:27. Certain prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem, who stood up and predicted that in the days of Claudius Caesar there should be a great famine throughout the land of Judea and the whole world. Then what? Then the disciples, as a body, at Antioch determined to send relief unto the saints in Judea; and that they did. Note how: "Every man according to his ability." They sent it by the hands of Barnabas and Paul unto the elders of the church—not to some receiver, or to some treasurer, or to some board; but they sent it unto the officials of the church of God by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. That is not all. Paul (Romans 15:25-26) says it ''pleased" the saints in Macedonia and Achaia to send unto the poor at Jerusalem, and it "pleased" them also to be debtors unto them; for if the Gentiles be partakers of spiritual things, it is but right that they administer unto their carnal needs; for the Jews had carried the glad tidings of the gospel, of spiritual matters, unto the Gentile world over in Achaia and in Macedonia. So Paul said that it is right, according to the law of reciprocity, that the Gentiles administer unto the Jews in their carnal needs. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things;" for you shall not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, neither shall you rob the priests of that which is their share in the service; and so it is therefore, ordained of God that those who preach the gospel should live thereby, and they are entitled to a remuneration for a service of that kind.

But, friends, I think I have observed this tendency, and it speaks no good thing for professed Christianity: In modern times the church as taught by various sects, has been reduced purely to a charitable institution, dispensing its goodness on the right hand and on the left; and in the cities and other places supposedly occupying a more prominent place there are modern terms that enter into the church work and church life of which I never heard in the years gone by. What is characteristic of it now? There are those who have built this or that and suggest that they are doing a great church work. What are you doing? "We are engaged in social uplift, in social betterment; we are organized as a committee of the church to look after the tenement section of the city." Hence, they fix up in fine attire and, prompted sometimes merely by curiosity, they go out slumming through certain districts and parts of the city. I have noticed that the President's sister (and I say it without any reflection whatever), when she landed recently back in the States, in one of our Eastern cities, had a great desire to form a company and go slumming. I hardly know what that means, because I have never been; but I know one thing—that the Bible is as silent as the stars about any kind of slumming work characteristic of the church of God. There was the city of Jerusalem, with its thousands of people, in the valleys of the Tyropean section, also the valley of Jehoshaphat, the vale of Hinnom, in dirt and filth and thickly settled districts, living in unsanitary surroundings; and yet neither Paul nor any of the apostles were ever engaged primarily in work of that sort. The city of Corinth, with its four hundred thousand people, contained its poor; and yet no apostle ever left the word of God and became engaged in slumming or "social uplift." Why, the church to-day in the eyes of the populace is reduced to about a parallel with the Red Gross. I have nothing unkind to say of the Red Gross but its function is administering purely to men's temporal and temporary necessities. All ought to be interested in lifting man's burdens and making life more pleasant; but the "Good Fellows," even the best fellows' organization, is about on a parallel with the idea that many people have of the church; and hence it is reduced to a kind of social organization for social betterment and for temporal advancement.

Now, mark you, the church of God, if it functions correctly and does its duty, will look after these conditions, will go to the homes of those in distress and administer unto their necessities; in that field of benevolent activity it will clothe the naked and feed the hungry and make life happier and better from a physical standpoint; but the man or the woman claiming to be a member of the church of God that makes that his primary work is deceived and blinded and wonderfully deluded. But I come, friends, to the third division, and the last for to-night. The function and the work of the church of God is not primarily for the furnishing of temporal help or assistance, but the paramount work of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is to spread the gospel from the center to the circumference of this old earth. As I said some days or nights ago, you may go to the man who is hungry and feed him, you may go to the man naked and clothe him, you may go to the man dwelling in a hut and lift him up, move him into a palace, and relieve and make better his social and physical surroundings; but if you do not give unto him the gospel, God's power to save, that man, though clad in fine attire and dwelling under the finest possible circumstances, will at last die and, like the rich man, lift up his eyes in torment. Why? Because you administered not unto him the one hope of life and light and immortality known to the world. I want to build up the membership of the church of God wherever it may be; I want to see the members thereof strengthened until they stand out like a stone wall, immovable, impregnable, steering clear of every doctrine of men and from cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; I want to see my brethren, members of the church of God, benevolent in character, touched with sympathy

for the human beings around about; I want to see them practicing the principles of pure and undefiled religion; I want them to live the principles of that religion not only during the big-meeting season, but when frosts come; I want to see them during Christmas time ready to follow in the footprints of Jesus as he went about doing good. But, in addition to all that, I would like to see every member of the church of God to-night filled with a burning desire to spread the gospel to earth's remotest parts. I would love to see them filled with such an anxiety in regard to this that they would become a great agency for the spread of the gospel, for the widening of the borders of Zion upon the face of the earth.

But, mark it, there is but one institution known to God's book by and through which this dissemination and scattering of the truth is to be done. Paul said to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:15): "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." When he said (Ephesians 3:10) that the manifold wisdom of God was to be made known through the church, he expressed a principle to which there is no exception. Man's wisdom is evidenced throughout man's institutions. God's wisdom is revealed through God's institution, and the church of the Bible is his great missionary organization. If you want to call it so, it is God's great missionary society; and the man who adds another is treading upon dangerous ground and taking steps for which there is no "Thus saith the Lord." In God's church is the place and the field for the carrying abroad unto earth's remotest boundaries the sweetest story ever told. The church at Jerusalem had that spirit and was possessed of that disposition for work; so when they were all scattered abroad, save the apostles, they went everywhere preaching the word. The church at Antioch, up in Syria, three hundred miles to the north, likewise became a great missionary center. From there Paul, Barnabas, and Mark started on the first missionary journey; and from there Paul and Silas started on the second and third missionary journeys. The church at Rome likewise became a radiating center; so that they sent out unto all the earth, unto the uttermost parts of the world in a period of thirty years from the time the church was organized and the machinery set in motion on Pentecost, the gospel spread through the simplicity of the church of God, unto every nation and to every person nnder heaven; for Paul said (Colossians 1:23): "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."

But, brethren, friends, for the carrying out of this work there is the money question; and because more of us are idolaters than we think and charaderized by the spirit of covetousness, therefore we are inactive and inoperative. We are closed-fisted, penurious, contemptibly stingy; and as a result all through this fair Southland of ours there are people almost within the sound of our whistles and who see the spires of our buildings who have never heard the gospel of the Son of God. Who is responsible therefor? There are those here on the earth that have never seen anything in the great commission except baptism. Poor, deluded souls! There are some that never saw anything but the faith or the repentance. God, introducing it by that sablime imperative, "Go and carry the glad tidings unto earth's remotest parts," laid upon as the duty of preaching the gospel to the lost; and if there be some to-night who are ready to go, it is our duty, as Christians, to sapport and sustain them by our moral influence and every other way.

I have no objection to sending the missionary into India or into Japan, but I can go inside the borders of our own beloved Tennessee, that boasts to-night of the great number of Christians after

the primitive order, and find work for ten years for every gospel preacher in the state. Until we wake up, until the strings of our purses open up, our hearts be ready to give and to support and to send the men out, we will not have done our duty as obligatory upon us by the God of heaven.

You expect preachers to go well dressed; you will poke fun at them if they look seedy and shiny; and unless they know how to handle the mother tongue you give them discouragement; but yet, in order for them to accomplish these thinga, there must be preparation. it takes money to buy a fine suit of clothes like mine [laughter]; it takes money to go to school to learn how to apeak the English language so that your friends will not be ashamed of yen. There would be hundreds of capable, edlcient young men to-night who would gladly enter the service of God Lhnighty as preachers of the gospel if the outlook were at all inviting and if the brethren who have been sharing the benefits of their labors and hoarding up would loose their purse strings and stand by them; but when we fail to do that, some business man says to the prospective preacher: "Here is a job for you, one hundred dollars a month." When the young man looks upon his helpless wife, maybe a child or two, he says: "I would love to preach the gospel; it would be the very height of my ambition; but I cannot go upon an uncertain basis." In God we trust—those of us who preach—not so much in the charity or the Christianity of the brotherhood around us.

Let me say to you, friends, in the language of the great business statistician, Mr. Roger W. Babson, of Massachusetts, that "business men have got to put more money in religion, for the foundation of all our success is spiritual and not material." He points out very clearly how just a small number of struggling preachers over the land, unsupported and handicapped, are keeping up the spirituality of the country In the face of all the forces of evil. My friends, time forbids the furtherance of this study. I could not ask of you who favor me so kindly with your presence, with your spell-bound attention characteristic of our assemblies, to listen longer to-night; but I would love to persuade you to enter into the service of God; I would love for you to put behind you all sham, all selfishness, and all the indifference and the stinginess perhaps characteristic of some of you; I would love to see you come in as a stalwart character and, first of all, grow downward, root and ground and fasten yourself in the soil peculiar to God’s church; then I would love to see you build upward and grow outward and begin to develop some sort of fruit that will bring a rich reward in fairer fields and in brighter climes. I want you, therefore, those who have not as yet done so, to accept Christ as your Leader; I want you to be glad to put your hand in the wounded palm of the Savior and say, "Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads, I will follow where he goes;" I want you, my friends, if you subscribe to human creeds, to human names, or are members of organizations concerning which the Bible is silent—I am not ashamed, but I am glad to ask you, for the sake of unity, to turn aside from these, let the Bible be your sole creed, let the church that you read about in the Bible be your home and your place of activity, then press onward to the everlasting joys until heaven at last shall be your ultimate and your glad triumphal home. To all who in any sense whatsoever consider themselves subjects of the gospel call, I bid you come to-night. If you have wandered away and become tired of that state of affairs, won’t you confess your faults, renew your pledge, renew your allegiance unto Prince Immanuel, and join under the marching orders of the Captain of our salvation?

Chapter 50

2.18 - THE CHURCH—ITS WORSHIP

THE CHURCH—ITS WORSHIP

I could not be but very much impressed, ladies and gentlemen, by numbers of things that are suggested by this magnificent audience. In the first place, I am thoroughly convinced of the fact that there is a demand in this world for plain, simple, straightforward preaching of the gospel, unmixed and unadulterated by human opinions, theories, and philosophies of men. Furthermore, I am thoroughly convinced that it does not take a whole lot of the world's affairs and drawing cards to get sober-minded men and women to attend religious services. I think this world is hungering and thirsting after some of the real meat of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For some reason or other, nearly all of us preachers have, for a number of years, yielded to the temptation for little fifteen or twenty-minute sermonettes; and all of that was simply ice cream and dessert, with no turnip salad and hog jowl connected therewith. I regret so much to-night that all of you cannot be seated, and especially the information that numbers have been turned away; and I do trust, my friends, that I may be able to so address you as not only to hold your interest as is the custom, but to provoke the most serious, solemn thought on your part as to what our duty is in the subject that is to be presented.

If, I had announced to-night some sensational theme on the society of Nashville or some modern term that appeals purely to the physical passion and the excitement and curiosities of the people, I might not have been surprised at your coming; but since the theme has been in the public press that I would try to talk to you about Christian worship, I believe that you have come because you recognize your responsibility unto God. We are aware of the fact that we are rapid passengers from time to eternity, and that the occasion will after a while come when we have to bid good-by to our friends and our loved ones of earth and launch out into the fathomless depths of the boundless beyond and there give an account for our deeds and our very thoughts while here we dwell. As a text to-night, perhaps there is none more suggestive than is found in Revelation 22:8-9, where, in the midst of John's experience in viewing the great pictures that were hashed before him, swept oh his feet and enraptured thereby, he said: "When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

I believe this audience knows in a general way what it means to worship. it carries with it the idea of reverence, of humility, of bowing down, prostrating ourselves in recognition of our dependence upon a superior power. I have been told by those who have stopped to count that the word in some form or other occurs about one hundred and ninety times in the entire Bible, thus evidencing the fact that the book of God teaches something on this important matter. But I have this to announce to you: that, so far as I know or can now recall, God Almighty has never simply commanded men to worship. That may seem a little strange to you, but I doubt if you know of a passage in which you have that very abstract statement Well, why not? In the first place ladies and

gentlemen, such a statement was unnecessary. Man is a worshiping creature. In the absence of authority from the Bible, without commandment, wherever man has dwelt or is dwelling to-night, whether in the midst of civilization or in the very center of heathenism, man's history is that he has bowed down and worshiped some object considered higher than himself. Whether he does that by tradition from the first pair in paradise born, or whether by what is called "intuition" I do not know, neither does it matter; but suffice it to say that in all lands and in all ages, with the Bible or without the Bible, wherever man has made history upon the earth, there is connected with him in whatsoever state he may have dwelt the idea of worship. Hence the Bible does not stop merely to bid us do that thing; but this is what the Bible does emphasize and the purport of its suggestions along that line--namely, God has tried to teach you and me the right object of worship and the proper way and manner in which to render the act required.

Beep these thoughts in mind: it is not everybody that worships the right object, and it is not every one that does worship the right object that does it in the right spirit and in the right way—the combination of requirements that are positively necessary in order that the act may meet with Jehovah's approval.

It has always been strange to me why John, the last and the most aged of all the apostles, the only one, we are told, who was privileged to die a natural death, his hair hoary, and his cheeks furrowed because of the passing of the years, when swept out from his native land on the barren, rocky waste of the Isle of Patmos —to think that John so far forgot himself as to want to worship an angel. I am not surprised at our failure and our disposition to worship other than the God of heaven. The angel appeared unto John out on the Isle of Patmos and drew aside the curtain that intervened and in splendid pictures and visions granted him panoramic views of that city which hell foundations the eternal home of the soul, across which the shadows never fall, until John was so enraptured and so moved by the grandeur and the glorious presentation of things that transcend the limitations of time and of earth that the record says he fell down to worship at the feet of the angel that showed him those things But the angel said: "John, do it not; worship God."

Throughout all the ages men have been disposed to worship other than the God of heaven; and while we look back to-night into the classic myths that adorn the pages of literature and refer to their forgotten state and to how far they wandered from the recognition of the true God let us not forget that perhaps we are not so far removed from idolatry as we imagine. In times gone by and with nations whose civilization lives only in history we are told that they mode their gods and their goddesses galore; that they erected their statues upon splendid marble pedestals, and then gathered around them as humble devotees, bowing down at the shrine unto that image and likeness which was created by their own fancy.

Occupying a prominent place in our American life, there is to-night the great Goddess of Pleasure, swaying her scepter, wielding her influence, making her attractions and demands. I think the time has never been when there were more people that were ready to bow down at her feet and to seek her benedictions than now. We are so anxious for the gratification of our physical passions, our animal lusts and desires, that we are ready to make almost any sacrifice in order that this Goddess of Pleasure may smile graciously upon us. But that is not the only one. In another part of the city and upon a different pedestal there, perhaps, stands erected to-night the great Goddess of Fashion, who adorns the courts, directs the affairs of life, and suggests to us that at the cost of

being ostracized we must bring forth the royal diadem and crown her in that realm lord of all. When Fashion dictates, you and I must humble ourselves and bow down and do her bidding or else receive the condemnation and practically be ostracized from what the world considers the best element of society. Therefore, at tremendous cost, at outlandish waste and terrible expense, we must buy and spend, and then discard every article or garment that is a few minutes out of date. Strange to say, her influence has not been locked out and barred from the meetinghouses and the places of worship; but all over the land and country are these things so antagonistic and foreign to that simplicity that ought to characterize humble worshipers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the time has never been but that the Lord God of Mammon stood swaying his scepter and wielding his influence and authority over the sons and daughters of men. Hundreds, thousands—yea, millions—there are of us who are ready to bow our heads and sacrifice anything under heaven—truthfulness, honesty, uprightness, purity, chastity, even the virtues of manhood and womanhood-upon the altar of this God in order that he may pour into our laps the blessings for which humanity sighs to-night.

Worship God rather than any idol, either in marble or stone or in fancy. But I want to suggest to you that there are different kinds of worship outlined to us even in the book of God; so that it is not enough for me to be conscious of the fact that I have simply worshiped, but I must understand and know assuredly as to whether or not the precise act rendered is the one demanded by the God of heaven. I recall that the Savior, talking to the Pharisees, a record of which is found in Matthew 15:1-39, said that they were worshiping God in vain. The Pharisees found fault with the disciples of the Lord because after mixing and mingling with the populace they sat down and ate with defiled—that is to say, unwashen-hands; for the Pharisees never did that. They not only washed their hands as a religious rite and ceremony, but many other things of a common nature. Jesus said unto them: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But [now note] in vain they do worship me." The record positively says that those Pharisees worshiped the right object—Jesus, the Christ, or the God of heaven; but what sort of worship was it? God says it is a "vain" worship. But what does the word "vain" mean? Simply empty; of no value; of no merit, worth, or substance. Hence, their worship was vain, empty, a mere formality, without the recognition of God Almighty and his approval. Hence, it was a vain worship; and I presume that none of us covet an act of that sort.

Again, when Paul went to the proud city of Athens, a record of which is found in Acts 17:22, in talking with the lawyers, the doctors, the philosophers, the logicians, and the very cream of the scholarship of the world, in a city noted for its schools and for its learning, in which there were students of old Plate, of Socrates, of Aristotle, the center of information, the classical city of all the world, he said to them: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." Well, why, Paul? "For as I passed by, and beheld pour devotions, I found an altar with this inscription TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." Now note: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." What were those Athenians doing? Worshiping. Paul said they were doing it in ignorance and in the lack of information. I submit to you my friends, to-night that a man may be a classical scholar; he may have delved into all the departments of learning and have his diploma from Am Arbor, Yale, Harvard, Vanderbilt Peabody, the best schools of the land, and be a regular bureau of information, a walking encyclopedia of knowledge with reference to things material; and yet, with reference to the act of worship, that same professor or postgraduate student may be

ignorant as to what is a proper ad of worship to the God of heaven. Many times could you have come more nearly finding out just how to worship God acceptably from perhaps some humble farmer away out in the rural district than from the best business men, the greatest financiers, and the shrewdest scholars of the world. Those Athenians worshiped God ignorantly, and hence Paul sought the occasion and took advantage thereof to declare him unto them.

Now, then, friends, this thought: If it were possible— and it was back in the Savior's day—to worship God in vain, what guarantee have you and I that it might not be the same with us in the great city of Nashville? If there were those back in Paul's day who worshiped God ignorantly, on what ground do you base the argument or the thought that some of that class are not still living to-night? I believe I can safely make the statement that people in general know more about almost any other book in all this land and any other line of thought than they do about the simplicity of Christ Jesus our Lord. I can find you plenty of men who can take up the biographies of the great men of earth—old Hannibal, Caesar, Alexander the Great, Washington, Jackson, Lee, Grant, and others—and go into detail and tell you all about them; and yet those same men, perhaps moving in the highest circles of business life, could not for their lives begin with the Child that was born in a stable and cradled in a manger and give anything like a connected story of his lips, though he Lived but thirty-three years upon the earth. The most important book that God has ever written and the world has ever known is in our midst—the Bible; and it is out of order and absolutely inexcusable for any of us to undertake to worship God other than in the light of the revelations by him made. But I rejoice, friends, not because of the vain worship, not because of the ignorant worship, but because of another thing mentioned in John 4, just after the Savior had had a conversation with the woman at Samaria with reference to the water that was suggested as they stood at Jacob's well. Finally the subject drifted from the living water to the idea of worship; and that woman, true to her teaching true to her history, said this: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain." There they stood in Samaria She alluded to Mount Gerizim, where the ten tribes had been accustomed to worship. Hence, she said: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The Savior, taking occasion from that suggestion, said: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." Hence, there is introduced, not vain, not ignorant, but true worship, and the only one that ought to attract the attention of right-thinking people. Then the Savior went on to announce and to discuss just the elements thereof. Hence, he said to her: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Therein is laid down in the very simplest statement possible what it takes to constitute an act of acceptable and true worship.

During the World War, as I recall in various and sundry articles necessary for the carrying on of the affairs, there were certain standards and tests that were used by which things might be properly judged and classified. The War Department, for instance, wanted to buy a number of mules. Those mules had to measure up so many hands high and weigh so many pounds. If a mule fell below that standard, he was rejected. Why? He did not come up to the right standard. Then in the classifying of human beings certain characteristics were put in Class 1, and numbers, possibly, of the young men present were drafted in Class 1; others came under the standard of Class 2; others, Class 3; and still others, Class 4; then when they came to the idiots, the infirm, and the preachers, they put all of them together in Class 5. But the point I want to suggest is this: that God

Almighty, in laying down the items on the standard of worship, has as definitely announced just how to test an ad as the government or any man ever dared to do.

Now, all of us, I take it, have been to meeting to-day somewhere. If I were to insinuate that you did not worship at the regular service, you would think that I was exceedingly unkind. But, friends, are you right certain that you did, acceptably? As a matter of fact, if some of you went through the process this morning of acceptable worship, it is evidence on its face that some of the rest who went through an entirely different process did not meet with God's approval. How do you know which one did? The Mohammedans, for instance, bowed down and worshiped. Every religious organization in America has gone through with some sort of a process of worship. Was all of it right? Did God accept the rendition of every individual, and did it meet with his approval? Well, what is the test?

Now, the beauty about this, like all other great things of the Bible, is its absolute simplicity—not the great theological philosophies that might cluster around it, but, sheared of all that, just the plain, simple statements that any child can understand.

First, what does it take, friends, to constitute an act of worship which meets with God's approval? I submit three necessary elements—first, it must be directed unto God, the right object; second, it must be done in spirit, which means prompted by the right motive, actuated by the loftiest purposes, and suggested on the part of the performer by a disposition to meet with the pleasure of high heaven; and, third, that act must be in truth, or according to God's word, which is the truth, for Christ said (John 17:17): "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

So, then, Jesus taught the very simplicity of it when he said to the woman: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." There is the object—in spirit; there is the motive—in truth; there is the way.

Now, I suggest to you this, and I know that it is absolutely correct, and from it there is no possible escape. Mark it: If you leave out the object, God Almighty, I care not how sincere you may be, how honest and conscientious, on item No. 2, and how closely you might follow the word of God, whatever you might do, if item No. 1 be lacking, there is a failure on the part of him who tries to do the service.

Well, again, you might to-night offer any ad of worship which God's word demands, let it be absolutely in truth, and you may offer it unto the right object, the God of heaven; yet if the right spirit and the pure motive and the right promptings of the heart and the innermost recesses of the soul are not involved in it, it is but an empty form, a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Then, if you direct the worship to-night to God, the right object, and have the right spirit and the right motive back of it, unless it be in harmony with God's truth or demanded by the truth, it cannot be an acceptable act of worship, because it fell down in one of the necessary requirements laid down by the greatest of all teachers. But, my friends, render that act to-night unto Jehovah, do it with the right spirit, prompted by the right motive, and then do the very thing that God has commanded to be done, and you have complied with the three demands. You have met the standard and can claim beyond the shadow of a doubt that God is pleased therewith.

Now, that leads me to make to you this very significant statement; and as I make it, I am not unmindful nor ignorant of the dissension that perhaps will prevail even on the part of a number of you present; but we come together, friends, to study, and because we chance to differ, I think none the less of you, and perhaps by our mutual association good mag result. But the statement I was about to make is this; hear it: There can be no ad of worship acceptable unto God Almighty unless the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded that special act to be done. But it may seem all right to you. it may be that there is no affirm in the thing itself, but it mud be in truth, which implies that it must come from God's word, the source and the sum total of the truth of God to man. Unless God authorizes it, you and I have no right to tender it unto him, lest Jehovah himself might be insulted by our presumption. Now, all of that is based upon this idea: In an ad of worship, who is it that is to be pleased therewith? If it is to be done according to my fancy and to meet with my approval, then, of course, I have the right to dictate just what is to be done; but if it be some one else to be pleased, then it is not mine to presume to tender something uncalled for.

Why, I remember the story in Greek literature of where the Greeks made them an image of old Zeus, their super-God; and as they placed his statue in their presence, they brought various ads and various services and offered them unto this God of their own fancy. Now, I claim, sire, that the Greeks had the right to do that. Why? It is their creature. They made their God, and they had a right to dictate what they would offer to a creature of their own hands.

Now, if that be our relationship to the object of our worship, then it is a question, "What does the voice of the people want?" and if we are to be pleased about it, then anything that meets with popular approval would be the proper ad to be rendered. But, my friends, my objective is to worship the God of heaven. That is what the angel said to John: "Worship God." I want, then, to please him in the act rendered. Well, how do I know when a thing pleases God? Some one says: "Hardeman, know this way; how do you like it?" Bless your souls, friends, I know that is not the standard. I like a number of things that I am sure God hates, and vice verse, perhaps, has been the story of almost all of us. it is not a question, therefore, when I come to worship God, for me to decide as to what I want. If the worship were coming to me and you people were so forgetful as to want to do me homage and worship me, then it would be right to say: "Hardeman, now here. We me ready to worship you. What will you have?"' It would be my right then to say: "Gentlemen, I want you to do this and that and the other." Why? Because it is coming to me and for my praise and glory.

Just so with reference to the God of our being. If he is the object of our worship, we mud render what he wants. How are you going to tell about that? How do I know whether he wants me to even sing to him or not? How do I know that God wants prayer offered as an act of worship? Is it God's work? Is it just because we have had a little conference and decided that that would be all right? 0, no, no, no! And I say it with all candor to-night and all the earnestness of my being; hear it: I think the man's heart is not right before God unless when he comes to bow down and offer service and worship unto Jehovah he is ready to say: "Lord, not my will, but thine, be done." The man who does not do that is a presumptuous character, and may be guilty, for aught I know, of insulting the God of the universe by tendering unto him something of his own choosing and of his own liking.

Friends, I do not know what God wants us to tender him other than what he has said. When he said, "I want this," that is the end of all controversy. I am not his humble disciple if I still halt and

refuse to do that by him commanded. But what has God said on the subject? And I suggest to you now that which is generally conceded to be, on the part of men, acts of worship outlined on the pages of God's truth. What is one of them? I submit to you, first of all, that it is our effort to teach all, to preach the gospel of God's Son. I am not spending these three weeks in your city because I have nothing else to do. it is not to me just purely a matter of pleasure, though I do enjoy the fine association. it is not for the purpose of merely entertaining yen, but in the service of God Almighty, with a sincere desire, if I know myself, to honor the God of my being and to worship him, in that I faithfully, boldly, and gladly announce what I believe to be his everlasting message of salvation for mortal man. Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel of God's Son. How do I know that this is what God wants? Because through the apostles he has bidden the world to preach the glad tidings of salvation unto faithful men who are able to teach others, and also this glad gospel was handed down by the peerless apostle of the Gentiles and thus perpetuated and continues down the line.

Well, before we sang the last song we all stood with bowed heads, and I trust with humble hearts, and we engaged in a word of prayer. Now, was that worship? 0, you might feel offended were I even to question it. But let's put it up beside the standard. Let's see whether it is or not. Likewise let's investigate the preaching to which you have listened. First, was the prayer, and is the effort to teach, directed unto God Almighty? If so, then the first requisite is met. Now, second, is the motive prompting the preaching and the motive prompting the prayer of the purest sort, or was it and is it simply to be heard and noised abroad before our fellows? Third, was that prayer in harmony with God's word? Did it breathe out in actuality the very things commanded by God, for which we are to give thanks and for which we are to pray? Is the preaching according to God's holy word? If so, friends, thus far have we worshiped God. But if, while Brother Garrett led the prayer, I was thinking about something afar off, anxious for the final part to be said, my mind drifting hither and thither upon the transient things of earth, I may have bowed my head, but I didn't have a part in the worship. Though I went through the form and you could not have detected it, yet I did not worship God unless I had the thought centered upon the "Rock that is higher than I," unless my whole soul followed in every word and made it mine by a secret if not outspoken "amen" and "be it so." If that prayer wasn't in harmony with and didn't breathe forth the commandments and the teachings of God's word, it was so much time and so many words spent in vain. But try again. I suppose that nobody will question the Lord's Supper as being one of the items of public worship of the church of the living God. But not every man who eats of the bread or drinks of the wine worships God aright. What is the answer, friends? When we stand to partake of the loaf, or sit, if you please, to eat of the bread, there must, first of all, be item No. 1—this act upon which I am entering and now performing must be directed unto God; second, it must be done with the right spirit, and the right spirit is reflecting, turning backward through the changing scenes of twenty centuries, lingering at the foot of the cross, and then by an eye of faith—the spirit that looks toward the other end of the line until he comes again.

Then, again, that act must be the exact thing that the Lord demanded. If we had had this morning, instead of the bread, a piece of cheese and had partaken of that; if we had directed it unto God; if we had done it in all sincerity, it would not have met with Jehovah's approval, because that would not have been in truth, as the Lord demanded. But when all of those conditions are fulfilled, there is the intelligent consciousness-not the mere feeling, but the intelligent consciousness of having worshiped God in that act. But I come to another part; and, brethren, I feel for you in advance. The

fellowship or the contribution is an act of worship to God. T wonder if we always worship him aright. or is this the critical point at which we are weighed and found sadly wanting? What does God say about that? Of course it must be directed unto God. it must be done with a cheerful heart and with the right spirit throughout. it must be of truth, which means according to God's word. Now, what does his word say about it? "Upon the first day of the meek let every one of you lay by him in store [or in a separate apartment], as God hath prospered him [according to your ability], that there he no gatherings when I come." God tells us who is to do it and when to do it. God suggests how much for me to contribute. Let me examine just a little while. There is fifty cents that I happen to have still left. Suppose to-day that, according to my obligations and proportionate to my income and all financial relationships—as a matter of fact, just suppose that I was able to contribute one dollar and that would be according to my prosperity; but instead of that I walk up and drop in the fifty cents. I want to ask you, ladies and gentlemen, if in my case God's requirements were met? Brethren, as Colonel Ingersoll used to say, "honor bright," did we worship God acceptably on that proposition? When I put in fifteen cents and was able to put in twenty-five, I haven't measured up to the full responsibilities that God demands at my hands. In that lies a great temptation for us to fall short of duty's demand in the act of worshiping God with our means.

But, again, nobody questions to-night but that singing is a part of the worship. Hence, the preacher so often says: "Let us further the worship by singing a certain hymn." Well, is every time a man sings an act of worship? "Why," some one says, "it just depends on what he sings." Well, friends, I think that is true; but the singing of the best song on earth is not always worship. That is a fine old song written by Charles Wesley: "Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly." Suppose I were to sing that to-night, would that be an act of worship? Well, it Just depends on circumstances. Why, I have sung that song and kindred ones many a time when it was not worship. I have sung it out in the country when passing the graveyard at night. it wasn't worship. Just to be plain about it, it is none of your business why I was singing it. But I was singing a spiritual song. Why, I have heard, ladies and gentlemen, in our smaller towns, even on Sunday morning, little negro boys, with their bootblack outfits strapped across their shoulders, going up and down the street singing the very same song that the brethren sang after I got to the place of worship. Now, were they worshiping God? If so, they didn't go to do it; it was purely accidental. So it is not in the mere saying of the words. it is not the mere carrying of the tune that makes the worship, but the other requirements as well. But before furthering that let me inject this idea: Suppose I were to say to Brother Smith now in just a moment: "Let's all stand together, and I want you to lead us in singing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' " Some people would be thunderstruck at my suggesting such a song. Why, friends, what is the matter with that song? I think it is a fine one, and I have no objection to singing that song on various occasions. What would you think about it if we were to open up here at our religious service with the splendid song: "Carry me back to old Virginia, where the corn and 'taters grow?" Some one would say: "Brother Hardeman, that does not, somehow or other, sound right." What is the matter with it? Friends, God Almighty has definitely and specifically outlined the service to be rendered in that act; and if you and I will but open our hearts and our minds, we cannot help but see the truth. First, whatever the act is, it must be directed toward God and be for his glory. Second, it must be done in the right spirit; and the right spirit is not simply to show off before our fellows; it is not to display to you that I have a finely trained voice; it is not to show to you that I can go from one octave on up to another and then to another. But the object ought to be to make melody unto God and with a sincere disposition to "praise him from whom all

blessings flow." And, last, it must be a spiritual song. That is why "The Star-Spangled Banner" falls short of the requirements; that is why you cannot sing "'Way Down Upon the Suwanee River" in worship of God. Those are patriotic songs and folk songs, and God says worship "in truth," which suggests worship according to his word. God's word authorizes spiritual songs. Therefore a patriotic air or any of the old folk songs will not suffice as an act of worship unto God. Sing unto him with the spirit and with the understanding, and let it be a spiritual song; and when you have so done, you have the assurance that God's blessings will be upon you and his smiles lavishly poured out round about. My friends, I want to ask of you solemnly and sacredly here to-night: Why can't all of us just do those things which the Bible demands? Why does any man want to argue or take a chance or presume that some other thing or some other way will do' Why not be content to worship God just as his word directs?

I repeat the first question: How do you know that the very thing that you may offer which God has not demanded is the thing that he wants? What is your assurance of it? Don't tell me because you like it that you are certain that God does. That is no reason at all. Simply because a thing pleases you is no assurance whatever that it pleases Jehovah, and in all of your candor and your honesty and your best endeavor to give God what you think is best you don't know but what that is the very thing that God does not want. There is but one safe course in a matter of this sort, and that is just to say: "Lord, I have come to worship you. Now, Lord, what will you have?" And God says: "Teach my word, pray, eat of the Lord's Supper, contribute of your means, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs." it would be presumption on N. B. Hardeman's part to offer God Almighty anything other than that which he has declared meets with his approval. Life is too short, death is too certain, eternity is too vast, and the issues are too great for me to he trifling with matters of this kind. I know that what God said is safe. I know that it is treacherous and dangerous to presume to do otherwise. Well, hut some one says: "But, Brother Hardeman, there are things in which I can see no affirm." "My goodness alive," friends, is that the conception you have? Because I don't see any affirm in it, therefore what? Therefore God wants it. I meet with men day by day whom if I were to ask about any of their ungodly deeds, what do you suppose would be their excuse? "Why, Brother Hardeman, I don't see any affirm in it." I could meet men around the gambling hall or the popular card party, playing bridge for prizes, and ask them what about it. They would say, with an air of triumph: "Why, Brother Hardeman, I don't see any wrong in it." Well, of course, that settles it, then. I presume if God knows that you, poor finite being, don't see anything wrong with it, that settles it. I speak to the girls and boys and then to some of the grown-ups about dancing in the modern fashion, with a rather reproving statement, as I verily believe I ought to do, and I am met with: "Why, Brother Hardeman, I don't see any affirm in it." Well, all right, then; that settles it. God wants that very thing because you don't see any affirm in it.

I take a blind man out, blind as a bat, upon some of your tall buildings, and, with a clear sky, I point him to yonder sun, which has risen from behind the eastern hills and traces his steady course across the arched sky and on to the western sunset, and I talk there to him of the grandeur and glory thereof; but he says: "Brother Hardeman, I don't see any sun." And then, of course, there is not any, because he didn't see it.

Friends, that is a ridiculous argument. It is presumptuous, and it smacks of a lack of faith and full trust in the all-sufficiency and the absolute fullness of God's revelation to men. But I must grant you that I think there are many things harmless per se that might be harmful under other

conditions. I would truly say to a young Catholic girl or woman in Nashville: "I don’t think there is a particle of affirm in your counting beads; and if you have a string around your neck three feet long and have sufficient patience and curiosity to want to find out how many there are, just go home and sit down and count them, even though there be a thousand. I don’t think there is anything wrong in that. I would not mind for a time engaging in such an act of counting them." But I say to that same Catholic girl: "When you bring that into the service of God and into the worship of the Most High and impose that act where God has not authorized it, then I must object to your counting beads as a religious rite." And she still comes back and says: "Where is the affirm?" The affirm is this: We are to walk by faith. God never said one word on earth about the counting of beads. Therefore it cannot be an act of faith, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin in God’s sight.

Why, I do not think there is anything wrong in those Pharisees washing their hands. Of course I do not; and to prove to you that I am sincere about that, I practice hand washing. I never let a week go by but that I wash my hands, and God knows I am not prejudiced against it. As an act of itself, it is absolutely harmless; yet, when made to enter into the service of God, and when they as a religious rite undertook to wash their hands as an act of worship, no wonder Christ said: "In vain do you thus do, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

2.19 = CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Allow me to read to you from Ephesians 5:23-32 : "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

There is in that reading an argument which I think all of us ought to be able to see and to appreciate, setting forth the very close relationship and the wonderful parallel between husband and wife and Christ and the church. it was predicted by Isaiah that God’s people should have a name even better than that of son or daughter, suggestive of a closer tie and of a more Divine union, and that one is the term "wife." As the husband is the head thereof, so Christ is the head of the church.

I think that I am doing no violence whatever to God’s word when I suggest to you that the husband represents Christ and the wife represents the church, and that just as a husband and a wife become one, forsake all things else and blend their lives into a oneness and a unity, just so every Christian forsakes all else, seeks a divorce from everything that would serve as a hindrance, and blends his life in that of the Lord Jesus Christ, he being the husband and the Christian the wife. The marriage relationship thus consummated and characterized as the church of Christ is under the head of Jesus, our Lord. In the very morning of time Z think there is a likeness between Grandmother Eve in her relationship to Adam and the church of God in its relationship to Jesus Christ, our Lord. There is a very simple little outline presented for your study and further development in Genesis 2:1-25. After all things of the earth had been created—the beasts of the field, the very fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air—all the various things were brought to Adam to see by what name he would call them. This having been done, Jehovah, conscious of the fact that every animal and every being had each its respective mate, for the first time said: "it is not good." Now, thus far God’s pronouncement had been that things were not only good, but very good; but now he comes to a point in the development of the scheme of creation, if you please, in which he said, "it is not good;" and the thing that is "not good" is this: "it is not good that the man should be alone." Perhaps many of the fair sex would heartily agree to its being "not good" for man to be alone, and they are right about it. So the last, the greatest, and the highest of all creation was brought into existence in the personality of the grandmother of us all.

Now, I want to note just the steps that were taken as which this act was consummated, and in that, if possible, see a likeness and a real outline of the establishment, creation, and formation of the church of Christ to-day. I submit to you, therefore, as a first point, that Adam, the federal head of the human family, was put to sleep. That is what the Bible says about it. God caused a deep sleep to come over Adam, and he slept. Step No. 1.

Now, what is the second thing done? After Adam was put to sleep, God opened his side, suggesting the idea that the person to be brought into existence was not taken from his head, that she might lord it over him; neither was she taken from beneath his feet, that she might be a servant or slave; but from under his arm and out of his side, that she might be a copartner along the pathway of life to share his sorrows and his joys. Hence, the second step: Adam, after having been put to sleep, had his side opened.

Step No. 3: That out of which the woman later was to be formed, and that which it cost Adam for her creation, was taken in the form of a rib. Hence, Adam paid the price of his own flesh and of his own bone for her who was ultimately to be.

Step No. 4: Having, therefore, paid the price, made the sacrifice, and given of himself, woman was created out of the material taken from Adam’s side.

Step No. 5: She was given to Adam to be his wife, to take upon herself his name, to be married and blended into him.

Step No. 6: As an intended natural and correct result, children were begun to be born of that first pair, and the earth was to be replenished as a result of the same.

Now, there stands the first man in all the earth, who at first was alone, and God declared that that state was "not good." God said: "We will make him a helpmeet fitted or suited for him." Thus have I outlined the process as the matter came to pass. Getting that firmly fixed in mind, first, Adam was put to sleep; second, his side was opened; third, the piece of the rib was taken therefrom; fourth, she was wrought into existence, created; fifth, she became Adam’s wife; sixth, the will of Jehovah was done, the miracle having been performed. Because of this children will replenish the earth, and that is God’s order in the process of the formation and perpetuity of the human family.

Now, based upon that very simple story, all through the Bible there is reference made to the church of God; that just as woman was brought into existence according to the process aforesaid, there was a type and a shadow of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. On down the ages, at the proper time, when man is ready for the reception of the great truth, the church was to be formed. As Adam was head of the woman, or the wife, so Christ is to be head of the church. So, then, you may expect a fitting parallel in the things characterizing the establishment or the formation of the church of God.

What was the first step back in the original? There was a deep sleep that came over Adam. What is the first step in the formation of the spiritual wife, the Lamb’s bride? After Christ had lived for one-third of a century upon this earth, thus fulfilling prophetic declarations spoken by the Jewish prophets regarding him, at last he is suspended beneath the heavens and the earth; and while he hung on the tree of the cross from the third hour of the day until the ninth hour, during the last three hours a darkness came over the face of the earth, the great king of the skies veiled his face

and refused to look upon the greatest tragedy of all the ages which was there being enacted, and the record says that finally Jesus bowed his head upon an aching heart and yielded up the ghost, declaring: "it is finished." While thus he slept the sleep of death, there was a Roman soldier standing near by, and, in harmony with the second step in the creation of woman, this soldier injected a spear into his aide, and thereby opened up the Literal flesh of the body of Christ, and from that there came forth that which was to purchase the church of the living God, to serve as a foundation upon which it must evermore rest. Hence, Christ shed his blood, and with that made the sacrifice and gave it up that he might purchase and buy that institution which was to be the spiritual bride or the wife of the Lamb.

Now, there are so many scriptures that demonstrate such a statement that I need not call attention to but one, perhaps; and that is Acts 20:28, where Paul said to the leaders of the church at Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Step No. 3. After the price was paid, the sacrifice made, then the next step naturally was this: that the woman, or the bride, or the Lamb's wife, was to be brought into existence and made a living reality; and then (step No. 5) it was therefore and thereafter to be characterized as the wife, the marriage having been consummated, and the legitimate, proper, and natural results being that spiritual children shall thereafter be born of that union and into that family. Hence the one is a fitting likeness of the other. Just as it was impossible for woman to have been created previous to the opening of Adam's side and the taking of that by which she was on his part born, just so it is equally an absolute impossibility for the church of God to have been brought into existence previous to the shedding of the blood of the Son of God. But just here some one injects this point: "Why," he says, "Hardeman, Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Therefore it must have been in existence, or else he could not have given himself for it." Well, I admit that on the face there seems to be an argument contrary to some statements made. That out of which the church was ultimately to be formed was in existence previous to the death of Christ—namely, men and women who had left their respective places to follow after Christ; but they were not at that time known or characterized as a wife, did not become such until Christ died, made the sacrifice, and gave himself for them. Then they became his wife, or bride. Suppose you see how that works with reference to a physical illustration. Here's a young man in love with a young woman. According to natural affairs, he loves her; and for that great love he is willing to forsake father and mother and all things that are in the way and give himself to her and for her. But was she his wife previous to the time that he gave himself for her? She was in existence as a maiden fair, but not as a wife, and did not become a wife until after he forsook all others, pledged his life, and gave himself for her.

Just so with respect to the church of God. Human beings out of which the church was to be formed were in existence before they were in existence as a church; but they were not in existence as the wife, as the bride, until Jesus Christ purchased them and the marriage was consummated. Then they are joined unto him as a bride, over which he becomes the head, and in which his Spirit dwells, and they blend into one.

Paul argues that in Romans 7:14, which I repeat to you:

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her

husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; [now note] that ye should be married to another." Now, what are the facts? The Jews, so long as the law of Moses was in existence, were married unto that law, as their husband. If during its continuation they had been married to another law, they would have been guilty of spiritual adultery; but if the first law be wiped and blotted out, then they are loosed from it, and are not adulterers, though they be married to another law, or another man. You, therefore, brethren, "are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another."

Well, unto what other? Unto him. Well, what "him?" Unto him who is raised from the dead—not married unto just Jesus of Nazareth while over Judean hills he traveled and across the plains of Samaria he walked; not married to him until he tasted death, but married unto him that is risen from the dead; and the man does not live that can And the marriage consummated between Christ and the church previous to the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead. But what is the objective in view, Paul? "You are married unto him who is raised from the dead, that you should bring forth fruit unto God." I insist that the word itself will bear it out, that the context demands it, that the "fruit" mentioned here is not the good works of which we so frequently speak, but the "fruit" as contemplated in that scripture means men and women born as the result of the marriage of Christ and the church; and hence children born today outside of that wedlock and that relationship are illegal in their state. In the church of God, translated out of darkness, born into God’s family, is heaven’s order, and we ought not to contemplate any kind of birth other than that. So, my friends, the church of God, having become married unto Christ, as the consummating act, has the right to take upon itself the name of the husband; and the children that result therefrom, from that union, have the right to take the name of the husband, or the head of the household of faith, and become members of the family of God; and they also have a right to expect to become beneficiaries of Heaven’s will by virtue of the fact that they are born into his family and are members of it, of his flesh, of his blood, of his home, if you please, in the spiritual suggestion thereof.

So, then, it is a privilege which you and I ought to appreciate and exalt higher than the hills—that it is ours to become and be members of the body of Christ, a part of the Lamb’s wife. it is a privilege to take upon ourselves the name of the husband of this spiritual institution, to be loyal unto the commandments of Him who died that we might live, and to gladly place our hand in the wounded palm of his, and all along the pathway of life live in submission to his mill, look to him for guidance and direction, neither transgressing nor going beyond, but, as faithful and obedient children in the family of our Father, to be glad to execute his will and evermore be disposed in heart and mind to say: "Lord, speak, I will gladly hear; command, I will obey." The soul that is thus right in its beginning, right in its purpose, and right in its objective to be accomplished, lives a life of peace, of joy and happiness; and when he pillows his head at night, it is with the consciousness of the fact that he is in close relationship with Christ Jesus. We are nestling in the very hollow of his hand, shielded, protected, and supported; and as down the aisles of time we onward march, we can lean upon his everlasting arms. Even though we pass down through the shadow of the dark valley of death, there will be no feeling of fear. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort" us, and he will land us

safe in the eternal heaven and give us the crown for which you and I here sigh. But in order thus to do, we must submit to Heaven’s terms. We must fall in love with our expected husband, resolved to forsake all others and turn to him, and then let the marriage ceremony be said, which is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, arise with our state, our relationship to the world changed, now married unto Christ, and then be faithful unto death, assured that he will give us a crown of life.

Chapter 52

2.20 - WHY A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

WHY A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

I appreciate your presence, friends, especially because of the unfavorable condition which prevails; and your coming from time to time is the greatest evidence possible of your genuine interest in these lessons that I am endeavoring to present. I am glad to note the presence of the fire department of your city. Every act that I have seen and everything of that sort and character to which attention has been called impresses me more and more with the fact that Nashville is not wholly given to worldliness, that its thoughts are not wrapped up altogether in things material, but that in whatsoever walk in life your people seem to be engaged, they have respect and reverence for things sacred and for things holy. Gentlemen, I bid you come back from time to time, enter into the singing of these good songs and hear what may be said, weigh it in the estimation of God's word, and accept it or reject it according as you find it to correspond therewith.

I want to call your attention to a passage of scripture by way of further introducing our services, and bid you listen to 1 Peter 3:8-16 : "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will affirm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

1 Peter 3:15 is the one that may most appropriately suggest the basis of the theme to-night, where Peter says: "Sanctify [set apart, make prominent] the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you [and yet do it] with meekness and fear."

I rejoice to believe that the time is upon us when people sitting in the pews will not accept just what the preacher says unless there be sober ground and scriptural references in support of the statements therein made. When I announce that, I do not insinuate or reflect upon any man who pretends to preach the gospel; but this matter, friends, is too sacred. The thing with which we have to deal has eternal issues depending upon it; and I would be glad if every man would study God's word, really come to the meeting with tablet and pencil, make note of the statements made, and, like the Bereans, search the Scriptures daily to see whether or not the thing spoken be true.

I have promised to apeak in reference to this thought: Why a member of the church of Christ; Of course I ought to be ready to give an answer to every man that might ask a reason for a claim of this kind. I would not be a member of the Democratic party and not give what I considered a good reason for it, and yet I think that I suggest the fade when I announce to you that many persons in the Democratic party there are who really do not know what Democracy teaches. If you would read out some of the planks and some of the principles by which that party is governed, there are red-hot members who would deny such being the Democratic doctrine. They have to be cited in some kind of a journal.

I would not be a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge unless I thought I could give a good reason for having so become identified.

I stand in your midst to-night claiming to be a member of the church of Chris-t. I think it nothing but fair that the world should demand of me a reason for having taken a position of that kind. Before I attempt to give any, let me call attention to the fact that I could have been a member of any one of about two hundred different kinds of religious organizations. This country is filled with them, and I think it is ridiculous that, under one Christ, with one Bible, in a land that ought to lead the world, indeed, in religious thought and Bible information, we are, in proud America, divided into factions and parties galore to the alarming number of something like two hundred. Such a condition is enough to confuse any ordinary man.

Whoever thinks of becoming identified with any organization is bound to be confronted with this proposition. Now, out of the great multiplicity that there are, which one ought I to affiliate with? Where ought I to cast my lot? Well, there are numbers of factors that determine a man's decision along that line. Sometimes the very fact that he married a woman of a certain religious persuasion settles the question for him; sometimes it is because his grandmother happened to be a member of one religious body; and, again, it may be due to another's having a very fine building, already paid for, where the elite and bon tons of the community are wont to go. Social, political, and business matters have a large part in these things.

Now, friends, in all candor, there ought to be but one determining factor in a matter of that kind. Of what church ought I to be a member? The answer to that question is this: What does the Bible say with reference to church denominations and religious organizations? The man who is right before God respects the Bible first of all, while business, secular, and material considerations are wholly secondary. But what does the Bible have to say about matters of that kind? Now, that thought ought to be prominent, or else a public admission that I do not propose to be governed and directed by the Bible.

Now, I can say to you candidly to-night that I cannot conceive of my being consistent with reason or revelation in becoming a member of any church on earth about which I could not read in the book of God. I just cannot fancy how I could get the consent of my mind to become a member of and a participant in any religious system on earth if, upon honest, careful investigation, I found that the Bible did not so much as mention that thing. I would not become a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge as a religious institution, because the Bible makes not the slightest reference to that organization. I would not think to-night of being a member of the Campbellite Church. Now, why not? it isn't because I haven't respect for any Campbell that ever lived. That isn't it. it isn't because I am prejudiced against that name. This to me is an eternal question. it transcends the limits of

time and launches out in the fathomless depths of the wondrous and boundless beyond, and hence nothing human or of human origin is attractive. Why not? Because I recognize that the hope of the world and all that you and I know about things eternal, things beyond, are revealed to us in the Bible. Not for any mean, low, or prejudicial reason, but for that reason, I never have claimed, I think I never shall claim, to be a member of any organization other than the one concerning which the Bible has something to say. But I want to get this thought before you further. The Bible does not authorize men and women to join churches or even one church. A year ago I spoke to you at length on that theme, and I merely make reference thereto. But no man lives who can turn to the Bible and find any authority for a man's joining any church under the shining sun. Now, I am just as certain that that is a correct statement as in your midst I stand. I have made it publicly and privately within the presence of those who would find an exception if it were there. I: am sure that it is not. I do not become a member of the church by any joining process; but, as illustrated heretofore, I was born into it, if a member thereof at all. There was no joining process connected therewith, but it was exactly like I became a member of my father's family. I never have joined it in all these years, and yet I am a member of the Hardeman family.

How did I come to be a member? I came to be a member by virtue of the fact that of flesh and blood I was born into it, and that settled it. There wasn't anything else for me to do. I was a member of it by virtue of a physical birth. Now, that is true in every one of your cases here. There is not a man to-night of this splendid company that ever thought of joining his father's family. None of us ever dreamed of such.

Now, friends, God's church is God's family. He has ordained and outlined that, based upon the spiritual birth, men enter into his family, and the birth itself implies transition out of one state or relation into another. So every person becomes a member of the church of the Bible by virtue of a spiritual birth, and that is why the Savior insisted that "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." To be in the kingdom of heaven is to be in God's family, which is the church. A man is, therefore, born into the church—no joining about it; and the minute he is born God adds him to the church for which Christ died. God doesn't add him to a church, but to the church. Just here, friends, let me ask: Are you a member of a church or of the church of the former the Bible knows nothing; of the latter it speaks repeatedly.

Now, the first reason that I submit to you for claiming membership in the church of Christ is the foundation on which it rests. I know, friends, that the stability of any institution, of any organization, or of any being, depends upon the foundation. A house, though it be exceedingly costly, can only stand proportionate to the character and stability of the foundation on which it rests. You may take a man's life, and, I care not how it may be, unless there is back of all the achievements by him possible to be wrought a finely laid foundation, it is not far down the way before there will come a collapse in that man's career. Why? He did not have the foundation upon which thus to build.

If the real elements of manhood, uprightness, honesty, and genuineness of character are not in the very warp and woof of his being, he may spring up like a mushroom and his praises be sung abroad, but sooner or later that character will tumble and fall, and great will be the fall thereof. So it is with any religious organization. its strength and its helpfulness and its possible benefits depend wholly upon the foundation underlying the same. Upon what, then, is the church of Christ founded? In Matthew 16:18, just after Peter had announced, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the

living God," Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Whose church? The church of Christ, Christ's church, the church belonging to him, because he is the builder, because he is the head, because he bought it with his own blood and filled it with his own Spirit. Now, what is the rock? Upon the truthfulness of the statement just announced, upon the sublimity of the fact that I am a superhuman, upon the acceptance of the great truth that I am God's Son, I will build my church.

Paul said to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:19-20) : "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone." He also said (1 Corinthians 3:11): "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Now, the church of Christ is built upon Jesus Christ se the Son of God. The foundation upon which the church of Christ rests has been tested and tried, for Isaiah (Isaiah 28:16) says: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

Hence, Jesus Christ lived a third of a century on earth, withstood all the temptations to which human life is exposed, was met on various fields by the combined forces of the opposition, at last was led as a sheep to the slaughter and nailed to the tree of the cross. His body lay in a borrowed tomb for three days and three nights, while he entered into the realm of Hades. Having been thoroughly tested and tried both by the powers of earth and the Hadean world, he came forth triumphant on the third day ready to make good that statement in which he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church."

If I build, ladies and gentlemen, upon Swedenborg, Buddha, Confucius, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell, Joe Smith, Jr., Mrs. Eddy, or any other human being, I am but building upon the sand, and God said that the man who so does will ultimately and at last see his house collapse.

There is but one church built on Jesus Christ, and that is the church about which you read in the Bible and of which every Christian on earth is a member. With this we ought to be content. When you become God's child, let the matter there stop, so far as affiliation with organizations religious are concerned; for, be it remembered, there is no scripture, there is no authority other than human, for the existence of denominations. Are you a Christians You answer: "Yea." Of what church are you a member? In connection with this let me ask: Are you a Christian? "Yes, sir." Of what Christ are you a follower? Suppose you think on that just a moment. You are a Christian, are you? "0, yes, Brother Hardeman." Well, now, honestly, of what Christ are you a follower to-night—which one? "0," you say, "I don't know a thing about the 'what Christ;' never heard of but one in all the Bible." Well, now, that is a fact; you never have. Now, why can't you see the other thought just as well? Of what church are you a member? You may read the Bible from first to last, and you never heard of but one church mentioned. The church is the body of Christ, and in the make-up thereof there is one head and one body, and Paul says "but one." Notwithstanding our submission to modern affairs and our being intimidated lest we speak the truth, let me march out and say it: There is as much sense in asking of what Christ a man is a follower as there is in asking of what church a Christian ought to be a member— just as much, because in the Bible there is but one

Christ revealed, in the Bible there is but one church spoken of. Christ didn't say, "Upon this rock I will build my churches;" he didn't say, "Upon this rock I will build one of my churches;" he didn't say, "Upon this rock I will build a church." He did say, "Upon this rock I will build my c-h-u-r-c-h" (singular) ; and if you ever run across another one, just put it down that Christ did not build that one, because he built his upon the foundation tested and tried.

Swedenborg has, perhaps, built a church upon himself; the Hindoo church is built upon old Buddha; the Chinese church is built upon Confucius; the church of Arabia is built upon old Mohammed. But the church of the Bible is built on Christ, and Christ alone. I presume the Campbellite Church would be built upon some Campbell, and so on down the line; but the church of the Bible is built upon Christ; and hence that is the sure, tried stone, absolutely certain to weather the storms of life and to pass over all the forces of opposition and stand at last in the presence of God Almighty justified, washed, and cleansed, that it may be presented unto him not having spot or wrinkle. But I claim to be a member of the church of Christ, in the second place, because of the creed it has. Now, I am sorry that conditions suggest a discussion of creeds; and get, in self-defense and justice to all, we ought to know about those things. I do not remember, but I think I have Been a statement to the effect that there are about sixteen or seventeen hundred different creeds in America. Some one Bags: "Now, that won't do, because there are only about two hundred different denominations. That doesn't make any difference, because creeds multiply in the same ranks; and hence in one body there are piled up creeds, and then creeds, and then more creeds, one upon the other, no two of which are identical. Beloved, that is a matter that ought to challenge our concern. What does "creed" mean? it means my belief. Well, of course, then, every man has a creed. I have one, and also a discipline, a confession of faith, and a church manual. I am glad to-night to show it to this audience. The Bible is my creed, God's book is my discipline. The old Jerusalem confession of faith is mine to-night. God's law as laid down in the Bible is my church guide. Other than that I have none, have never subscribed to any other, and do not intend to. Now, why not? Because I believe this one is ancient. I can put one hand on Genesis and the other on Revelation and say: "I believe every word of it." From first to last, with all of its statements, it does not matter whether I can explain them or not, I believe them. I love the faith that was expressed by Sam Jones, perhaps in this very building or in a great tent in this city, when he said that he believed the whale swallowed Jonah. Why? Because the Bible said so. And Mr. Jones declared that if the Bible had said Jonah swallowed the whale he would still believe that, just because God's word said it. Friends, that is the faith by which a man is to walk. But I stop and ask my friends many times, privately and publicly: Why have a creed other than the Bible? What is the reason for it? Well, I submit to you this: If a creed were to contain more than the Bible, don't you think it possible for that creed to contain too much? Of course that is possible. Again, if a creed contains less than the Bible, might it not contain too little? it might leave out the very thing that ought to be put in. Very well, then. If the creed contains no more than the Bible and no less than the Bible, it is exactly like the Bible; and since we do not need two of the same kind, identical, I am begging of you to lay aside every human creed and accept the word of God, and that alone.

Now, furthermore, I believe in the absolute completeness and perfection of the word of God; and that is based upon the statement made by Paul (2 Timothy 3:16-17), where he said that "all scripture" inspired of God is "profitable." Now, you watch and see if there is anything left out that needs to be looked after by any kind of an assembly or body of religious people. it "is profitable for

doctrine." The word "doctrine" means "teaching." Hence, all the teaching that man needs he can get from the Scriptures. But it is not only "profitable for doctrine" but "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Now, I believe that statement. What excuse, then, would I have for getting up another creed, even though it be considered supplemental?

Let every child of God on earth take the Bible as his guide, and, under the splendid light and the effulgent glory thereof, he will need no human ritual to help him find out where to go and how to walk in life. Allow me to say, friends, that human creeds have a bad effect upon the outside, honest man with reference to his faith in the word of God. I can see no ground on which human creeds, disciplines, and church rituals can be advocated. The Bible, and the Bible alone, ought to be the Christian's creed.

I claim to be a member of the church of Christ because of the name characteristic of it. I used to be met with the idea that such matters but little, that there is nothing in a name, and heard these things spoken of very lightly; but I am glad to believe that the world is coming to recognize that, after all, our name is the surest asset and the best capital we have on earth. I would not appreciate a man's telling me that there is nothing in a name, when Solomon said: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." What is the name of the church as spoken of in the Bible? There are various appellations, and all of them very significant. That institution is called the "church of God;" it is called the "church of the first-born;" it is called "God's house," "the pillar and ground of the truth;" it is called "God's building" and "God's temple," in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Now, these are Bible names; and what a wonderful impression would it make upon the people as they pass through the streets if they could see over the doors of our meetinghouses Bible names? But, instead of such, what do they And? This, that, and the other; and when they take their Bibles and attempt to find out from whence such come, they are absolutely in confusion as to why a religious organization or institution should bear a name other than those used in God's book. But let me ask: What name characterized the membership in Paul's day' How were they designated in New Testament times? With reference to their relationship to one another, they were called "brethren;" with reference to their saintliness of character and purity of life, they were called "saints;" with reference to the fact that they are students and learners, they are called "disciples;" and when it came to the expression of their relationship to Christ, they were properly called "Christians." No wonder, then, that Paul, while standing in the presence of King Agrippa, presumably to make a speech in his own behalf, turned to the king and presented to him the story of the cross and asked him why it should be thought a thing incredible to him that Christ should be raised from the dead. When he had finished, King Agrippa said: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul never begged him to be a Democrat, he wasn't asking King Agrippa to be a Mormon, he wasn't pleading for him to be an Odd Fellow; but he pleaded and begged of him to become and be a Christian. That is what gospel preachers ever since that time have persuaded men to become and be; and I, for one, would not have you be anything else. I don't want any man who has ever favored me with his presence to be anything but simply a Christian—a member of the church that you read about in the Bible. I want him then to take the Bible as his creed and discipline and confession of faith, and be faithful, loyal, and true to it the remnant of his days, go about always doing good, walking in His footsteps, practicing the principles of pure and undefiled religion. If he will do that, when at last the storms of life are all over, heaven is certain to be his home.

I said to you the other day that the church is represented as the Lamb's wife, and everybody knows that. Now, I just ask you, gentlemen, honestly, to-night: What name do you expect your wife to wear? If you are Mr. Johnson, how would you like for your wife to go by the name of Mrs. Brown? I know enough about you gentlemen to know that such would not suit you very well. And when you raise an objection, suppose she answered you this way: "I am Mrs. Johnson all right, as a fact; but I am Mrs. Brown-Johnson." That still doesn't go well. Nothing short of her wearing your name, and yours alone, will meet your demands. The relation between Christ and Christians is that of husband and wife. A loyal, faithful wife loves to wear the name of her husband, and considers it an honor to so do. Don't you think it next to ridiculous for a person to claim to be married to Christ, while at the same time he is wearing another's name? If a Christian loves Christ as he should, no other name is desired. When God made a helpmeet for Adam, he gave her a name which cannot be pronounced without calling the name of the husband to whom she was to be joined; hence her name—"woman." When people believe and obey the gospel, they become married to Christ, and their name is such that you cannot say it without giving honor to Him who is the head. A mall is in a powerfully bad light trying to defend the Bible against the evolutionists and infidels while at the same time in his own life and practice he does not conform thereto. If I won't wear Bible names, if I won't subscribe to the Bible as my only creed, if I won't take it, and it alone, I am at a disadvantage in trying to defend it against the enemy; but when I plant my feet upon God's word, raise aloft the banner of Christ, and propose to wear the names, be governed by God's law, recognize Christ as the one and the sole head, then, with other qualifications necessary, I am able to present a good front toward the enemy of the Book of truth. Why? I showed my faith in it by accepting it, by indorsing it, by practicing it in every detail and in every phase. If this world is ever united, friends, I ask you, what book will be the creed of the union? Do you think that all could unite upon any man-made book? Certainly not. And we might as well get right down to the point and admit that if the Christian forces of the city of Nashville ever get together on the question of a creed, it will be by the elimination, the wiping out, of all human books and booklets and the adoption of the Bible, and the Bible alone. May God speed the day when this shall be done.

We can never unite on a human name. You can't get the religious people of the world to be Campbellite, Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterians; and if we ever present a solid phalanx against the devil and all the agencies that threaten the peace, happiness, and highest estate of human beings here upon this earth, we must stand simply as Christians and as Christians alone.

I had a splendid friend of mine not long since, in talking to me just along this line, to say: "Hardeman, when we all get to heaven, we will he together over there." And he said: "There won't be any Campbellite, there won't be any Episcopalians, and none of us will be Mormons on the other shore; we will all be one." I said to that good friend: "Did you ever pray as the Lord taught his disciples to pray?" "0," he says, "Yes." I begged of him not to do that any further, unless he was willing to practice it. What did the Savior teach men to pray? "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." That man admitted that in heaven there would not be any of these human names. Consistency demands that either the prayer be omitted or those divisive names be left off. If you believe there will be no Mormons, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Campbellite over there, why not try to get rid of all such here? With all the earnestness and power of my being I want to insist upon every man who has not as yet resolved and purposed in his heart just to be a Christian, to take the Bible

as his guide and Christ as his leader, to form that resolution and carry it into effect this night. If there are those who have subscribed to human creeds and human affairs, I beg you to lay aside these, that there be no divisive things to mar the peace and unity of those who really love the Lord. If there are those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, but have wandered away, we want you also to respond to the glad call.

Chapter 53

2.21 - A SUMMARY AND REVIEW

A SUMMARY AND REVIEW This is an exceedingly fine Saturday-evening crowd, and to you who have seen fit to come, after the business cares of the week and the day, I want to acknowledge my very great appreciation of your presence and take courage because of the interest that you thereby manifest in what is being said and done here from time to time.

I have been giving the services during the evenings this week to the study of the New Testament church. I appreciate the fact that you have enjoyed and enter into, as I verily believe, the study as suggested; and I trust that we may be nearer, not only to the truth, but to one another in our conception of things Divine, than heretofore has been our status in life.

Because of a query that was put in the morning paper and it's being a practical question and right along the line of the discussions, I changed from what I had in mind, to try to make a summary talk to-night of the things gone before, and, in the talk, give direct and definite answer to the query submitted. I think of no text that might be more appropriate than Hebrews 8:1, wherein Paul said, "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum;" and he proceeded to summarize various things that had been previously mentioned both by himself and others under inspiration.

I have said to you, ladies and gentlemen, that there are but two Divine institutions known to man. One of them is the home, and the other is that church about which so much is said in the New Testament Scriptures. it also is a family, in many respects based upon similarities and likenesses to the earthly family. God is the Father thereof. Jesus Christ is represented here on earth as the bridegroom, and all Christians everywhere constitute the bride. I would not be misunderstood, and I would love to get this matter clearly fixed in your mind that every man and every woman who has believed and obeyed the gospel is a member of God's family, God's church, by virtue of the fact of the new birth. Now, many of those, perhaps, thus born again have, in addition to and without the slightest authority on earth from Jehovah, become identified with other institutions, and in that act I verily believe they have gone farther than God ever intended. Now, the difference between that class of people and myself is this: I am trying to get them to leave off that for which there is no authority and just stay where they were the very minute they became God's children, feeling absolutely certain that as long as we are governed by the Bible, that is sufficient. Other matters have but a destructive influence by their divisive nature and their partisan spirit.

I do not claim, and have never so done, that those who have taken no stand with denominations are the only Christians upon the earth; but here is the contention: Having simply believed and obeyed the gospel, we propose to be Christians only. Now, there is a wonderful difference between saying that we claim to be Christians only and that we claim to be the only Christians. The Bible clearly predicts that the Lord's people, some of them, will be engaged in a state of confusion; and the Lord bids his people to come out of that state and just stand, if you please, as humble Christians only. The confusion of the twentieth century is denominationalism. There is no doubt about that. There is no reason on earth to deny it, and it doesn't matter how sacred they are to us, we had just as well face the facts as they are. You need not tell me that when religious

people are divided into two hundred different parties there is no confusion. This condition is the devil's greatest cudgel, with which he mauls and hammers away upon professed Christianity.

Now, what God desires, as I verily believe, is for us to leave off all else and be Christians only, without any handle to it, without a prefix, without a suffix. That is the platform on which I propose to stand as long as God lets me dwell upon the earth. I claim not to be a member of any religious organization under heaven except the New Testament church. I want to be just a member of the thing that Paul was. I want to stand exactly on the same footing with reference to religious bodies as did Peter, James, and John, and all the primitive disciples.

Now, of what religious body were these Christians members? What do you think about that? When Peter preached on Pentecost, for instance, and the people heard and believed, repented of their sins, and were baptized into the name of the Christ, the Lord added them to the church; and they were, therefore, members of it. Now, that is the one that I want to stand identified with; and if we will just think as to what they did that made them members, under the same God, under the same dispensation, I believe that if we will do the same that they did, God will add us to the church, and it will be the very same one as that to which they were added. Hold these thoughts in mind and meditate on them while other things are suggested a moment.

We have learned that the church as spoken of in the Bible does not refer to the material meetinghouse-that which is made by hand and composed of brick and of stone; but it is a spiritual building, made up of lively stones, every atone therein being filled with life and vitality and strength-that is to say, it is the building composed of men and women who have been born and adopted into God's family, and hence in that building God's Spirit dwells.

Now, we have found also that the church of the Bible is not a Jewish institution, for the reason already given; that Christ said to Nicodemus, a chief ruler of the Jews, who could boast of an ancestral line absolutely pure, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," which is but the equivalent of saying: "Unless you are born again, you cannot become a member of the church of the Most High." The church of God is not a political institution; neither is it a denomination; absolutely, positively, and certainly it is not. There were no such things as denominations in our Savior's time. You can start back with the Christ and trace down the ages fifteen hundred years before the first denomination was ever born on the earth. Then, how can a thing that is so modern, a thing concerning which the Bible is silent and to which the slightest reference has not been made—How can that thing be the thing which the Lord has established and purchased with his blood? I have no disrespect for denominationalism. I am not prejudiced or biased against it, not a particle on earth, not a bit more than I am against the Democratic party or the Republican party; but I just simply want to suggest that the church of the Bible is not the Democratic party. That is not saying anything ugly about the Democrats; I hope none will become offended.

Now, in all candor, let me say, because truth demands it, history verifies it, and everybody knows it, though it is not popular to say it, that the church of the Bible is not a denomination; and I want to repeat what I have said from this platform: I don't believe there is a man in the city of Nashville who would dare affirm that the Bible authorizes religious denominations. I have too high a regard for the intelligence of your people to believe that any man is ready to march out and assume the laboring our in defense of the absolutely unprovable proposition that the Scriptures authorize

denominationalism, and it would be the greatest blessing this world has ever seen if all denominationalism and parties unknown to the Bible could be obliterated and buried in the gulf of forgetfulness.

I have tried to talk to you this week about the establishment of the church, and have said that the church of the New Testament was established in the year 33, in the city of Jerusalem, by Christ Jesus. Friends, that ire so well established, however, that there is scarcely a scholar of note on earth who has written about the matter but that agrees to that declaration. Practically all the histories which I have had occasion to investigate and the great theological writers of different faiths and different orders come with one consensus of opinion, as expressed in the greatest dictionary of the Bible, when the author declares, after investigating from all sources, that Pentecost is the birthday of the church of the Bible.

Then I have also discussed in your hearing this fact : that there is one church mentioned in the Bible; there is but one, and that one stands out so prominent and so positive that there can be no doubt regarding it. You never read in all your life in the Bible of different sorts or kinds of churches. Now, I understand that you read of the church at Corinth, at Rome, at Thessalonica, at Philippi, at Galatia, etc.; but they were not different kinds of churches, only differing in locality and geographically. There is one church, and but one. But some one suggests to me frequently that the various denominations of our day are branch churches of the true vine. Well, now, if there be a branch, that evidences the fact that there is a trunk somewhere, because branches do not grow unless there is first of all a trunk. If the different denominations in America are the branches, the thing I am interested in is the trunk. Where is the main vine? And let’s all get busy and not be satisfied with just abiding in a branch. God never said: "Abide in the branches." He said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; abide in me." Honestly, friends, where are you located tonight? Are you a member of the trunk, or are you abiding in a branch? If so, I bid you come out of the branch and cling to the true vine, where God said "abide."

I have in a previous talk spoken of the work of the church, which is threefold.

First, it’s the business of the church to develop its membership.

Second, it’s the business and duty of the church to look after charitable matters round about us, to relieve those that are sorrowing, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to visit the sick.

Third, it’s the work of the church of God, its chiefest and supremest work, to spread abroad the gospel, God’s power to save, throughout the length and breadth of the land; and I would that I could stimulate every child of God and encourage him to go his limit and use his powers as best he can for telling the plain, simple story of the Christ, unmixed with all human theologies and philosophies, and let the people just see the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the matter really is.

Now, I come next to investigate the direct matter that was sought in the query—the history of the church. That question, as I recall, was this: "If the church of which Mr. Hardeman has been speaking was established in Jerusalem in the year 33 by Christ, who carried the church on down through the ages until Alexander Campbell picked it up in the nineteenth century?" Now, I think that is a fine question. I am really glad of an opportunity to get to speak to that point directly. The question probably implies more than was intended. The question admits that the church was in existence, the same one founded by Christ on Pentecost, and Campbell picked it up—the one

founded on Pentecost. Well, that would be a glorious thing if thus he did. I do not think this is what the man really meant. He did not mean to admit by implication that this is it—that he got the original thing and picked it up and moved right along. But, friends, I have studied about that time and again and investigated to the very best of my ability; and I am ready to announce to you to-night that, so far as I am individually concerned, I have no special interest in the history from Pentecost on down the line, as far as merely the history itself is concerned. That is not vital, not germane to the identity, to the sameness, or to the oneness of the church as it may exist upon the earth to-night.

Now, I want to be perfectly clear and definite regarding all matters of that kind. Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell [or Hades] shall not prevail against it." What is it that the "gates," or the passageways, to the Hadean world shall not prevail against? There are many good people who think it refers to the church, and in that there is the Savior's pledge that through all subsequent time the gates or Hades shall not prevail against the church. I do not believe this is what our Lord had in mind, but it would be no special violation of the correctness of affairs even though he did. Christ was talking to the apostles in a private conversation regarding the establishment of the greatest institution the world has ever known when he made the declaration of this text. He said: "Peter, upon this rock, this great truth that you have acknowledged and confessed, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Against what? "Against my building it. I will build it. Though I am going to be crucified, though I pass through the gates that lead out of this into the Hadean world, the intermediate state, that will not hinder my purpose, upset my plan, or thwart my intention. I will burst the bars and come out of Hades, and I will build it."

If I owned a lot in the city of Nashville, I could truly say: "Upon this vacant lot I will build my house, and the authorities of Nashville shall not prevail against it." O, not against the house, but against my doing the thing promised. But be that as it may, some think that that passage demands a perpetuation of the church on down the ages. Many fail to recognize a very vital principle. I submit to you this: There is not a fruit or a product upon the earth but that has come from seed somewhere back up the line. This is true both in the animal kingdom and likewise in the vegetable world. Some seeds might be covered up and buried for years and for generations, and then when brought to light under proper environment and congenial circumstances would spring forth and produce fruit.

I am not especially interested in where that seed has been, in what has been its condition, what it has been doing, or anything of the kind; but if I can be convinced that it is the same seed as was the original, then the problem is solved and the proposition is no longer one of doubt. I have read of seeds of wheat that have been buried for three thousand years down beneath the surface of the earth; and when brought out after thirty centuries looked down upon them, and exposed to the sunlight and to the gentle showers those seed have germinated, sprung up, and produced a crop of wheat. Now, I want to ask: Is that the same kind of wheat, identical, as was that raised three thousand years ago? To ask this is to answer it, for God said nine times over in Gen. 1 that everything should bring forth after its kind. Now, I am perfectly content, absolutely satisfied, that if those seeds of wheat spring up they will produce a crop of wheat which will be exactly like the crop produced three thousand years before. Now note: I do not care where that grain of wheat has been during these years; it doesn't matter what it has been doing. The question is: Is it the same

wheat!

I suggested to you some evenings ago that sometimes a crop of red clover is buried under the surface of a field. Year after year may pass in which other crops may grow up; but if you will plow down beneath where you have ordinarily been plowing and turn back some six or eight inches toward the surface, the next spring there will come up a fine crop of red clover. How do you prove it is red clover? By proving where that seed has been all the time? That hasn't a thing in the world to do with it. Well, by trying to figure up what that seed was doing during all these years? 0, no; that is not it. You care nothing about where that seed has been nor what has been characteristic of it; but here is the crop, and by its own quality and characteristics and likenesses you identify that as a crop of clover beyond a shadow of a doubt. it does not make any difference, I repeat, as to where the seed has been in the years gone by. At this time of the year the wheat has sprung up, there is that promise of a crop; but we want to destroy the possibility of there ever being any more wheat upon the earth. Now, let's go about it. Go out here and pick up every sprig of wheat that is in process of development. Just simply leave the fields bare, so that it would be impossible for a crow to get his dinner from it; and you make that universal, until every Living crop of wheat on earth is plucked up and destroyed, sprig by sprig; and then you get all of the seed that you can find on the face of the earth and wipe that out. Have you destroyed the possibility of a wheat crop exactly like that one? Hear it: If you let live one Bound grain of wheat anywhere on top side of God's green earth, you have not destroyed wheat as a vegetation Of the earth. Why? Because there is the identically same wheat locked up in that one seed; and for twenty-five, fifty, one hundred, or one thousand years down the line that one grain of wheat has only to be planted to produce a crop exactly like that one that you have sought to destroy. So there is but one possibility of getting rid of wheat, and that is to destroy every single blade of wheat, and then, in addition to that, go back and destroy every single grain of wheat to be found 'neath the broad expanse of heaven's vast domain. Then you will have accomplished the purpose intended.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, Jesus Christ said, while here upon the earth, that "the word of God is the seed of the kingdom." He ordained his executors that they should go over the face of the earth. What doing? Sowing. Sowing what? Sowing the seed of the kingdom. What was that? God's word. Who said that? Christ. (Luke 8:11) Well, what is the soil into which that was to be sown? It is the human heart. And as the apostles went over the face of the earth, they were cowing and planting into the soil the seed of the kingdom.

Now, in due course of time that seed sprang up, germinated, and brought forth fruit. For instance (Acts 18:18), Paul, having preached the gospel down at Corinth, many of the Corinthians heard and believed. Here the first evidence of the crop having sprung up was that faith was characteristic of those to whom it was proclaimed. After that I And that these people, under the sowing of the seed, repented of their sins; not only so, but that they confessed their faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. What else did they do? They were buried with him in baptism, and arose therefrom to walk in newness of life.

Let me ask: What did that make of them? The apostles planted the seed; the people warmed and nourished it; and the result was the fruit, called "Christians." That was the fruit that was made from the planting of the seed and from the development thereof. What else about that? They were nothing but Christians. So far as any living man knows, God's word was their only guide as it was

being revealed day by day through his chosen representatives; and these Christians, the product of the Bowing of that seed, Finally began to meet together on the first day of the week, to break bread, to contribute of their means, and to worship the God of their being under Jesus Christ as their sale head, and they were thus called the "church of God."

Now, then, eighteen hundred years have passed, and you can trace the history of those people down through the first century and on down into the second century, until they become finally lost beneath the horizon of history. I admit to you to-night, as a matter of fact, that the story of the apostolic church seems to fade practically, if not altogether, out of view, at which time Romanism sprang up and overshadowed the gospel of the Son of God and the church of the first born; and for hundreds of years, designated in the world's history as the Dark Ages, the record of the church of God is unwritten upon the pages of profane history."

Suppose to-night that every child of God on earth did apostatize and for centuries there wasn't a Christian to be found. Then what? In the course of time Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, and other great men of their age undertook to find some sort of relief from religious confusion, and, if possible, to find such an organization as would be in all respects like that of the New Testament. Their intention was a good one. I have never questioned the motive nor the uprightness of their plans and purposes. But in their efforts at reformation they failed and left the world in a state of division, with denominations springing up and multiplying upon the face of the earth. A hundred years later came Stone, Purviance, Campbell, and others, who determined to cut loose from human creeds and human names and to restore the New Testament organization as it was in the days of the apostles. "The Bible, and the Bible alone," was their motto. Their main question was: Do we still have in this, the beginning of the nineteenth century, the same seed as the apostles planted back in the city of Jerusalem in the long ago? If so, they reasoned, we have the same soil, the human heart; and, according to God's immutable law, if the same seed be planted in the same soil, it will bring forth a fruit exactly like that at Pentecost, no matter where it has been all of these years. And if that principle be true, and true it is, then it is no longer a problem or question as to where the church was at the time Alexander Campbell was born upon the earth. Suppose there was none. Was the seed still here? If so, and it is planted, unmixed with human affairs, in the hearts of men, it will produce an identical crop with that in the years or generations gone by.

Let me try to illustrate it this way: Out on some lonely island live a people who never heard of God, nor the gospel, nor the church of Christ, but they are intelligent and can read and understand plain speech. In passing that island, somebody throws God's word over on the land, and the ship on which the man was sails on. Some of those people on the island find this book, and, after they find it, they begin to read it, study it, and investigate it; and at last they are convinced that God in heaven sent Jesus Christ, his Son, to this earth. Guided by the Bible still, they see the Christ select his representatives and teach them for something like three years. Then, according to the prophecies back in the first part of the Bible, he at last dies a felon's death and is buried in a borrowed tomb. After three days he bursts the bars and comes forth triumphant and gives a world-wide commission. He then bids his apostles to tarry at Jerusalem and wait for the promised Spirit, which should guide them into all truth. On Pentecost the Spirit came. Peter preached the good news of the gospel; the people heard it, believed it, and obeyed it; and they read, too, that the Lord added them to the church.

Now, then, one of them suggests: "Suppose we do that. We believe the gospel, we repent of our sins, and we obey God. On the first day of the week we will meet to celebrate the Lord's death, to study the Scriptures, to do just what the Bible makes obligatory upon us. Individually, we will call ourselves 'Christians;' Collectively, we are the church of Christ, the church of God." I ask you: Would not that, my friends to-night be as much a church of Christ as that one planted on the day of Pentecost?

So, then, in answer to the query from another point of view, allow me to say that Alexander Campbell didn't "pick up the church." it was not in existence in its organized form. What did Campbell do? Seek to organize something different from the Bible? O, no; not at all. Did he want to establish a church or a denomination and become the head of it? Just the very opposite. He and Stone and others believed from the great depths of their souls that denominationalism was of human origin, and they pleaded with all to take the Bible, and the Bible alone. They said: "Let us march out of denominationalism, cast off denominational ties, and become and be just what they were back in the days of inspiration." The Bible was their creed, Christ was their leader, the church of God was their home, and Christianity was their life work. Upon these principles they begged the world to unite. Such is what the world calls "Campbellism." My friends, that was not establishing anything; but the effort was to restore that which had been buried under the rubbish, under denominationalism, in the generations that are gone by. They just simply plowed down beneath that which was covered up and turned up the seed of the kingdom; and when it was exposed to the sunlight and to proper surroundings, it brought forth and produced the fruit that has come down the ages from that day unto this.

Let us not worry, therefore, friends, over church succession; let us not be troubled about church history; but let us see if we have the same seed of the kingdom in 1923 as there was back on the day of Pentecost. If so, it will bring forth an identical crop and produce the same church.

I submit to you to-night, therefore, that when the seed of the gospel is sown, he who believes it should do nothing but what the Bible directs. I would love to speak so that it would be impressive unto every man who has believed and obeyed the gospel and then gone on and joined some human organization which is not mentioned in all of God's word. I would like to be the means of having you throw off your allegiance to all human organizations and plant your feet upon the solid rock, standing for the church that you read about in God's book, and none other. I would love to encourage you to discard all man-made things—church disciplines, human creeds, and such affairs—and, in discarding them, say: "Just the Bible, and that alone, is mine." I would love to encourage you to lay aside any human name, I care not how dear it may be, and just simply wear the name of Christ. At Corinth the church of God became divided as brethren. Look at the sad picture presented. They had their special preachers. They were not divided over the society question; they were not divided over the question of baptism. They were divided over a question with reference to preachers—a very small thing. One of them said, "I am of Paul;" another said, "I am of Cephas;" and another one said, "I am of Apollos." Paraphrasing that to its modern term, this is what occurred down at Corinth: One set said, "We are Paulites;" another said, "We are of Peter, we are Cephasites;" and the other one said, "We are not either one, we are Apollosites." And Paul said: "Brethren, therein you are fleshly, not spiritual. You are as babes, having to be fact with milk, not able to endure strong meat. For whereas there is division among you, you are carnal, and not spiritual." Now, hear it and answer it in the light of high heaven: If it was wrong to be a Paulite,

don’t you think it would be wrong to be a Campbellite? If it was wrong for the Corinthians to wear the name of Peter, what apology can you have for wearing the name of Martin Luther? If it was wrong to wear the name of Apollos, then what is the argument, what is the defense, for wearing any other human name? Now, everybody knows that Paul condemned that. Condemned what? Their wearing human names, although they were the names of apostles. Note Paul’s argument: "Was Paul crucified for you?" No. Then why wear his name? "Were you baptized in the name of Peter?" No. Then, why do you want to be a Cephasite? Why not honor the Christ, who died for us and into whose name we are baptized?

Now, allow me to say this: I think a greater man than Alexander Campbell has never lived outside of inspiration, and the history of the man and that which he has done for the religious element of America put him in a class almost by himself. When the great infidel, Robert Dale Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, came to this country, unfurled the black banner of infidelity, and defied all the religions of the land, denominational preachers, creed-bound, were astonished and confused. Mr. Owen’s challenge swept over this land from Cincinnati to New Orleans; and when the great, learned doctors of divinity heard it, they stood trembling, and, like a lamb dumb before its shearers, they opened not their mouths. While the cause of the Bible was suffering by the attacks of Mr. Owen, there was a call that went across the mountain into Bethany, W. Va., and a young man, Alexander Campbell, said: "I will go to the rescue of our Bible. its flag shall not trail in the dust." A debate with the enemy was arranged, and in the city of Cincinnati Campbell upheld the truth of God’s word, fought its battles, and came out with banners flying and colors floating in the breezes. Thus he confirmed and demonstrated the reality of the religion of the Lord. From that hour unto this day no infidel has made a similar challenge in all this land. Alexander Campbell was a great man, indeed, and I appreciate and honor his memory; but was he crucified for me? No, sir. Then why wear his name? That is Paul’s argument. Was I baptized in the name of Campbell? No. Then, why honor him by wearing his name? Friends, this is not Hardeman’s argument; this is Paul’s argument, and you have got to meet it at the eternal judgment bar of God.

I want to ask of every man that loves the truth and wants to stand on the basis where all the world can stand to come to-night for the avowed purpose of confessing your faith in the Lord, of rendering further obedience to him by being buried into the name of the sacred three, and rise simply as a Christian to walk in newness of life. Such a platform is big enough, broad enough, and wide enough for the entire world. Whenever you hear anybody asking about this being narrow, say to them that it is the very opposite. Denominationalism, with its narrowing name, with its limited creed, and with its limited hope, is the thing that is little and narrow. But the church of God is for the ransomed and the redeemed of all the earth, and together let us stand under his name, subscribe to heaven’s creed, and, with our hand in the palm of Christ, walk down the aisles of time as a solid phalanx, defying all the powers of the Hadean world, until at last we shall stack arms on the glad plains of a never-ending eternity, lay aside our battle-scarred armor, hang our swords upon the jasper walls of that eternal city, and then with palms of victory and with crowns of glory join in the hymning of his praises while eternity rolls its endless ages on.

If there be any in this company who will accept that call to-night, I beg you to respond while together we stand and sing.

2.22 - INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC The presence of a large audience like this is certainly indicative of the interest you have in these efforts that are being made from time to time to study together and think together on those things that ought to be of genuine interest unto every man. I want to say to you that I appreciate the presence of this large company, and do hope that we may to-night, without prejudice and as nonpartisans, enter upon the study of the subject coolly, calmly, and deliberately.

According to announcement of last night, I suggested to you that, in response to a number of queries, I wanted to apeak to-night about why it was and is that we do not have instruments of music here on the stand or anywhere else in the audience. I think you have a right to know that, and I am sure that I am perfectly willing to give to every man that asketh me a reason for anything done or for anything not done in the worship of God Almighty.

Now, in the discussion to-night of that proposition, allow me to say at the very outset that it isn't a New Testament theme to discuss the question of instrumental music, for I presume that everybody who knows anything about it at all knows that there is not a word said in the entire New Testament about it. If that statement be true, it ought to forever settle the matter to all those who have subscribed to the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice. Now, of course, if a man has not done that, then the statement true or false, would have but little to do with him.

Now, notwithstanding the silence of the New Testament, there is great interest in the subject, as is evidenced by the enlarged audience of the evening. Permit me to say to you, my friends, that in the discussion of this matter there is a vital principle involved, which I hope to develop to the extent that all of us may be perfectly clear in mind regarding it.

Now, I am not unmindful of the fact that it is very popular—exceedingly so—in most religious services to have physical instruments of music as an accompaniment to their vocal service; and, perhaps, of the religious bodies represented in this country, it is but fair and right to say that the great majority so do. But I want to ask of you as sensible people: Does the fact that the majority practice such argue the scripturalness or the soundness thereof? I take it that you will all agree with me that the majority of the people of Tennessee or of America would be worthless in settling what God says regarding any matter or what he failed to say. Be it remembered as we reflect over the historic past that the majority of the people in Bible history have been wrong more times, perhaps, than they have been right, and that is an important thought for us to consider. The explanation lies in the statement that God's ways are not like man's ways, neither are God's thoughts like man's thoughts; and, therefore, when a matter is left purely to the thoughts of the people, the chances are that they are going astray.

Now, notwithstanding the popularity and the general fact that a majority of the people are accustomed to use instrumental music, I want to say that, in all candor, I honor the man who for conscience's sake can stem the tide of public sentiment, go against the currents, and face the wind in his steadfastness for what he believes to be taught in the book of God, popular sentiment

to the contrary notwithstanding. The use of instrumental music in the worship of God was practiced in the Old Testament period. it was first introduced in the religious service four hundred and forty-nine years after the Israelites had crossed out of Egyptian bondage, the record of which is found in 1 Chron. 16, at which time David was king of Israel; and hence under that system of government, which itself was contrary to the authority and the direction of God, instrumental music, four hundred and forty-nine years after the law was given at Sinai, was practiced and allowed to be done during the days of David and subsequent thereto. For about three dozen times in the Old Testament instruments of music are mentioned in connection with the worship of God; but when you turn to the New Testament, not three dozen times, not even one time, is it thus mentioned, showing beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt that while it prevailed throughout the days of David and subsequent thereto under Judaism, at the very institution and inauguration of the Christian dispensation and of the church of the living God it was purposely left out. Therefore the silence of the Scriptures regarding it certainly ought to have some moment and some weight upon those who rely upon the New Testament.

Those people among our religious neighbors and friends who practice infant baptism, for instance, are consistent in likewise practicing instrumental music; and I never have charged as get their inconsistency or their lack of harmony, for the same authority for babies being members of the church gives the authority for instrumental music. But any man is inconsistent and absolutely so, when he assumes that the one is forbidden and the other is incorporated. The man does not live that can be in harmony and consistent on a proposition of that kind. If instrumental music is to accompany the worship to-night, under the gospel age, from every point of authority and reason, harmony and consistency, babies ought to be entitled to church membership, and must come in upon the very same ground and from practically every point of view. But we are not living, friends, under the regime and the rule of the Old Testament for Paul said (Hebrews 8:6-10): "Now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." For finding fault with the first, the prediction was that "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;" and note, further, it is "not according to the covenant that] made with their fathers in the days when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts."

Now, formerly they had received a law written on the outside-upon tables of stone—the effect of which was to work its way inwardly to the hearts, consciences, and lives of the people; but under the gospel age the beginning of God’s law is in the heart, and, like the measures of meal, it works its way outward until all has come under the influence and the realms thereof.

So, then, unless in the New Testament dispensation some man can put his finger upon that passage of scripture which indicates authority for instruments of music in the worship, there is a departure from the principle of the fathers and from the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses said (see Deuteronomy 18:15), in pointing down the ages: "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, and him shall you hear in all things; and it

shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear him shall be cut off, for he hath broken the covenant of the Lord."

Now, that scripture simply suggests this, or else it is of no significance, namely, the time was when we were to listen to Moses, the time was when we were to give heed to David, and the time was when we were to turn an attentive ear unto Elijah; but all of those having fulfilled their place, God will raise up a Prophet like unto Moses, and him shall you hear in all things. Hence, whatsoever the Lord has said, that is the law governing the people under the Christian dispensation. What the law has not said and the Lord has not declared is absolutely not binding; and it would be an act of presumption to insist upon the incorporation of the same into the rules, regulations, and practices of the church of which he is the head.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." This scripture evidences the fact that to-night we live under the reign of Christ; and then, to make demonstration beyond the shadow of a doubt, there is the lesson given on the mount of trans- figuration when Moses, Christ, and Elias appeared. Suddenly there came a cloud overshadowing the sun, and the three disciples fell to the earth because of the fear in their hearts; and when they looked up, behold, all had passed away save Christ Jesus, the Lord; and then the voice coming from the eternal world said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Now, the object of the transfiguration was not that God might acknowledge his Son; for already, at the Savior’s baptism, God had said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" but on the scene of the transfiguration he added the primary lesson to be impressed by it and said: "Hear ye him." No longer, then, are we subject unto the authority of Moses or of the prophets, nor the precepts and examples of David, but unto Christ and the apostles, to whom his great commission was given and to whom the business was turned over for execution. Now, the principle that is involved in this ought to settle all matters akin thereto. it is a principle that is not new, but was started first of all between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, of Switzerland, a contemporary of the great reformer of Saxony. When Luther and Zwingli, in their study of the Scriptures, came to lay down some fundamental principles, they parted company; and I submit to you to-night that the question becomes settled according to whose principle you accept.

Luther said: "I favor bringing into the church of God and having a part and parcel thereof anything and everything not specifically forbidden and directly condemned." That was Luther’s attitude assumed toward the Bible, and I want to stop here long enough for you to get it so that you can Bay it on the way home, say it after you He down, say it to-morrow morning when you rise up. The principle is that we will accept into the service and worship of God anything and everything not directly and specifically forbidden by the Bible. On the other hand, the great Swiss reformer said: "My platform is that in the matter of worship to God and service to the Lord we will accept nothing unless the Scriptures authorize it." God must ordain it or it will have no part in his service.

I submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, that if you will subscribe to either of those principles I can tell you the rest. Just tell me what your attitude toward the word of God is going to be, and the question is settled once and for all as to where you will drift, the manner of worship in which you will engage.

Now, as a matter of fact, I have subscribed one hundred per cent to the last principle, which is this: Take God at his word, believe what he says, do just what he requires, live as he directs, and trust him for the promises. Let us bow at his feet and say: "Lord, not my will, but thine, be done." "Speak, and I will hear; command, and I will obey. Whatever you say do, that I will perform; and in the absence of heavenly and Divine authority, let me refrain and not presume to walk other than in the light of revealed truth."

If I could get the citizenship of Nashville to subscribe to that one principle and mind it, I would be perfectly content to leave, assured of the fact that not many moons would have rolled round until such a great restoration would sweep over this splendid city as has characterized none other in this land. That was the principle, ladies and gentlemen, of the great restorers; and when Barton U'. Stone laid down the principle that the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be his guide, he did not know where that would lead him. At that time he was a Presbyterian preacher, in full fellowship and relationship therewith; but when he adopted the principle of the Bible, and the Bible alone, of course it was not long until he came out of Presbyterianism and gave up its confession of faith. He became a stickler for the book of God Divine, and hence a wonderful power for God in bringing about a restoration of the principles announced in God's book in the long, long ago.

But, friends, you know that I oppose instrumental music in the service. A number of my very best friends think I am peculiar, and possibly I am; but I ought to congratulate myself if I am, for the Bible definitely said that God's people should be peculiar; and if that be true of me, I rather invite the discriminating characteristic. Many seem not to understand why I oppose instrumental music in the service of God. I want to say to you candidly that it is not because of any personal dislike, or of the fact that I don't love the sweet strains, the enrapturing sounds, the pleasing harmony, and the delightful rhythm that come from music performed on mechanical instruments. There is not a man in all this audience, unless having greater capacity, that appreciates anything from a Jew's harp to Ringling Brothers' brass band any more than I. I do not oppose it because of its being personally distasteful.

Well, I will go one step further. Some one said: "Brother Hardeman, do you believe in musical instruments in the home?" Why, indeed so. In my home there is a fiddle, a mandolin, a graphonola, and a piano. Also, in my home there are babies, and sometimes turnip salad with a little piece of hog's jowl. So, then, I am not opposed to these things per se, as is evidenced by my practice. But, ladies and gentlemen, it is not a question of whether I like or dislike anything connected with the service of God; it is not a question of whether it is distasteful or pleasing to my ear, to my taste, to my feelings, or to any of the things that go to make up my individuality; for I remember the Savior said that God is Spirit and seeks such to worship him as shall worship him in spirit and in truth, That statement implies beyond the shadow of a doubt that God's word must incorporate or provide the authority for whatever is offered as worship. But in the New Testament I call your attention to some statements that are made regarding this matter. In Matthew 26:30, just after the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Bible says that "when they had sung a hymn, they went out." I believe it would be a reflection upon your intelligence if I were to try to tell you what they did other than just what the records say. What did they do? They "sung a hymn." They did nothing that anybody in Nashville knows of except that "they sung a hymn" and "they went out."

Well, the next time I call your attention to Acts 16:25. Paul and Silas are in prison, and in the midnight hour and during one of those wonderful scenes that transpired they sang praises unto God. What did they do? The Bible says they sang praises unto Jehovah. I know that is what they did. I might guess that they did something else, but I might miss it. Numbers and numbers of people have guessed at things and so done.

Paul says (Romans 15:9), by way of fulfilling a prophetic declaration, that they shall sing in the midst of the Gentiles.

Again, Paul declares (1 Corinthians 14:15): "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding."

Again (Ephesians 5:18-19): "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Again (Colossians 3:16) : "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Then, again (James 5:13) : "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." This is the recitation of the passages found in the New Testament. Wherever God speaks of the question at all of praising and worshiping in song, it is simply: "When they had sung an hymn;" they sang the praise of God at midnight; "Sing with the spirit, and with the understanding;" "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart;" "Let the word Of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts."

Elder Payne has recently declared that a mechanical instrument inheres in the Greek word "psallo." Many friends rushed into print indorsing his book; but since these partisans have had time to think, they have decided that Payne covered too much territory and have sought to explain away their former indorsement. But suffice it to say that when that statement was made and supported as it was, it sounded the death knell and began the funeral march of all the arguments that might be made regarding it. Why? Because if the word from which we get the term "sing" implies an instrument of a physical nature, then you and I cannot obey God’s command unless we each have one and perform on it individually. Otherwise we would be left out; for we could not worship God by proxy, like we can vote in a Democratic convention. So it would follow as certain as time rolls on that every one who undertakes to worship God by singing only would be in open rebellion or disobedience to God’s word, because if the word implied the playing, then the man who sings only has only partially fulfilled God’s word, and you learn from Saul’s experience that partial obedience is rebellion and sinfulness in the sight of God.

I submit to you to-night, my friends, that no man can use instrumental music in the worship of God as an act of faith, and that is so clearly demonstrated and such a plain proposition to Bible students that only the word is sufficient. Paul said (2 Corinthians 5:7): "We walk by faith." "We" who? We Christians walk by faith." The word "walk" does not mean physical, but it means manner of life—our conduct, our deeds, our activities, our passing along the way of life, and our rendition of service to God.

Now, what is the principle, Paul? "We walk by faith, not by sight." Just one other thought: How does faith come? The answer (Romans 10:17): "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore, unless God's word authorizes and plainly presents it, there can be no faith regarding it. Then, speaking directly in harmony with this very sentiment (Romans 14:23), the same apostle said: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." I want to say to you, friends, that when I come to worship the God of my being and propose to offer to him something which he has not commanded, it is presumption on my part and but little short of an insult unto the God whom I seek to please.

But, again, I want to ask you, my friends, by way of repeating a thought of some nights ago in the matter of rendering service and worship to God—I want to ask who is to be pleased in that act? How are we going to settle that? When I come to worship God, is it a matter that is determined by my pleasure, or is it a disposition upon my part to worship God and to please him? 0, I think everybody would say the latter. Then this question follows: How do you know, how can you know, what pleases God Almighty other than what he has said on that question? And since God has said "sing," I do not know that the opposite, or additional, or accompaniment thereto, would meet with his approval; and until we reach the realms of bliss Divine and come in closer touch with him we will never know other than what he has said in this book.

But, again, I said to you that I had subscribed to the principle of being governed by what the Bible said rather than by its silence; and Paul made a general blanket proposition when he said to Timothy (2 Timothy 3:16-17) : "All [not just part] scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." There is no lack; there is no want, the object being "that the man of God may be perfect." "Perfect" how? With reference to his equipment, in that he is "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Therefore, if the Bible does not specifically mention instruments of music under the authority of Christ Jesus, it follows that such is not a good work.

Peter declares the same thing (2 Peter 1:3): "According as his [God's] Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." And the question has been ringing down the ages: Where is the passage in all the New Testament upon which you can put your finger and take the stand that here God furnishes and demands the use of an instrument in his worship? But some one says: "Now, Brother Hardeman, the Bible does not forbid it; and, therefore, we are at liberty to use it, and it is permissible." Well, is that a safe principle, friends? Just grant that every word of that is true; are you willing to subscribe to that statement—that whatever the word of God does not forbid in direct statement, that thing is acceptable? it would involve every man on earth in wonderful complications. Why, the Bible does not forbid, by so saying, the baptizing of the baby. No man lives who can put his finger upon the passage in God's book where it says: "Thou shalt not sprinkle water upon a baby." Now, are you ready to conclude, therefore, that it is all right? The Bible has nowhere said, "Thou shalt not count beads" as an act of religious worship; and if the principle prevails, then it is perfectly permissible for our Catholic friends to go into the service of God Almighty and institute therein the counting their beads as a religious act; and if I should object, what would be the answer? With an air of triumph and a spirit of defiance, they would say: "Hardeman, where does God say you must not count beads?" Well, I would be up with my work on that proposition.

Then the Mormon elder might parade down the aisle with some three, four, or five women as his wives; and if I raise my voice against it, he says: "Now, Hardeman, where in the Bible does God ever say that a man must not have three wives at a time?" Well, I don't know; neither do you. But some one says: "Infants are prohibited and forbidden to be baptized on the ground that God said to baptize believers, and the fact that he said baptize believers cuts out and prohibits all others who are not that." Well, I think that is correct.

Just so when God says "sing," that eliminates "play." When God says, "Make melody in your heart," that forbids making it upon the Jew's harp—the same principle to the dot.

Well, another little matter just there of which I think. I have been told by those of my friends that there is just as much scripture for the organ or piano or flute or violin as there is for the tuning fork. Well, now, supposing there is, let's make the argument and watch old Aristotle, the father of logic, smile at the solidity of it. There is as much scripture for the use of the piano as there is for the tuning fork. Therefore, the piano is authorized by the word of God. As one of the humorous pictures in the newspapers, "Can you beat it?"

Suppose, friends, that the tuning fork be wrong, does that make the organ right, or vice verse? Supposing that the tuning fork be right, does that make the organ right? Certainly not, for they are not parallel, and yet it is insisted that they are.

You watch what a tuning fork does. This is not one, but it will represent it. I strike it here, and it gives the pitch of the piece of music to be sung. Now, wait a minute. When does worship begin? In the singing of the song. The singing is the thing that is worship, and I struck the tuning fork and got the pitch of it, and the thing "has done quit" and is back in my Docket, and now we sing unto God the song, and the worship commences.

There was an old gentleman in my town who, in answer to this, once made this remark, and I have often thought about it: "Why," he said, "the difference between a tuning fork and the organ is this: that the tuning fork has enough respect for God to quit before the worship begins, while an organ continues all the way through."

Let me say to my friends who use the organ that if you would use it as a tuning fork, let it stop before we commence to worship God, I would not open my mouth against it. If, on the other hand, the introduction and the use of the tuning fork or any other fork in the service of God were such as to divide people that ought to stand together, I would say: "Away to the bottom of the Cumberland River with every tuning fork in Nashville!"

Well, I am told, further, that the use of the instrument aids the singing; but that brings on more talk. Now, let's see just a moment. What is the object of singing? Paul said: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in" the singing. Now, we don't sing just to be doing it, but to worship, God. it is not just a part of a cold, ritualistic formality. That is not it. But it really has a part in the service of God. Now, what is the object? According to the Bible, the object of the singing is that in those songs there may be teaching and admonition. Well, as a matter of fact, then, when you announce the song and sing it, I just wonder could you get more teaching out of it if we were to start up a lot of musical instruments and drown it out. Would that help you to understand the teaching? For while one sings, the other counteracts it and destroys the sound and the articulation. Have I helped you to understand what is said? If in the

song sung there is an idea of admonition, can you better admonish during the silence of accompaniments or with the sound of them galore? I think but to ask such a question is to answer it.

So, then, as a matter of fact, instrumental accompaniment cannot aid singing, so far as God's object was intended—that is, it cannot aid it in teaching and admonishing.

Well, now, let us try the other end of the line. Does it aid God in any way in receiving praise? Does it elucidate matters in Heaven's ear and around the throne on high? If so, nobody knows it; and it is all reducible to this: Music has a fine, soothing, pleasing effect upon me; but music has the same effect upon a beast, upon a bird, and even upon reptiles—a purely physical sensation produced by the feeling strains, the pleasing harmonies, and the splendid melodies. As to whether it is refining in nature or degrading depends altogether upon the type of music rendered. The hell holes of earth have as their attraction the sweetest strains of music the world has ever heard. The old songs of the sirens were never more attractive to the human ear than the songs that are sung and the music that is rendered in some of the greatest dens and lowest dives on the face of the earth. But the worship of God is spiritual. it rises in transcendency above the earth, and God has ordained that we should sing unto him and make melody, and the melody that accompanies the singing is upon the instrument known as the human heart-not simply the singing of the words and not simply the carrying of the tune, but, my friends, if there be not the sentiment back of it, if there be not the heart in it, it is not the worship demanded by God. Paul said he would rather say five words with the understanding than ten thousand which could not be understood. Therefore I will sing with the spirit, I will sing with the understanding; and anything that might hinder or drown out or clash with the teaching and the admonition cannot be, by virtue of the nature of the case, a help or an aid to the service of God. But I submit to you, again, friends, some other facts regarding this very same idea. I used to be told that we wanted to have instrumental music in the service because it would draw the crowds, and after we got them there we could preach the gospel unto them. Well, that is a wonderful argument, isn't it? But if the purpose is merely to draw the crowd, I would suggest that we have a brass band or arrange a prize fight on the stage. Seats at Fifty dollars per would beat an organ "all to pieces." Why not have a ball game? I noticed yesterday that seventy-two thousand people sat to watch Babe Ruth "come back." The movies and the attractions of earth, the theaters of all kinds, will draw the crowds; but let me tell you, friends, that there is only one thing that ought to appeal to an audience of a religious nature, and that is God's power, the gospel; and if men are not drawn by that, they will not be worth the drawing by anything else. As evidence of the fact, let me compliment and congratulate the good people of Nashville who have been so faithful in coming to our services here. They are not drawn by any sensational theme, not drawn by the antics of the preacher or the performances thereof; but they have come because the gospel is proclaimed, the Bible is taught, and the Scriptures commented upon in their relationship to the subject in hand. There is nothing unique in the singer, nothing peculiar about the speaker; but you came because the gospel is presented and the truth of the Bible is proclaimed. This men and women are hungering and thirsting to hear. Let us preach the unadulterated gospel to men, strike straight from the shoulder, insist upon a strict and a rigid adherence to God's word by all men, cut loose from things human, things that appeal to the flesh, things that are purely sensual and worldly in their nature, and speak where God's book speaks and be silent where it is silent. The gospel is the power and salvation of God unto every soul that

believes.

But, ladies and gentlemen, one of the greatest reasons which I submit to you to-night for opposing instruments of music in the worship of God is the fact that all over this land and country a once happy, united, contented, peaceful, aggressive people were standing shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand; but because some wanted to be like the nations around them, following in the footsteps of David rather than of Paul, they have introduced into the service of God that which the Bible does not authorize, and the result is that a wedge has been driven and has riven and split the body of Christ from one end of this country to the other. Over the protests, over the prayers, over the anxieties, over the overtures of faithful, godly men and women, whose lives were unquestionable, who have suffered and worried and sacrificed, the instrument has been forced against their will and without God's authority, and hence a divided people, while the Canaanite and the Perizzite in the land rejoice over the divided condition of people who claim to take God at his word, live as he directs, and trust him for the promises.

I would rather have been the man who marched up to the Savior's body on the cross and injected the spear into it than to be responsible for having torn asunder the spiritual body of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Woe unto that man, unto that people, whomsoever they be, guilty of an act of that sort!

Here is the fine philosophy: Those who have insisted upon the use of the instrument of music march out, openly and above board, and admit that they can worship God acceptably, conscientiously, and honestly without the use of the organ, or man-made instrument. Brethren, if you be really sincere, honest in that declaration, for the sake of peace and harmony, in God's name, why not be the means of drawing together that which is divided and blend all together under one flag, endeavoring to keep hereafter "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" in this goodly land of ours?

If that were my attitude toward it, unless I am deceived within myself, it would be a genuine pleasure to march out and take my brethren by the hand and say: "Sire, I can worship God without this, and I love the peace and harmony and unity of God's people better than I love any kind of machinery made by the hands of man." If that time could come to pass and we would all preach the gospel as it was done a century ago, ere long denominationalism, human creeds, human disciplines, and human names would tumble before the solid phalanx of God's mighty host. The Bible would become the universal creed, and thus salvation would be brought unto the sons and daughters of men. it is in our power so to do, and we ought to be willing to do anything and everything possible, if there be not a matter of faith surrendered, for the accomplishment of that one thing.

I repeat to you what I have said time and again, brethren, that if you will take God's word, put your finger upon one single, solitary thing that I, N. B. Hardeman, do not preach and practice as a member of the church, I pledge you my word that I will introduce that thing, if possible, before the going down of to-morrow's sun. And then reverse it. If there be something which I preach and practice which is not commanded and not authorized by the word of God and you will show it in his book, I pledge myself to give that thing up, even yesterday, if it were possible. I do not want anything to stand between me and any child of God on earth, and I do not want to be the occasion for causing this (God's) people to be divided. Friends, what is it? What does Hardeman preach, what does Hardeman practice, against which there are valid and scriptural objections? I preach

the Christ as the Son of God, the operation of the Holy Spirit in conviction and conversion; and if a man but believe the gospel, repent of his sins, confess his faith, be baptized, walk in newness of life as a disciple of the Lord, as a saint, as a Christian, meet with his brethren to worship God on the first day of the week, and by prayer, by teaching, by fellowship, by breaking of bread, and by singing carry out God's commands, heaven will ultimately be his home. What is there objectionable about that? What is there in that that would divide the congregations of Nashville? What is there contrary to the teachings of God's word? Let us think on these things. But I have talked the limit to-night, and I now come to press the invitation once more. If there are any in this great company who as yet have not obeyed the gospel of the Son of God, this is a Ane opportunity so to do. If there are those who have wandered away and want to renew their faith, their allegiance, their relationship, we likewise bid you come. If there be any man in all this house who will take his stand upon God's book and there plant his feet, I will meet him under the realm of high heaven, and upon that foundation strike hands together, lock arms, and walk down the aisles of time as one under the flag of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Friends, time is rapidly passing; the opportunities are flying by; present decision determines future destiny. This may be the critical hour when your eternal wreck, ruin, or happiness may be settled; and I appeal to you as sensible men and women, splendid men, young manhood and young womanhood-I want you to-night simply to become and be a Christian, I want you to become and be a member of the church about which you can read in the Bible, I want Christ to be your leader, the Bible your guide, the church of God your field of labor, and heaven your home.

3.00 - Title

HARDEMAN’S TABERNACLE SERMONS

VOLUME III A Series of Twenty-One Sermons Delivered in the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tenn., March 18 to April 1, 1928 BY N. B. HARDEMAN HENDERSON, TENN.

GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY Nashville, Tennessee 1 975

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FOREWORD

It is with genuine pleasure that I introduce to the public this volume of gospel sermons preached by N. B. Hardeman in the Ryman Auditorium, at Nashville, Tenn., in which place Brother Hardeman had conducted two similar meetings, the sermons of which were put in book form. A DESCRIPTIVE WORD.

It will be observed that these discourses have been entitled "Gospel Sermons," by which is meant that the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed from start to finish, and not the doctrines, traditions, and experiences of uninspired men. To be sure, the latter were exposed to the view of the most unlearned by being contrasted with the simplicity of the gospel of the Son of God, and thus made to stand out in all of their opposition to the truth and hindrance to the unity of God's people for which the Savior so earnestly prayed (John 17:20) and regarding which all inspired apostle exhorted (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:3-6). A PUBLIC DEMAND.

Because of a public and insistent demand by the thousands who heard and read these sermons in the daily papers, the Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville Banner, no apology is offered for bringing out this volume.

History is valuable only to the extent that it contributes to the betterment of mankind; hence, only such facts should be permanently preserved as will enrich the mind and heart with the inspiration of the highest and noblest ideals of life. So deeply was the public impressed with not only the subject matter of these discourses, but with the clear and forceful presentation of the subjects discussed, that all overwhelming sentiment expressed itself for their preservation in book form—this, too, notwithstanding the fact that it was N. B. Hardeman's third meeting in the same city and with practically the same audiences.

ALL UNUSUAL PRESENTATION OF VITAL TRUTH. Of course, all truth is vital, but there are some truths of exceeding vital importance that are sometimes neglected. The thing that brought into being and crowned with such a wonderful success the "Restoration Movement," or the effort to return to the church of the New Testament, was the emphasis laid upon the sinful divisions among the professed children of God, the evils of denominationalism, and the only remedy for such evils. This necessarily led the preachers of that age to show the difference between the church revealed in the New Testament and the existing denominations, with their doctrines and traditions of men, making void the word of God. (Mark 7:8-13.) Not since the days of those who launched and most vigorously prosecuted the return to the ancient order as revealed in the New Testament has any man with more boldness, clearness, and convicting power stripped the truth of denominationalism with its human garments or shown the evils of sectarianism than N. B. Hardeman has done in this series of sermons. This he did with the ease and grace of a consummate master of assemblies that so challenged the thousands of hearers as to bring them back with a spirit of eagerness to hear more of the long-neglected truths that stirred the religious world in Alexander Campbell's

days from center to circumference.

PRESENTATION OF CHURCH HISTORY. From both sacred and profane history, with which N. B. Hardeman showed himself to be perfectly familiar, it was shown how the church established by the Lord Jesus Christ had departed from the truth. He showed the origin, creed, doctrine, and practice of all the denominations as purely the work of uninspired men, and how far they were from the word of God.

OPPOSITION AROUSED. This unusual presentation of historical facts stirred the defenders of sectarianism as they have not been for generations, and many criticisms were hurled at the preacher. However, these only served to emphasize the farreaching and revolutionary effects of the truth so ably, earnestly, courteously, and kindly presented by N. B. Hardeman, who, modest, unassuming, and void of egotistical mannerisms, is one of the greatest preachers of this age. THE SONG SERVICE. The inspiration arising from thousands of voices singing in unison spiritual songs with all earnestness unsurpassed added much, no doubt, to the delivery of these discourses, as well as fitting the minds of the great audience with a more receptive mood for the messages delivered. But such edifying and soul-lifting singing could not have been without a competent leader or director, such as B. H. Murphy, who inspired his helpers with his splendid leader The great building was made to ring with the melody of human voices trained to sing as God requires, and this contributed much indeed to the success of this wonderful meeting.

F. W. SMITH.

Chapter 58

3.01 - "REMEMBERING"

"REMEMBERING"

Ladies and gentlemen, my brethren and friends, it is, indeed, a great inspiration and a genuine pleasure to be greeted by such a magnificent audience, prompted, as I believe you are, by the holiest desires to spread abroad the principles of the kingdom of Christ, to render proper thanksgiving unto Him from whom all blessings flow, and to show forth the praise of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Through the guidance of a kindly providence, we are here again to mix and mingle in Christian association and to declare once more the counsel of God to dying men.

It is not at all rare for great assemblies to come together. Sometimes political conventions call forth thousands. Matters of entertainment, things that pertain to the affairs of men here, are such as to bring together the multiplied throngs, but when people come together for the purpose of reverencing Jehovah, and showing respect to his truth, it is a great encouragement, and especially in this age in which we now live.

I want all of you to enjoy every service of this series. I want you to feel that it is your meeting, and that the responsibility of its success rests very largely upon you as individuals. I count myself exceedingly fortunate to stand in your midst and have a part in your efforts. I shall never forget six years ago when first I came to you as a stranger, and received such a gracious welcome at your hands. It is a pleasure today to meet you again and especially to be surrounded by kindred hearts and congenial Spirit?. It is both all inspiration and a pleasure to be surrounded by these hoary heads who have borne the heat and burden of the day. Their sacrifices and continued labors have made possible gatherings like this in the name of the Lord.

I congratulate the congregations who have been responsible for working out this program, and now I feel as if you are amply rewarded in the results thus far attained. While I look with pleasure and appreciation upon those of you here assembled, I am not forgetful of faces once familiar, conspicuous now by their absence. They have slipped away and have passed to the realm of the boundless beyond. I do not doubt but that from that spirit land their eyes are turned toward this auditorium, and they joy and rejoice with us in this service. Their having gone comes as a forcible reminder of the fact that all of us are beating solemn marches to the tomb.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power And all that beauty, all that wealth ere gave Await alike the inevitable hour, The paths of glory lead but to the grave!"

"All flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the grass, the grass withereth, and the flower thereof faileth, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which, by the gospel, is preached unto you." Death, decay and passing away are written upon the wings of time and timely things, and out of all that you and I behold in our journey from this to the other shore, God’s Word alone stands Gibraltar-like against the elements of time.

I am especially grateful again for the courtesy shown by the daily papers of your city which have so kindly contributed to the success that was attained in former meetings, and that have been a very potent factor in bringing to pass the gathering of these thousands here today. I want to express further a genuine thanksgiving for the courtesies of their promises already announced. And to the merchants and business men who have kindly come to our noon-day services, I am not unmindful of a spirit of gratitude. I believe that every employer will be glad for those under him to come to our services. I think the Mayor, the Chief of Police and other officials of this city would rejoice and be glad to know that those over whom they exercise authority have respect enough for things sacred to want to attend our services, both day and night. To all, therefore, who have in any way had a part in our success, and who maintain that disposition to further the same, we owe a debt of gratitude which, perhaps, neither I nor my brethren will ever be able to pay. The Bible, friends, is the most universally read and studied book of all the earth. For it there is a high regard, and by its wonderful teaching men have been moved and made to think as from the perusal of no other book ever penned upon this earth. Its opening sentence is, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The falsity of that statement can never be proved. To the real or pseudo-scientist there is ample time for his multiplied millions and billions and trillions of years, for God says, "In the beginning Jehovah created the heavens and the earth." That Book before us now gives the only sensible account of our existence upon the earth, and I, for one, do not address the ape or the chimpanzee as my grandfather, neither do I count the monkey as all elder brother, but I believe the story of Holy Writ, and have no apology to make to any man for my faith in God’s Word.

Upon the pages of that Book is revealed our duty, not only to ourselves and to our fellow-man, but to Jehovah as well, and when the curtain is drawn aside the destiny of the human family is boldly proclaimed to all mankind. From the first pair in Paradise there are ten generations down to the flood, at which time sin and wickedness had become so great upon this earth that God decreed that everything in whose nostrils was the breath of life should be banished from the face of the earth. Therefore this mighty flood, this wonderful ocean o’ertopping the highest hills and the loftiest mountains, this boundless expanse, without a single shore, was heaven’s means of purifying the earth and making it a better dwelling place for humanity. By means of the flood, eight souls, having entered into the ark, were transferred from the old corrupted, sin cursed world into the new.

Ten generations more go by, and we are introduced to him who became the friend of God and the father of all them that believe. Wonderful promises are announced, both of a physical, and likewise of a spiritual nature. From our introduction to Abraham on to the close of Revelation, the story is but the story of one family through whom the promises had come, and from whom the Christ can trace his ancestry with unbroken line. The descendants of Abraham, with the passing of years, drifted down into Egyptian bondage, about seventy and five souls in number. There they were subjected to the hardest tasks and to the most rigorous labor of which there is a’ record. The years go by, and God at last heard their cries. Under the leadership of Moses they marched across the Red Sea, and on the other shore sang the song of glad redemption and of sweet deliverance.

Two and a half months thereafter they came to the foot of shaking Sinai, towering six and a half thousand feet above the level of the sea. Here they stayed for all entire year, and during that time four prominent events took place: first, the giving of the law; second, the infidelity on the part of Aaron, the worship of the golden calf, and the punishment; third, the building of that house of gold

upon a foundation of silver; and fourth, the numbering and the organization of the people. At the end of another year they were found at Kadesh-Barnea, from which place the spies were sent to view the promised land, and because of the evil report on the part of ten, a decree went forth that for thirty and eight years longer they should wander up and down the beds of those streams, across the parched sands of that great and terrible wilderness, until, in the providence of God, they were permitted finally to enter the land of promise. The experiences of those forty years were just about such as come to humanity even today. There were murmurings, rebellions, fault findings, criticism, back-bitings, organizations against their leaders, and longings to go back to the flesh-pots of Egypt. The patience of Moses, and the bearing of their burdens to the Lord in prayer are fine examples to every leader who is devoted loyally and unflinchingly to the service of God. When forty years had passed they were in the plains of Moab, just beyond the Jordan, opposite the historic city of Jericho. Before the death of their matchless leader, two great battles had been fought. Old Sihon had been slain down at Jahaz, and Og in the battle of Edrei. The Amorites were dispersed, and the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh were settled on the Eastern tablelands. It was just at this time, or if you want it specifically, it was in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, and on the first day of the month, when Moses spoke to the people the words that you find in the book of Deuteronomy, some of which I read to you at the beginning. That which I have in mind to try to impress upon you is this, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in shine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no." My friends, proper equipment in life demands a good memory, likewise the ability to forget. All of the blunders, the murmurings and the fault findings unjustly made ought to be forgotten, but the fear of this great leader and captain was that they might forget the God who had led them all the way, who had fed them with manna which neither they nor their fathers knew, who had caused their garments not to wax old, nor their feet to swell. At that time Israel was facing a great future. Moses wanted to mortise their feet in the past. He knew that they were its product, and that they were standing on sacred soil, ready to cross the River Jordan, drive out the various nations, and come into the full possession of their own. He knew man’s disposition, and the nature of his people. Moses said, in substance, "Brethren, beware lest when you come into goodly cities and dwell therein, and drink of wells which you did not dig, and eat fruit of vineyards which you never planted, when you become greatly multiplied in your flocks and herds, when your silver and your gold and all that you have has been multiplied, that ye forget the God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondage. Remember it is God that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers." Their further story is to me interesting. About forty years more went by and the nine and a half tribes were planted in the promised land. They soon forgot the past, and thus they grew haughty, puffed up and were filled with pride. In order to bring them to penitence, and make them to recognize that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, he sold them again into subjection, and a series of oppressions, seven in number, came one by one upon them. When they came to themselves, time and again, and called unto the Lord, a suitable leader was raised to meet the exigencies of the hour. Hence we have a series of judges, all the way from Othniel to Samuel, fifteen in number, during a period of about 450 years. Thus God’s government was inaugurated to meet their demands. But as has always been true, they grew impatient with Jehovah’s way, and became ungrateful. They failed to remember how that one time the Lord took them up, led them

about, kept them as the very apple of his eye, and gave them such abundance of the good things of the earth.

They looked about and saw the nations marshaling their forces on the fields of battle with their glittering swords and their rich-colored uniforms, and said, one to another, "Let us make unto ourselves a king, that we may be like the nations around us." Samuel warned them against such a departure from the way of God, but in their evil disposition, stubborn and rebellious nature) they answered back, "Nay, but we expect to have a king." God gave them a king in his wrath, and for 120 years all the tribes were united under the kingship of Saul, of David, and of Solomon. But that seems to be as long as people can easily march together, and hence division springs up in their midst. Ten tribes went after Jeroboam down to Bethel, and there began a system of worship unheard of by the God of Heaven. Two small tribes remained under Rehoboam in the city of Jerusalem, and tried to carry on according to heaven’s commands.

I want you, in this historic review, to think of principles and of lessons that might be enlarged upon, possibly, to our profit. Only 254 years passed from the division of the kingdom until the ten tribes had so far forgotten the Lord and had departed so much from the path of God’s government, that they were literally swallowed up and absorbed by the great Assyrian nation. That marked the death knell and sounded the doom of the ten tribes of Israel. The two tribes continued on for 134 years, when they were sold into Babylonian captivity. The seventy years pass, and their unfortunate experiences are traceable to the fact that they did not observe that which Moses urged upon them just before his departure, namely, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee."

Friends, there may be a parallel in various ways to this wonderful bit of history. Our beloved land, America, has by some been called a child of Providence. I am not here to deny that possibly a guiding hand has had a part in the history of this, the greatest country on earth. I think it unfortunate for any nation, or for any man not to remember the kindly hand of a superior power. Unfortunate is that nation or man across whose path no guardian angel has ever been known to fly and in whose affairs there are no readings and no discernments of providential care and favors bestowed.

I think the year 1620 marks the real beginning of that splendid land wherein we chance to dwell. I know that previous to that year the Spanish had their settlement at old At. Augustine in the land of flowers, but if the Spaniards had been successful, all effete monarchial government would have crushed the possible liberties of the new world. Already the English had settled at Jamestown, but had they been successful it would have meant the transferring of the old principles of government upon the new world. And the industrious Dutch had, previous to that good year, established their trading posts on Manhattan Island, but if they had been left undisturbed this country would have been great only as a wonderful commercial nation.

I think it was the coming of the Pilgrim Fathers in the historic Mayflower that brought and introduced into this country the supreme idea of God Almighty. It is said in history that every resolution and every undertaking on their part was with the idea that God should walk together with them. Their posterity settled the thirteen sturdy, self-reliant colonies which, in the course of years, drafted that, immortal document, the Declaration of Independence. Six years of bloody warfare followed to make good that decree. Finally, with the loss of thousands of their kind, and

their little country almost literally baptized in the blood of their sires, they were recognized as a nation among the sister nations of the world. That religious and civil liberty for which they had fought and died was then confined between the Atlantic on the east and the Alleghenies on the west. But its star was not to be held in such narrow bounds. The frontiers were pushed across the crest of the Alleghenies and the light of that star swept on to the mighty waters of the great Mississippi. And it wasn't content then. Beyond the bosom of the river the same light of religious privileges and of respect for God was carried, across the great staked plains, and its western boundary became the snow-capped regions of the wonderful Rockies. The wisest statesmen and the greatest philosophers said, "Ne plus ultra"—beyond this thou shalt not go—but in that pronouncement and prophecy they were doomed to disappointment, for by and by the light of that guiding star overtopped the summit of the snow-clad Rockies and mingled its silvery beams with the golden glories of the Sunset coast. Thus our great country, springing up from a foundation like that mentioned, extended from ocean to ocean, and from the Lakes to the Gulf. It has grown, multiplied, made progress, and advancement, until, as you know, it stands the greatest nation on the face of the earth. Our leaders have had but to touch our wonderful national resources and abundant streams of revenue have come forth —possibly to bless, maybe to curse, a splendid land.

I think you and I today ought to remember how that possibly Jehovah has kept all eye upon us as a people in our civil and likewise our religious privileges. We have come to be exceedingly great. We are feasting upon the very fat of the land. Our wealth is unlimited. Our powers likewise cannot be measured. The eyes of the entire world have for some time looked toward America, not only as the money center and the trade center, but for that religious life which some day, I trust, may encircle the globe, and make all darkness to vanish, and the marvelous light of heaven itself to shine upon the denizens of earth.

We do big things. We cross the ocean in five or six days. Lindbergh needs but thirty hours. The Mayflower was five or six months. We build greater cities, do bigger things in every way. I wonder, friends, if we alight from our barks to greater tasks than did those of the past. Are we rearing greater men, are we developing a better citizenship to adorn the doctrine of God Almighty, and likewise to be a blessing to humanity?

I regret to have to say today that, as a nation, we have largely lost confidence in our fellow man; the old-time elements of honesty, uprightness, downright truthfulness are below par on the market of the world. The blackest crimes, the most gruesome deeds, and the most atrocious acts that ever stained the pages of history He at our very door. The slimiest creatures that ever cursed the face of the earth have sat in high seats in our government, with a conscience seared as with a hot iron, until public sentiment had to drive them away. The alarming thing is that we have tolerated such conditions so long. We have allowed these venomous beasts to hang on until our selfreproach is largely gone.

We have got to rise up in self-defense and recognize that our success in life is not material, but that it is moral and spiritual in its nature. Our lofty skyscrapers cannot rest upon a foundation purely materialistic in nature. And there has got to come a time ere long when we must reverse our gear and hark back to the principles that actuated our fathers in days gone by.

We have drifted away from God. We have turned aside from His Book, and unless there is a halt, this country will be turned into hell at last with all the nations that forget God.

We are standing upon the past. We are its products. The land on which we stand this afternoon is made land. The soil in which we are to sow our seeds is a prepared soil. Let us not forget that unto Him, who is the Father of our Spirit?, there is all obligation and a duty that must be paid.

But, friends, that is not all. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ was established twenty centuries ago. Through the passing of the years there was a general state of apostasy, and beneath the rubbish of humanism and of superstition, the cause for which Jesus died lay buried during the long spell of the dark ages. Finally there was the hand of Providence to show forth the rays of light that opened up the great reformation, the culmination of which was the coming of another Mayflower bringing those who had vision, regard, and appreciation of Jehovah to clear the clouds and banish the darkness, and to cause the light of another star to cast a glimmer o'er this earth.

We stand today, from the point of religious consideration, upon the ground prepared by others. I am in no sense responsible for the possibility of such a great throng of people, Christian in name, assembled. More than forty different congregations, together with friends and kindred who have come, are responsible for it. I cannot but gladly share the result of the labors of those who have gone before. I recognize that I am standing upon the foundation prepared by others. I am, during this meeting, to try to sow the seeds of the kingdom into soil very largely prepared. I would be untrue to myself and all ingrate, unless I harked back now to give honor to whom honor is due. I remember that God Almighty and good men have labored and served and sacrificed to make possible the glories and the pleasures and the joys that you and I today share.

I call to mind such old brethren as Phillip S. Fall, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, a number of the Sewells, F. D. Srygley, J. C. McQuiddy, Jas. E. Scobey, and, not least among the number, the lamented J. A. Harding, together with a host of others, who are responsible for the pleasure that is mine now. And as we hymn His praises, and the melody from six or eight thousand hearts present wings its way to the great throne of heaven itself, let us remember all the way how that God's hand had been in it all.

I have come, my friends, to try to beget within those who have it not as yet, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to kindle within your hearts a lively hope, by announcement of the resurrection of our leader from the confines of the tomb. I trust that I may be able to appeal to your finer senses, and better elements, and cause you to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I want you, friends, to become members of the body of Christ, of the household of faith, and to pledge the remnant of your days unto the most pleasant service possible to mankind, and then at last, when Life's dream is over, I want you to share the pleasures that pass understanding.

If there are any of you in His presence even at this initial service who understand the will of the Lord and have a heart and mind to accept it, I am glad, even now, to extend the gospel invitation, while together we stand and join in the singing.

Chapter 59

3.02 - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

I purpose tonight to begin a series of studies regarding, first, the Establishment of the Church of the Bible, to be followed by its subsequent history, its gradual apostasy, the rise of ecclesiasticism, the development of the great hierarchy, and finally the dawn of the great Reformation, culminating with the Restoration movement of more than a hundred years ago.

I believe that this audience will appreciate such a study, for a knowledge of these things is vital to our eternal destiny.

I have no apology to make for preaching tonight upon the establishment of the church for which Jesus Christ died. I call your attention, therefore, to the reading of a part of Matthew 16:1-28.

Most of the mighty works of the Son of God were done around the Sea of Galilee, but since he was human as well as Divine, the time came when He longed for seclusion, and a period of rest. Hence, He left the beautiful sea, and went with His disciples near to the little city of Caesarea Philippi. There He asked of them what public opinion was regarding his identity. They replied by telling Him that some said that He was John the Baptist, others that He was Elias, others Jeremias, and still others announced that He was, at least, one of the prophets. To make the matter direct and personal, Christ turned to the disciples and sought to elicit from them the answer that was forthcoming—"What do you think about it' what do you have to say?" With that courage and boldness characteristic of the man, Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." By their very silence that statement was indorsed by all the others.

He turned and pronounced a blessing on Peter for having made that confession, and said that flesh and blood had not revealed it, but His Father who wee in heaven.

Then He said, "Thou also art Peter, and upon this rock— upon this great truth—I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In this expression, wherein the word "church" is first used in all the Bible, there are some significant statements regarding it. Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." Christ was to be the builder. Any church, therefore, on earth tonight founded by any other than the Lord Jesus Christ is not the church mentioned in this Bible. He said, "I will build my church." Any organization erected or built at any other time than the time contemplated here is unknown to the Book of God. Any organization built at some other place than the one emphasized in the Bible is a stranger to God's Book.

Notice,—"Upon this rock I will build my church." God forbid that in my phraseology and reference I should fail to give Jesus Christ the honor and the glory as the proud possessor of that which was bought by His blood, and filled with His spirit. That is why it is that I speak of it as the Church of Christ. I mean the church belonging to Christ, the church owned by Christ, and justly so by every

consideration that brings about a purchased possession. That is why the peerless apostle speaks of it as the church of the First Born, the pillar and the ground of the truth. And Christ said again: "Upon this rock I will build my church," He said—not churches, as of many, but church, as of one. That is the only institution about which the Bible has anything to say.

It ought to be a challenging question, paramount to every one tonight; Are you a member of that institution, are you a member of the church, or, are you a member of a church? Remember that such a thought as a church is unknown to the Book of God. But again He said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." He did not say: "I purpose to build," or "I may build," or even "I shall build it," as though to indicate a mere state of futurity, but using the strongest wording possible, that which carries with it not only futurity but all emphasis and a determination, He said, "I will build," thus giving to those of His audience the strongest possible statement and the greatest assurance that nothing shall thwart His purpose or turn aside that declaration or intention. "Though I may pass down through the gates into the realm of hades, the home of departed Spirit?, I will build my church. I may be confined in that realm, my body may be buried in a borrowed tomb, a stone may be rolled over the mouth of the sepulcher, but I will build my church. By the power of God I will burst the bars that may be round about and come forth triumphant o'er the powers of the hadean world. I will pass through other gates, "I will build my church." Then He said the very gates already mentioned shall not prevail against it—equivalent, I think, to saying that the gates shall not hinder.

I know there is a prevalent idea that Christ here promises that the gates of hades shall not prevail against the church. The Bible does not say that. I think this passage does not mean that. But the gates of hades shall not prevail against my intention, my purpose, my objective- in spite of all such, I will build my church. And I rejoice tonight to believe in a Christ who was able to make good a solemn promise to the apostles, and through them to all of us yet living.

But, further, He said, "Peter, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." From this statement I learn this, that the kingdom of heaven in this passage is a synonym for the church of the Lord, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." If that expression meant not the same as the church about which He had just spoken, then Peter used the keys of the kingdom to unlock the door of all entirely different institution, and stands out guilty of burglarizing the church of God, the pillar and the support of the truth.

I am aware of the fact that in many passages of the Bible these expressions may have different significance, but in this connection, the law of language and of good sense demands their equivalent. So the word "church," likewise the "kingdom of God," the "kingdom of heaven," "the kingdom of His dear Son" and the "body of Christ" are used as synonymous expressions, but while synonymous each carries its peculiar characteristic feature.

Let me say this: with reference to its laws and its government, the church is properly called a kingdom. It is not a republican form of government, nor yet is it a democracy. It is a monarchy with all the powers vested in one sovereign head, Christ Jesus, the king, who has within Himself the power of legislation, of the judiciary and likewise the executive. In such a realm He has but to speak and loyal citizens hear, entranced. He has but to command, and faithful followers move in harmony with His authority. As regards its organization and the relationship of the different members to a great federal head, it is properly called a body—Christ the head, Christians the members, and the Holy Spirit the vitalizing, life-giving power. When you think about it as it pertains

to the world, and in order to emphasize its relation to other governments, it is properly called the church, a word that means the separated, the called-out, and the isolated in their relationships. That such all organization is in existence tonight I think will not be denied or questioned by any of you who chance to hear, or possibly those who will read of what is now being said. That there was a time and a place of its erection I think also admits of no argument. So far as I know, have right or reason to believe, this will not be denied or questioned by any of you. All scholars who have written upon the subject agree that the church of the New Testament was founded, established and inaugurated on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Summing up the evidence, and gathering the very cream of the scholarship of the world, Smith's Bible Dictionary very accurately says that Pentecost marks the birthday of that institution.

There are many lines of study, many ways of approach to a matter of this kind. I purpose tonight to go back into the historic past some 600 years B.C., and trace matters as they are closely revealed regarding this institution. When Nabopolassar, the great monarch of Babylon, died, his son, Nebuchadnezzar, inherited the throne. Unwilling to share the rulership of the world with his rival down in Egypt, there was a great contest, and one of the greatest battles recorded in Biblical history was fought at old Carchemish in the year 608 B.C., with the result that the Eastern monarch was supreme, and his universal rule was acknowledged by all the people of all civilized lands.

He rushed from this section back across the Arabian desert and assumed the throne left vacant by his father. He had carried, however, with him, from the land of Palestine, the treasures of the House of God, and the vast number of those who had been worshiping at the throne of Jehovah. In that number were the three children, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego, together with Ezekiel, Daniel and others. Not many months went by until old King Nebuchadnezzar had a wonderful dream that troubled him. He remembered the next morning that he had had a dream, but was unable to recall exactly what it was. So he ordered all the soothsayers, the astrologers and the magicians to come into his presence, and to make known to him that which he had dreamed, and likewise the interpretation.

They said, "There lives not a man in all the earth able to reveal what the dream was. You tell us what it was and we will make due explanation and give proper interpretation." But he said, "The thing has gone from me and unless you can reproduce it, I will issue a decree that all shall be slain, but the man who will reproduce it shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor." When the decree went forth that all of those wise characters should be slain, the news reached those in captivity, and Daniel remonstrated, saying, "Let not the king be hasty, let me be brought into his presence and I will reveal to him the interpretation." So Daniel was taken into the presence of the king, and announced to him that there was and is a God in heaven who can reveal secrets, and make known what shall be in the latter day. When the setting was completed, Daniel said: "Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This image which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible. As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay. Thou sawest that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became

like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Now that is the dream. Watch the interpretation: "Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom; the power, and the strength, and the glory; and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall not be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron cloth not mingle with clay. And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Thus the dream and interpretation is before us. As a student I have but to turn to profane history and read definitely just the application of the things here prefigured, or outlined. I know that the Babylonian empire, according to history, was then in existence, with Nebuchadnezzar as the monarch of the same. It continued on some years after Daniel's prophecy and interpretation, until finally in the year 536 B.C. Babylon fell, never to rise again.

You remember the record of that wonderful night, when Belshazzar was having a great feast, praising the gods of gold and of silver and of brass, when there came forth the fingers of a man's hand writing on the plaster of the wall, announcing the death-knell of that government, and sounding the doom of Babylon forevermore.

History tells us that Cyrus and Darius, of Persia and of Media, combined, and established a government upon the ruins of Babylon. This Medo-Persian empire, represented by the breast and arms, continued until about the year 330, at which time it also faded away, as Daniel says. Then there came the young man, Alexander the Great, who bore rule over the earth. That is the belly of brass, as signified in the interpretation of the dream. But Alexander lived for only about seven years, and died a shameful, drunken death, after which his government was for a time divided into four parts, and these soon blended into two, the South and the North, known in history as the Logidae and the Salucidae. These things continued on down the line until finally a rebellion on the part of the Jews broke out, and, for a hundred years, warfare raged throughout the sacred land of Palestine. This is the period when old Mattathias and his five sons rose to prominence and fought most valiantly for the independence utterly denied unto them at last.

Coming down to about 63 B.C., we find that the Roman government made its rise over that part of the country, and under the dominion of old Pompey began to exercise rule over that land forever sacred. In about the year 34 B.C., while the Caesars were occupying their sevenhilled city and swaying universal dominion over the sons and daughters of men, old Herod the Great was king over the land of Palestine, and, during his life, the New Testament began its story. Matthew 1:1-25 records the birth of Christ. Matthew 2:1-23 records that decree that went forth from this Herod the king, that all children under two years old in the city of Bethlehem were to be slaughtered. The third chapter opens up by saying, "In those days came John the Baptist." Friends, in what days? Surely, in the days of which we have just been reading, in the days of the Herods, in the days of the Caesars, John the Baptist broke the silence of the wilderness and, with a clarion voice, called upon his fellow-citizens to repent, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This expression implies that it was approaching and had come nigh.

After John was put in prison Jesus Christ began to preach and to say likewise unto the people, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Soon after this the Twelve were sent out under that restricted commission, and made similar declarations. Following them the Seventy went forth two by two, and they also announced that the kingdom of God was come nigh unto them. These declarations, with no uncertainty, announced the approach of that kingdom, or of that church promised by the Christ when he said in Caesarea Philippi, "Upon this rock I will build my church." But that is not all. In that memorable Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught the disciples how to pray, and he said, “After this manner pray you, Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come." My friends, if already that thing had been in existence, and if the disciples were already members, such a prayer would have been misleading and delusive in its very announcement. It shows upon its face that at that time the kingdom had not come, and Christ taught them to pray for its coming, for its glad realization. When the question came up in Matthew 18:1, regarding who should be great in the kingdom of heaven, Christ taught a wonderful lesson, and He said to the apostles, "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Were they at that time members of it? Had it already come, and into it had they been translated? If so, then this language has no meaning or significance whatsoever. "Except you be converted and become as a little child, you shall not enter into it when by and by it is established upon the earth." No other interpretation, no other significance can soberly and sensibly characterize the passage. And again in Mark 9:1, there are these familiar statements, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Friends, its approach is so nigh that while some of them may die, it is absolutely certain that all will not, but "out of this company right now, to whom I am talking, there be some who will not taste of death until that to which all the prophets and others had been looking shall come." And as all evidence of its coming, these are the characteristics. it shall come "with power," and thereby "shall you be not deceived."

Now will you get the simplicity of that statement: "The kingdom of God will come with power."

If I can learn from the Bible tonight just when that power came, I will know assuredly ~when the kingdom came, for it was to come with power. In Luke 24:49, Christ said: "Tarry you in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high." At that time they were not clothed with

power. They had received heaven’s charge, Christ’s commission, but they were to wait in the city of Jerusalem until endued with power from on high.

But, you ask, "When did the power come, and how may I thus know?" In Acts 1:6, there are these words: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? He said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power, but you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

What have we learned? First, that the kingdom of God is to come with power. Second, that the power is to come with the Spirit. There is just one more step, When did the Holy Spirit come? If that may be determined, there is God’s word that the power shall accompany the Spirit. My friends, I have but to begin the reading of Acts, second chapter: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of the rushing of a mighty wind. There appeared unto them cloven or forked tongues, like as of fire and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Bible says that the Spirit came on Pentecost. The Bible says that the power came with the Spirit, and the Bible says that the kingdom came with the power. Therefore, it follows inevitably that the kingdom or the church of Christ was ushered into existence in its established, setup state, on that memorable occasion.

Following that, the first gospel sermon ever preached in the name of a crucified and risen Lord was announced by the peerless apostle Peter. On that day, for the first time, he injected the keys that had been given, unlocked the door of the church bought by the blood of Christ, and announced the terms of admission into the realms of that institution thus promised, and now consummated upon this earth.

Hence that chapter closes by saying that the "Lord added unto the church daily such as were being saved."

Friends, I have briefly traced this institution in prophecy until it becomes all established fact.

I want now to go to the other end of the line. Let us turn to the closing chapters of the New Testament, and also read some statements regarding this same thin’. I want you to notice which way the index finger points, and the phraseology of the Bible in referring to this institution.

Standing on the Isle of Patmos, in the year 96 A.D., John says, "I was in the kingdom and patience of the Lord." The kingdom or church was, therefore, in existence in the days of John.

Paul wrote to Timothy in the year 64 (1 Timothy 3:15) and indulged the hope that he might possibly be released from prison, and make him a visit, but in case he could not, he wrote: "That thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and the support of the truth." At that time this institution was in existence.

It is now a matter of history. It is no longer what "I will do." It is no longer what "I shall do," but it is now a consummated fact, and a historic certainty. In this same year, the Colossians were told that they had been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. And again, Paul wrote the first Corinthian letter in the year 69, and he addressed it after this fashion: "Paul called to be all apostle

of God, by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth." Friends, that institution was then in existence. It had had its realization and identity clearly marked upon the face of the earth. But drop back still further, into the year 34, Acts 8:3, and the Bible has this to say: "Paul made havoc of the Church of God." He persecuted it, and wasted it. These expressions would be wholly meaningless if such all institution were not then in existence.

After the execution of Ananias and Sapphira, "great fear came upon the church." This brings us back to the year 33 where prophecy ended. From these considerations, I announce that the church was established in the city of Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection from the dead. This sentiment is voiced by the scholarship of the world.

I state to you that on that day Peter preached the first sermon. I bid you hear the announcement by him made. After clearing away the misunderstanding, and explaining the miracle of the day, he said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David saith concerning him, I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul unto hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou madest known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance. Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with all oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make shine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

Friends, this is the announcement, for the first time, of the resurrection of Christ. Peter brought home to those who had stood at the cross fifty-three days before the fact that they were guilty of the execution of the Son of God. Now to them he said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly—believe confidently and without doubt—that God Almighty, who raised him from the dead for the purpose of sitting upon David's throne, has now made him Lord of Lords and King of Kings." No wonder that the historian says, "When they heard this they were cut to their hearts." Conviction was brought; they ~were reminded of the tragedy in which they had a part, and they were conscious of the fact that their hands were dripping with the blood of the immaculate Son of God. Hence, with a faith, engendered by the things thus spoken, they cried out and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Do for what? Certainly, "to rid ourselves of the crime and of the sin that has been brought so directly and emphatically home to us. What may be done, that we may be free from the guilt that is ours?"

Then Peter, as they thus knocked at the door for entrance, inserted the keys that had to him been given, and unlocked the door into this bloodbought, heaven-born, and Spirit filled institution. To those who had already heard, who had already believed, and to whom conviction had been brought, Peter answered, as guided and directed by the Holy Spirit, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation, for the promise is not only to you and to your children, but all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

You ask what was the result?

"They that received his word were baptized. And the same day they were added, builded together, about three thousand souls."

Then the record closes by saying that the Lord added day by day unto the church promised by Him in the days gone by. My friends, from that hour till this no new fact of the gospel has been added. Since that time and until now no new commandment has been given. From that occasion until this moment, no new promise has at any time been announced. It is the same story tonight as it was twenty centuries ago. In this audience there may be those who believe in the Christ with all their hearts, who are ready to march out in the face of any sort of infidelity, and with a courage befitting a follower of our Lord, boldly announce faith in the Crucified One. Let me ask, why not do that tonight? If you are conscious of having done a wrong, or even by negligence failed to do the right, heaven calls upon you to repent of every sin, and resolve, by the grace of God, to turn from such. Won’t you this night sanctify your lips by making public confession of Him who is the Son of God? Then I bid you duplicate the very experience of those three thousand by walking down into the waters of baptism and, in the name of the Sacred Three, be buried with Him, and arise to walk in newness of life. Thereafter, live faithful and true, and by and by he will transport you into the blissful peace for which humanity sighs.

3.03 - CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

CHRIST ON DAVID’S THRONE

Perhaps 2,500 people are now in the auditorium and I assure you that it is all encouragement to see you present at this noon service.

I spoke to you last night regarding the establishment of that institution promised by the Christ. I want us now to study the proposition as to whether or not Jesus Christ is reigning on David’s throne. Much depends upon this matter.

I think that the salvation of the world is at stake, for unless Christ Jesus the Lord is crowned at God’s right hand King and Lord the Gentile world is yet without any assurance of sins forgiven. The word "throne" literally means a seat; figuratively, it means royal dominion, kingly authority.

David’s throne was established in the city of Jerusalem, 1047 B.C. On it he sat and swayed the scepter of authority over Israel for thirty-three years, at the end of which time the Bible says (1 Kings 2:12) that "Solomon, his son, sat upon the throne of his father, David." He was followed by his son, Rehoboam, and throughout the reign of twenty-one kings, down to the days of Zedekiah, 587 B.C., they all occupied the literal throne of David in the city of Jerusalem on Mt. Moriah. At the rebellion of Zedekiah, David’s throne was vacated, the children of Israel were carried captive across the Arabian desert, from which they returned 51 years later. David’s throne, then destroyed, lay in ruins for a period of more than 600 years. By and by Christ’s birth was announced on the earth. The angel appeared to his mother, and said, Luke 1:30-33, "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Thirty-three years passed, during which time that matchless, marvelous life spent its force upon the earth. At last he died a felon’s death on the cruel tree, his body was taken and buried in a borrowed tomb, and there he slumbered during the passing of the three days and the three nights, at the end of which he was raised from the dead. Peter standing on Pentecost, announced the first gospel sermon in the name of a risen Lord. In explaining the resurrection he said: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with all oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hades, neither did his flesh see corruption." The climax of that was that God had made that very Jesus both Lord and Christ.

I want to say to you, my friends, that if language has any significance, Peter declared in terms unmistakable and incontrovertible that God Almighty raised up Christ for a definite and specific purpose.

Now there are many things that follow the resurrection of the dead. I understand that the disciples were begotten again unto a lively hope by virtue of this resurrection. I know the Bible says that Christ was declared to be the Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead, etc., but the one specific purpose, the leading thought, the paramount idea, as expressed by the great apostle, was that God raised Christ from the dead to sit on David's throne. May I say to you that, grammatically, "to sit" is all infinitive with the construction of all adverb, carrying the idea of purpose equivalent to the following expanded form, viz.; He raised up Christ that He should sit, that He might sit, for the purpose of sitting upon David's throne. If Christ is not on David's throne, the resurrection might have been deferred until this good hour, or for ages yet to come. If so it be that Christ is not now on David's throne, the Gentiles are yet without God and without hope. In the great council at Jerusalem, James said, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called." The word "tabernacle" means here lineage, descendants, family. David's family had ceased to occupy the throne since the days of Zedekiah, and David's throne literally had remained in ruins from the days of the captivity. From David's family or lineage not one had swayed the scepter of authority, but when Christ comes, as understood by Peter, as announced and declared by James, and in perfect accord with the prophetic declaration of the generations gone by, Christ was raised up of the family, tabernacle, lineage, descent of David to sit upon his throne.

Now for the words of Amos there are evidences and witnesses abundant. On that same occasion Peter said, "Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe." The audience kept their silence and Paul and Barnabas, fresh from their missionary journey, made known to that multitude what God had wrought by their hands among the Gentile world.

James bears witness to the same thing, and hence the tabernacle or lineage of David has been restored. Now I want you to watch the purpose of it all, viz., "that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles." That the Gentiles as well as the rest of men might seek after the Lord.

It follows, then, my friends and brethren, that if the lineage of David has not been restored upon his throne, the Gentiles are not privileged to seek after the Lord. Until Christ dies, comes forth triumphant from the dead and makes his glorious ascent to the throne of God, where he is crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the middle wall of partition still stands, and the Gentiles are not privileged to seek after the Lord.

Now I grant you David's throne is no longer on the hill of Mt. Moriah, it is no longer a literal, material affair of earth. Such all idea seems to me to dishonor God, and to rob Christ of the very glory that I believe was to Him granted by his triumph over the powers of the hadean world. In Psalms 89:35-39, it is said: "I will not He unto my servant David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Hence the throne of David was transferred from the literal Mt. Moriah in the city of Jerusalem unto the right hand of God. When the powers of the hadean world were

overcome and the bars of death were burst asunder, Christ came forth, bade good bye to his disciples and, "a cloud received him out of their sight." Heavenward was he borne, and as he neared the portals of eternal glory the angelic hosts said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." Inquiry came from the further shore, "Who is the King of Glory?" and the immediate response was, "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in."

Daniel had a vision 600 years before Christ. He said, "I saw in the night visions, and one like unto the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him." Now note—that does not declare that one like unto the Son of man came from the Ancient of Days, but Daniel saw him as he came to the Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days was none other than God almighty to whom Christ was borne by the clouds. Daniel then said after he had come to the Ancient of Days, "there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is all everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It seems to me that such passages ought to settle this matter to all who take God at his word and believe what he says.

I verily believe that Christ rose from the dead, that he ascended to the Father, that he was crowned King of Kings and was seated on David’s throne which had been transferred to the right hand of God. Hence when Peter came to climax that matchless sermon on Pentecost, he said, "Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, [let them believe confidently] that God hath made that same Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." In Hebrews 8:1 we have these words, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such all high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord Pitched and not man." In Psalms 110:4, there is this: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Hence Christ began his reign as priest, and likewise as king, at the right hand of God Almighty. And with these words agrees the sentiment of Paul in that matchless sermon on the resurrection from the dead when he said in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

You who read the Bible understand that back under the law of Moses, when the harvest time had come, the obligation was to go out and gather in the first sheaves, the first ripe grain, bring it, wave it in the presence of God, and offer it upon the altar as a pledge, as a guaranty that the entire crop would be gathered in. And just as certainly as these first fruits were brought, it put the Jews under obligation to see to it that there was a gathering of the full harvest.

Based upon that Paul said, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of them that slept." It was he who first came forth triumphant from the confines of the tomb. As the first fruits He has placed himself upon the altar of God. His resurrection is a solemn, sacred pledge, and a genuine guarantee that all of the rest of the human family will be taken from the graves, the sepulchers will be robbed of their victims, and all be brought at last unto the presence of God. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As through Adam all of us pass unconditionally and universally down to the realm of the tomb, so in Christ unconditionally

and universally shall all come forth, "But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

You ask, friends, how is death to be destroyed. There is but one possible way, and that is by the triumph of the resurrection. Jesus Christ at God's right hand, reigning on David's throne, swaying the scepter of authority over the destinies of men, will continue that dominion and reign until the last enemy shall have been put under his feet. Christ's reign will not be completed until the graves are empty, the sepulchers are robbed, and the tombs give forth their victims. Then the saints will shout, "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" Then will Jesus deliver up the kingdom to the Father who shall be all and in all, while Christ will take his place as our elder brother.

Friends, if I did not believe that, I would be this morning among those that are most miserable. I really and truly believe that the possibility of the existence of the church of Christ demands His reigning today over the house of spiritual Israel. The breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile demanded the death of Christ and the opening of the door of faith. It demanded his reign on David's throne. To Him as my king at God's right hand, I gladly acknowledge allegiance. I can share that devotion with no other of whom I have ever read. I propose to march under but one flag, and no other banner is to me known save that of Prince Immanuel, our only potentate, our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Hence when He speaks I trust that I may ever have a disposition to say, "thy servant heareth," and when He bids me move, I hope ever to maintain that disposition, to walk in the light of His suggestions, and to rely upon His promise.

Friends, it is a great privilege today, a wonderful opportunity that you and I can be called out of darkness and be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, wherein there is fullness and joy, joy supreme, and bliss Divine, unspeakable, and unthinkable by mortal man. The privileges of that very promise are based upon the word and the authority of our governing, ruling, reigning King today.

I wonder if there are those in this audience who have never yet bowed in subjection to His kingly authority? Are there any of you who have never yet given yourselves to Him? If there are, I beg of you to obey Him now. We have no abiding city here. We are but transient actors upon the stage of life, and our stay here is ephemeral in its nature. Has there ever come one single, solemn thought ringing through your soul that you must soon pass away from this earthly realm? Will you not therefore think seriously, soberly, candidly, and decide to give yourself to Him while you may? We bid you come.

3.04 - CHURCH HISTORY OF FIRST CENTURY

CHURCH HISTORY OF FIRST CENTURY

I read from Acts 1:1-8 : "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus? of all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom of Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

I have spoken to you regarding the institution established by the Christ on the memorable Pentecost. I want to further the study of that organization, as it is revealed in the New Testament during the first century. The Church is that spiritual realm over which Christ reigns as head, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells. It had its origin in the city of Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, in the year 33. There the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and thus the body became a living organization known as the Church of God or pillar and support of the truth. On the very day of its inauguration there were Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven assembled. On that day about 3,000 souls became obedient unto the truth, and those were by Jesus Christ added to the one body of which He is the supreme head. The second sermon of which we have a record was preached also by Peter on the porch of the temple, at the end of which the record states that the number of men came to be about 5,000, to say nothing of the women, and all those who were able to understand.

Upon the persecution of Stephen, all of the disciples, except the apostles, were scattered abroad, and they went everywhere preaching the Word. That is a general statement suggestive of the idea that they had caught the significance and the spirit of the church they loved. They understood full well that it was a great missionary institution. They remembered that Christ had said back in Matthew 13:33, that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.

They understood, as stated in Acts 1:8, that they were to be witnesses both in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

I stop to call attention to this thought—that the church planted at a certain place as a center, was to radiate its influence from there in every direction. You will note that it first began in Jerusalem. The next field was Judea; the next Samaria; the next was Galilee; and then to the uttermost parts

of the earth. And observe the fact that these Christians at the beginning were filled with such fervor, ambition and love for the truth that they prepared themselves as best they could, and were willing to go everywhere, not preaching their opinion, nor their vain philosophies, nor speculative conceptions, but the record says they preached the word. This was the very thing that was ordered to be preached throughout the passing of the years. In the presence of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul bade Timothy do the same thing. A more solemn charge or a more sacred thought was never delivered to mortal man, nor clothed in human tongue.

These disciples, therefore, left their homes, were scattered abroad, and went everywhere preaching the Word. The history of their further labors is not given, and the wonderful results that were achieved are not specifically stated. The writer of the Book of Acts begins in the very next verse, Acts 8:5, and gives a detailed account of one of that number, who went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

Friends, that wasn't another gospel, nor a different idea. They were all out preaching the Word, and when it is declared that Philip preached Christ, it is but a synonymous term, indicative of the very same idea. The result of that preaching is mentioned in this connection. In Acts 8:12, it is said: "And when the Samaritans believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." But to further the story, not long thereafter all angel of the Lord appeared to Philip while at Samaria, and said to Philip: "Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert."

He arose and went. The result was that he preached Jesus to the secretary of the treasury of Queen Candace's government. The effect of the sermon was that this man, having heard the gospel, believed it, acknowledged the Christ as the Son of God, went down into the water, and was baptized, after which he arose and went on his way rejoicing.

Next the record tells us that Peter went to the city of Lydda, and there healed Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years. From there he went to Joppa, and raised Tabitha or Dorcas, whose friends had washed her body and laid her in all upper chamber.

Peter then went up the coast from Joppa northward for thirty miles to old Caesarea, and there opened the door of faith to the Gentile world. The record declares that some of the disciples who were scattered abroad had gone as far as Phenice. Others had carried the Word to the Island of Cyprus, sixty miles from the mainland, and yet others had gone as far as Antioch, 300 miles north of the city of Jerusalem. This Antioch became likewise a center from which there radiated the greatest missionary activities the world has ever known.

Paul and Barnabas, together with John Mark, set out from the city of Antioch by way of Seleucia, the seaport, to the Isle of Cyprus, preaching at Salamis and Paphos. Here they turned northward a distance of 170 miles to Asia Minor. There they established churches, and caused men and women to be inducted into the family of God. A second journey, and likewise a third, was undertaken, and thus the gospel sped beyond the Aegean Sea, and the banner of the Lord was planted on European soil.

These journeys and efforts resulted in the conversion of thousands. Churches were organized and the commission formerly given was being executed in every land.

Summing up the whole matter, Paul said, in Romans 10:18, "Verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

He wrote to the church at Colosse, and in Colossians 1:23 he has this to say: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven; whereof I, Paul, am made a minister." From such declarations you are not surprised when history says that in the Roman Empire, before the end of the first century, there were more than six million loyal Christians, marching 'neath His royal banner, members of the institution bought with His blood, filled with His spirit, and thus far guided by His counsel.

All optimistic spirit prevails thus far, and it would look as if by and by all humanity would be gathered into this number.

But, my friends, in this expectation there is a disappointment. Long before the first century closed, the great apostasy was seen and predicted. Paul, in writing to the brethren at Thessalonica, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, said this: "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, he said: "The mystery of iniquity cloth already work."

Friends, when Paul gave that solemn charge to Timothy, which was possibly the last thing he ever penned, he said, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."

We may wonder why all this? Hear the reason.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

It has not remained for the twentieth century to discover people who would not bear or endure sound doctrine. Long before the first century was brought to a close, and in a short while, comparatively, after Jesus Christ was crowned at God's right hand, there was a tendency on the part of some who were members of the body of Christ, who had named the name of the Lord, to justify the prophecy of the apostle when he said, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." To be perfectly frank with you, I used to think that Paul had in mind other people than those of whom we read in the Bible. But when I took a second thought, and realized that no such bodies as those which I had in mind then existed, I was forced to the conclusion that he had reference to members of the Church of God who would become tired, grow weary with the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus, and allow their minds to be corrupted by fabulous stories of men.

He said again (1 Timothy 4:1): "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing Spirit?, and doctrines of devils."

So, friends, while the gospel started with colors flying, multiplied souls responding to the call, and missionaries going hither and thither all over the land preaching the Word of life eternal, and of joys supreme, it wasn't long until this spirit of apostasy began to evidence itself in the sacred realms of the body of Christ. Thus I read, in 1 Timothy 1:19, where, concerning faith, some had made shipwreck of the same. It seems to me that no greater calamity can be fancied than the idea

of shipwreck made of a faith that once served as a cable to bind a human vessel unto that anchor, the hope of the soul, cast into the heavenly harbor. With faith shipwrecked and destroyed, this vessel sailing out on the bosom of life severed from the anchor, drifts amid the rocks, upon the reefs, and into ruin, and eternal destruction. To Timothy, Paul said again (2 Timothy 2:16): "But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as cloth a canker; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Brethren, friends, you see that the mystery of iniquity had begun its deadly, hellish work even before apostolic days had ceased to be. The prophets declared that there would be members of the Body of Christ who would not long endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts they would heap unto themselves teachers having itching ears, and from the truth they would turn away unto fabulous stories; that there was certain to be a departure from the faith; that faith would be shipwrecked; and that faith would be overthrown. But that is not all, yet. When Paul bade good-bye to the elders on the coast of Miletus (Acts 20:28), he had this to say, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Friends, the story of the church has been a demonstration of these prophetic declarations. Of course, there are those on the outside, seeking every opportunity, throwing out every kind of attraction, to draw away disciples, but even within the sacred realms of our own number there are men who love not the truth as they should, who rise up as self-appointed leaders, and undertake to draw away disciples after them. Thus is the picture presented in the Book of God. But that is not all. There was a special warning given Timothy when it is said (1 Timothy 4:16), "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

Let me tell you, friends, it is no child’s play to live the Christian life. It is not a little fly-up-the-branch matter or flippant affair, to launch your campaign for eternity. It is not a careless, slipshod, happy-go-lucky sort of way that enables us to keep in the straight and narrow path. I must take heed to myself, and to the doctrine, and to see to it that I continue in them, with the hope of saving both myself and those that hear me. Hence I am admonished, as was Timothy, to hold fast the form of sound words. I must let no uncertain sound emanate. I am to speak as the oracles of God direct. Let me remember that "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." No longer are we to speak the language of Ashdod, and by our very speech betray a lack of familiarity, and a lack of appreciation of the oracles of God.

Paul told Titus that elders should hold fast the faithful word, as they have been taught, that they may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

These passages indicate and imply the possibility of a doctrine described by some other word than "sound." I am persuaded to think that there are far too many who seek to satisfy the world and to tickle the ears of audiences. Too many are they who are exceedingly careless and indifferent

toward the importance of holding fast the form of sound words—speaking sound doctrine.

Again Paul bade Titus to speak the things that become sound doctrine, to be grave, sober, honest and perfectly sincere. In Galatians 1:7-9, Paul said, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or all angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Then to give double emphasis, and add force "hereunto, repetition is made in the next verse, when he said, "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed."

Friends, I might have been able to prepare some LECTURES worthy of the name, to come to your city, and to entertain you by the presentation of fancied stories. But I am conscious of the fact that woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel of the Son of God. "Whosoever goes beyond, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come unto you any bringing not this doctrine, receive him not unto your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that bideth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Just before John pronounced the final benediction and dropped from weary fingers the pen of inspiration, he gave this final warning: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." My friends, there should be in this country a greater reverence for Jehovah, a greater and more profound respect for His word, and a higher regard for that church bought by the blood of His Son. The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be improved upon by modern evangelism. All the multiplied powers and fancies of men combined with all the philosophy and ingenuity of the most subtle of earth will never be able to offer a substitute for the simplicity of God’s power unto salvation. And when the sands of life beneath our feet begin to slip away, there is but one thing that will serve as a foundation on which our holiest desires and our fondest hopes can rest. Let us build upon the Rock, Jesus Christ our Lord, believe what He says, obey His commands, and trust Him for the fulfillment of his promises.

I have related to you the story of the New Testament Church as revealed in the Bible. The first century closed with the Book of God completed. Paul said, "All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

Christians believe that. Infidels repudiate it. Christians accept that without any addition; from it they dare not subtract.

Because I believe this statement, I accept no creed but the Bible, no confession of faith but the Word of God, no church ritual or rule of faith or practice other than that which is given by inspiration.

I believe that every scripture spoken of God through man is inspired, that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and there lives not a man in

this city who can fancy one thing humanity needs that is not provided for in one of these four statements. Hence the man of God is thoroughly equipped unto every good work. Whatsoever, therefore, is not incorporated in the Bible, whatsoever is not found upon its pages, is not the good work referred to in that connection. But again, 2 Peter 1:3, "According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." With such statements Christians bow at the feet of Jesus, and accept the Bible as complete. They seek neither to revise it, nor to amend it in any way. They place one hand upon Genesis and the other upon Revelation, and gladly say, "Lord, I accept it all." In this historic study you have doubtless observed that only one body is mentioned, viz., the church built by Christ.

I come now, at the close of this talk, to insist upon your membership in this institution. I want you to become a member of the body of the Lord. I want you to forsake the world, to renounce your allegiance to his satanic majesty, and to flee to the outstretched arms of Him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest to your souls." My friends, this is the only hope. Infidels may ridicule the church of the Bible. They may speak lightly of the blood of Christ. They may sneer, ridicule, blaspheme, and pronounce every sort of scorn against it, but with scarcely all exception, in the time of trouble, and the hour of death, they seek some crumb of comfort and some ray of hope from the words of life eternal. But the man who dies in the Lord must live in Him, and to live in Him you have to be initiated into that realm. Hence the purpose of this meeting is, if possible, to beget within you a faith in the gospel, to induce you to accept His terms, obey His commandments, and stand upon His promises until Life’s dream shall have passed. If this you do, you can lean upon His arm and be transported across the stream we call death, and at last be initiated into the grandeurs and glories that shall burst upon your enraptured vision in fairer fields and brighter climes. If that be your desire, if you have given it the proper consideration, I want you to come down the aisle and give me your hand, while you give God your heart.

Chapter 62

3.05 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECCLESIASTICISM

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECCLESIASTICISM In the study of the New Testament church every one certainly knows that it had officers, known as elders and deacons. I purpose tonight the study of the Development of Ecclesiasticism on the earth. It is purely all historic affair. But little in the Bible is said regarding it. The prophetic finger pointed to the departure from the truth and to a disposition to follow the ways of man. According to the New Testament, each congregation was to have elders and deacons.

Hence, in Titus 1:5, Paul said: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city."

I call your attention to the fact that there was a plurality of elders in every city therein mentioned. But to make the matter a little more specific and definite, we are told, in Acts 14:23, that when Paul and Barnabas had passed throughout Asia they ordained elders in every church.

Looking out upon the world and observing the hand of uninspired man in directing the affairs of the churches of this country, one must be impressed with the wonderful contrast between human organizations and the church about which he reads in the Bible. In all that sacred volume there is no such thing as one elder having authority over several churches. Not simply once or twice, but every time the matter is mentioned in the Bible, it is always a plurality of elders to each individual congregation. That, of itself, evidences to us just how things have drifted from the original pattern, and from the ancient order of things.

These elders were to have authority, exercise dominion, and to feed the Church of God. Hence Paul said (Acts 20:28-30) to the elders of the church of Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all of the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

There is a wonderful responsibility resting upon the elders, bishops, pastors, overseers of the Church of God. One of the qualifications of all elder is that he must be apt to teach. Unfortunately, some of them are apt to do most anything, because at the very beginning of ecclesiastical history, elders were not content to abide by the Word of God. They felt the responsibility resting upon them, and sought to make the church a prominent institution. They looked about and saw the pagan worship of the day. Many things about it appealed to their human nature, and step by step, they imitated, followed after these things and endeavored to adorn the Church of Christ, and the doctrine of God, by introducing some of the pagan features. There were things in the pagan religion that appealed to the young of the church—things which were harmless per se. The Lord had never positively said: "Thou shalt not so do," therefore, acting upon the broad principles of liberty and of sanctified common sense, they introduced a number of things borrowed into their own worship.

Another thought came to them as they looked around about. They said, "Here are a number of worldly influences, things that appeal, that attract, that sway and move men. Why not as a congregation capitalize these affairs, and thus utilize worldly influences for the advancement of the cause?" Basing the whole upon mere human reason, they saw no fault in such a procedure, and thus another departure was made. But there was another step. They fancied that if the time could ever come when they could get a Christian emperor on the throne, and thus line up the influence of the civil governments and matters political with the church, all things would move along with greater strides, and more rapid progress. Toward the beginning of the second century all idea entered the minds of some that the membership of the church should be divided. Hence, two classes were suggested, and ere long the clergy and the laity became two separate and distinct bodies. Of course, the Bible knows nothing about such a procedure, neither does it recognize any such distinction among the people of God. May be you might be able to read about lying members in the church, but I think you will never find anything about the lay members. The idea that preachers were created out of a different kind of soil, and to them special recognition ought to be given, comes not from the Book of God. And yet that appeals to many preachers. They want some distinction by which they can be separated from their fellows, and unless they can get some title, the world never would find out that they are a whit better than anybody else. And now it has come about that you are discourteous unto any preacher if you just address him as, for instance, "Brother Srygley." The world wants to say "Dr. Srygley," "Reverend Srygley," and even "Parson Srygley." Now, their objective is to do the man a favor and all honor, but in so doing they go beyond anything in the Bible. I have had people call me "Dr. Hardeman." I am not a doctor. I am not "Reverend Hardeman." That word is found only once in all the Bible, Psalms 111:9. "Holy and reverend is thy name." God’s name is reverend. N. B. Hardeman’s name is not. Some folks call me "Elder Hardeman." I am not all elder, neither in years nor in any official way. I am not a pastor. "Well," someone says, "what are you?" I am just N. B. Hardeman, and if I can manage to live so that my brethren can conscientiously extend their hand and call me "Brother Hardeman," I want no greater title.

I believe that the time is not in the future, but now, when we ought to take cognizance of matters of this kind, for such surely evidences a lack of regard for the Word of God, and a plain violation of that statement which says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." But the clergy, in the course of time, felt as if the whole responsibility were resting upon them. They took charge of the churches and thought that the only approach to God was through them. In the course of time, they assumed the relation of the old Jewish priests, and not many moons passed thereafter until every church had its priest to direct its affairs. This, of course, is unknown to the Book of God. But that is not all. In the Bible the word bishop is used as a synonym for elder. It came to represent the chairman of the board of elders, and thus assumed a meaning nowhere allowed by inspiration. But a system is developing and this is one of the steps leading away from the ancient order.

Man has always believed in organization. He feels that nothing can be accomplished unless men organize, legislate, draft a platform, adopt rules, bylaws and regulations. Hence, in the different localities, a number of churches blended together in what we would call a kind of district association, and over such there was placed one of these bishops.

Watch another step—when the several districts in one vicinity had been organized, over which there was a bishop, then, of course, other districts were organized in other sections with other

bishops presiding. When all the districts in the province were thus organized, the next step was the blending of all the districts throughout the state or province under one head.

Now the next question was, "Who will be the head of this enlarged program?" The demand created another term which you have for the first time. The word "archbishop," or higher bishop, was thus applied. This ecclesiastical official had dominion over the province or state as a whole. The province was thus first divided into districts, over which a bishop reigned, then all the districts in the provinces were blended together, over which there reigned the archbishop. Finally all the provinces were thus organized and the next question was, Who shall be head of all the provinces or states in our country? These must, of course, be put under one authority and blended into a unit. This step was a short one. You are introduced to another term as strange to the Bible as any matter you can fancy. You ask, "What is it?" The word "cardinal" is applied to him who becomes head of each nation. The cardinals are appointed by the pope and are his ambassadors. The pope selects the cardinals and they in turn select the pope. There are now about seventy cardinals and half of these must remain in the country of Italy.

Watch the steps thus far taken. For the individual congregation the clergyman becomes a priest; for the district congregations the bishop becomes the head; the archbishop sways the scepter over the various districts of each state; and the cardinal exercises dominion of the states of each nation. Anybody can see the next step. The last question was, Why not go ahead and consummate the whole affair, and bring under one jurisdiction, and one authority, all the nations of the earth? That step was taken, and, therefore, a man was placed at the head of the whole religious world. From the birth of Christ upon the earth, we have drifted in history over six hundred years, until in the year 606 A.D., Boniface III was designated pope by the Emperor Phocus, who himself was a murderer and all adulterer. Back of the year 606, neither in the Bible nor out of it, can any man find where any soul on this earth was ever styled pope, and yet our intelligence is insulted by some peoples' suggesting that Peter was the first of that type. The Bible knows nothing about it. History fails to record it. And six hundred years pass, during which time all literature, either sacred or profane, was, and is still, as silent as the glittering stars, or the sacred city of the dead. But what have you seen? The development of all ecclesiasticism with reference to the administration or executive functions thereof. Who are the officials now, and over whom do they reign? The individual congregation has its priest, developed out of a pastor or the clergy. The district, with Its narrowed territory, has a bishop over it in a different sense from the word "bishop" as used in the Bible. The districts blended together in the province or in the states have a higher authority unto whom the smaller caliber are amenable, viz., the archbishop. These in turn are under the cardinals, appointed directly by the pope. The cardinals, of course, are under the pope, who sits today in the Vatican as the Holy See, as the viceregent of God, and the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth.

But, friends, all of this is as foreign to the simplicity of the ancient order of things as daylight is from midnight darkness. Not one syllable, not one iota, not anything that looks like a distant relative to all imitation of a thing of that kind is found in all God's Book, from beginning to end. Had the elders, God-appointed and heaven-approved, been faithful, loyal and true to the teachings of Jesus Christ, this world would have been free from that great curse which has fastened itself upon it in the form of a hierarchy, or all ecclesiasticism, remote and strange to Holy Writ.

Right along with this administrative department you may expect other things equally as strange, and hence a system of doctrine likewise begins to develop. In the recitation of these things, I am not reading to you from the Bible. I am not giving you chapter and verse in God's Book. I have the best reason on earth for not doing it, and that reason is that the Bible knows nothing about the various things thus mentioned. But I can give you uninspired history and cite you to that which is authentic and undeniable.

I now call attention to the development of those strange, unique doctrines, which have become common, and which many good people accept as if they were of Divine origin.

Holy water—a water said to be especially blessed and sanctified by the priest—was first introduced in the year 120. Whence its origin? The apostles never heard of it. The Bible knows nothing of it. Heaven's will had been revealed and the pen of inspiration had been dropped from weary fingers before such all idea was born on the earth.

What else? The next thing peculiar was the introduction of the idea and the doctrine of penance, the infliction of punishment, the subjection to physical agony, and to physical pain, in order that one might expiate his own sins, and thus claim redemption from wrong done. When did the world first learn anything of penance? In the year 157. Back of that time such a thing was unknown, either in the Bible or out of the Bible.

Again, there is such a thing upon the earth now as Latin mass. What does it mean? Whence its origin? Did the apostles know anything about it? Did Christ ever say one word regarding it? Did the Holy Spirit make mention of anything that even smacked of its nature? Of course not. Latin mass had its genesis upon this earth in the year 394.

Well, what then?

I have heard quite a bit about the doctrine of extreme unction. I am sure that I have read every word of the Bible, and I hesitate not to say that this is also a stranger to the Book of God. The man who speaks as the oracles of God, who holds fast the form of sound words, and is careful regarding sound speech knows nothing about these peculiar doctrines of purely human origin.

Extreme unction was first announced to mortal man in the year 588. From that time till now, it has been, by some, administered to those thought to be in immediate danger of death.

Next comes the doctrine of purgatory in 593. But it came not from the Bible or inspiration. I learned about it out of the Bible, and a long way out. The year 593 A.D. marks the date when first purgatory was mentioned as a religious idea. But what does it mean? It suggests that those who died unprepared and without hope, may be freed from the agonies of torment in which they are writhing by the payment to the priest of a sufficient sum of money. My friends, money extracted by such a means has been used to build magnificent cathedrals and edifices in the heart of various cities, and these attract the attention of passersby. We are made to wonder at the great liberality of those who endorse it. Oh, it is not so much liberality, but it is the sale of that concerning which the people are deluded and blinded.

But, further, if you go to the city of Rome and desire all interview with the pope, you first approach his secretary, tell who you are, where you came from, and the kind of interview you want. If, after you stand and wait a long, long time, all audience is at last granted, you must get down on bended

knees, and approach his August presence as he sits in front of a window, with the light coming from his rear, glittering upon your face. There he will extend his hand, and let you kiss the ring. On other occasions he will extend the toe of the right foot, and bid you to pay proper homage and make due acknowledgment.

I always thought quite a bit of President Roosevelt. I admired him because of his courage and of his ability to make up his mind without having to stop and ask what public sentiment was. It is said of him that, while on a visit to the city of Rome, he was asked if he would like to see the pope, and, knowing the ungodly formality through which one would have to pass in order to do that, he rose to the height of all American citizen, and said, "To hell with the pope!" Of course, I would not say that, but "them's my sentiments." When was such a thought as kissing the toe of the pope introduced? Not until the year 709. As a tourist enters At. Peter's cathedral, the most magnificent church structure on the face of the earth, the great porphyry stone whereon emperors once stood while the pope placed the crown upon their brow and formally introduced them into office, is first pointed out. Then a guide takes him a step further to the right, and upon a pedestal he sees a great bronze statue representing the apostle Peter. There he sits with a crown upon his head, a large ring of keys in his hand, and his bare right foot extended. The toes of it have been literally kissed away.

I chanced to stand there once and watch the passersby who believed in such lean over the golden rail, and imprint a kiss upon the bronze toe of this gigantic figure.

Poor deluded souls, ignorant of the Word of God, blinded and deceived by the commandments of men.

Those who believe in things I have mentioned have always had quite a bit of trouble about the Lord's Supper. Throughout a long period of departure from the ancient order they were disturbed, and in the year 1000, the doctrine of transubstantiation was first announced. What do they mean by this? It is their idea now that, by the prayer and the power of the pope, the bread and the fruit of the vine are mystically changed into the literal body and the literal blood of the Son of God. They believe that there is a literal, actual change of substance, and hence the word Transubstantiation. But remember that no one ever dreamed of such until about the year 1000.

Well, then what? The priests decided that it was the proper thing for them to practice celibacy, another term unknown to the Bible that is, they will not marry. They want us to call them "fathers," but they do not aim to marry. Now you, my good friends, can do just as you please about that, but I, for one, do not intend to do anything of the kind. Let me say to you tonight, that I propose to be courteous and polite, but I would knowingly violate God's positive straightforward command if I were guilty of addressing any man on earth, religiously and officially by the term "father." In the last address our Lord ever made (Matthew 23:9), he said to the disciples: "Call no man your father which is upon this earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." And allow me to say that the original of the word Father is that from which we get the word pope. Therefore God says to Hardeman, and all others, do not call any man "pope." I do not care, my friends, if a man does have his collar turned hind part before, I do not aim to call him "father." Were he to come to my home, I would treat him kindly and courteously. I would speak to him and of him as Mr. So-and-So, but I do not propose to slap Jesus Christ squarely in the face and directly speak the opposite of that which he has prohibited and positively forbidden. When did this idea of celibacy ever come into the minds of men? In the year 1015. Back of that, no such a thought was ever dreamed of. But

I am not surprised at it because Paul said to Timothy, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing Spirit?, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; and having their conscience seared as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry," etc. But this is not all. There was introduced in the year 1190 the doctrine of indulgences. If I wanted to go into business in Nashville, or anywhere else in Tennessee, and could get people to believe the doctrine of indulgence, I could make more money than any corporation or firm in your city. What does that mean? You just pay the priest so much and he will give you a night off to paint things red and to have a high old time. Pay the sum demanded and you can gratify every passion, satisfy every lust, and revel in all of your physical appetites to your heart's content.

Mosheim says: "The general prevalence of ignorance and superstition was dexterously, yet basely improved, by the rulers of the church, to fill their coffers, and to drain the purses of the deluded multitude; indeed, each rank and order of the clergy had a peculiar method of fleecing the people. The bishops, when they wanted money for their private pleasures, or for the exigencies of the church, granted to their flock the power of purchasing the remission of the penalties imposed upon transgressors, by a sum of money, which was to be applied to certain religious purposes; or, in other words, they published indulgences which became all inexhaustible source of opulence to the episcopal orders, and enabled them, as is well known, to form and execute the most difficult schemes for the enlargement of their authority, and to erect a multitude of sacred edifices, which augmented considerably the external pomp and splendor of the church. The abbots and monks, who were not qualified to grant indulgences, had recourse to other methods of enriching their convents. They carried about the country the carcasses and relics of the saints in solemn procession, and permitted the multitude to behold, touch and embrace at fixed prices, these sacred and lucrative remains. The monastic orders often gained as much by this rare show as the bishops did by their indulgences."

Again, you have heard about auricular confessions. If you have ever been to any cathedrals, you have observed that there are little booths all along in them. On the inside there sits a priest. On the outside there comes a poor deluded soul and approaches this little booth, kneels down by the side, draws aside a little curtain over all opening, and pours into the ear of the priest within all his secret thoughts and every sin of which he may have been guilty. He arises and passes out believing that all sins have been forgiven when, as a matter of fact, you and I know that no such thing has been done. The man on the inside can no more forgive sins than you or I. There is not a syllable of truth in such a claim. The blood of Jesus Christ alone can cleanse from sin, and that wonderful blood has never been delegated unto any man that today walks the face of God's green earth. But when did such all idea first appear? Not until the year 1215. And so, the wonderful system, step by step, grew as the exigencies of the hour demanded.

What next? In the year 1311, at the Council of Ravenna, the Western branch of this ecclesiasticism adopted the practice of sprinkling for baptism. Up to that time I grant you that sprinkling had been practiced from the year 251 in cases of sickness, and on special occasions. But as a practice, as a doctrine, as the polity of the Western branch of that ecclesiasticism, sprinkling was not adopted until the year 1311. Of course, you know the Greek Catholics have never practiced sprinkling, but from the very beginning of their existence until now, they have practiced immersion.

You ask, ladies and gentlemen, any of the Roman branch what does the word baptizo, the original form, mean. There is not a scholar among them but will tell you it means to immerse, to bury, to submerge, to overwhelm, to cover up. Then you naturally follow with the question, "Why don't they do it?"

Here is the reason. Catholics claim that they are all infallible body. When the pope and his cardinals assemble and deliberate upon a matter, and render their verdict, such becomes to them infallible. Hence, if you grant the infallibility of the pope, then you must accept the idea that sprinkling is a satisfactory way of administering the sacred rite. But the strange thing to me is that people, in this country, who repudiate and ridicule the idea of infallibility, have borrowed from no higher source than the Catholic edict the practice of sprinkling for baptism and do it in the name of Christ. Bear in mind that God never commanded it; Christ never authorized it; the Holy Spirit never sanctioned it. Such a practice and such a doctrine is purely of human origin. Water and nothing but water was never sprinkled on anything, for any purpose, in all the ages, by the authority of God. It took six hundred years for the development of the administrative part— the executive part' of this great ecclesiasticism.

It required 1,300 long years for the development of doctrine perfected and complete. But with the passing of these years and a few minor changes in doctrine and practice that have been made since, the system has fastened itself upon the earth. There is about it scarcely a vestige of that simplicity that characterized the Jerusalem church.

There is one thing peculiar to Catholicism, and that is this: it is unlike any other church or body known. I would be absolutely unable to name a definite person that began it. I could not tell you the specific date of its origin. Neither could I put my finger upon any page in history wherein is recorded the definite, and specific place.

Catholicism did not spring into existence overnight. It IS the development of a departure from the Word of God, until it stood forth exercising dominion and claiming authority not only in matters religious, but likewise in civil affairs as well. In the year 728, there was granted the jurisdiction over civil authorities to the pope of Rome. And he-was the supreme head, not only of the church, but of civil affairs, until the good year of 1870. At that time he was shorn of the temporal government, but now has the monumental gall and the colossal cheek to demand of the Duce of Italy a recognition of temporal powers.

Friends, if Catholicism had its way tonight, it would hold in the very grasp of its hand, not only religious, but like wise civil government as well. To that end every fiber of its being and every pulsation of its heart is consecrated. This ecclesiasticism is purely of human origin. It is human in origin; it is human in doctrine; it is human in practice. The best definition that I could render of such a hierarchy would be to say that it is a mixture of Judaism, paganism and Christianity. Take a small part of the latter, more of the former two, blend them together in proper proportions, and the result is that institution, that organization, that ecclesiasticism, that threatens, tonight, possibly more than we know the religious and likewise the civil liberties of our land.

Any devout member thereof who pays his allegiance to the power that sits in the Vatican, and who has taken upon himself the Catholic oath, has, perhaps, a higher regard for it than he would for all oath to support the constitution of the United States of America. A great danger threatens this

country unless religious forces come out from things that smack of such characteristics, cut loose from human organizations, and that which pertains to ecclesiasticism, and earnestly endeavor to restore upon this earth the ancient order of things. My friends, I have come to your good city to call upon you to flee from such matters that are purely human in every phase, and feature. I am glad to tell you that there is a church founded by Jesus Christ, bought by His blood, filled with His spirit, and guided by His counsel. The terms of initiation into it are such that you and I can easily understand them. I pray God that you may be willing to obey them, and then to stand upon his everlasting promise. If you understand these terms, and have a disposition to accept them, I am glad once more to extend the gospel call. Put your trust in Jesus Christ; earnestly and truly repent of every sin; publicly confess your faith in the crucified one and obey him in the sacred ordinance of baptism. If such you will do and ever thereafter live faithful to him, heaven will be your home.

3.06 - CATHOLIC CHURCH OF 16TH CENTURY

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF 16TH CENTURY

"I think no one recognizes more fully -than I do the wonderful responsibility that now rests upon me. In a great concourse of people like this impressions are certain to be made. Should I make the wrong one, or be guilty, knowingly, of misstating any fact which would be detrimental or injurious to any living soul, I am certain that God would hold me accountable.

These talks for a few nights are purely historical in their nature. I am exceedingly careful to make only such declarations as are found in our public libraries, taught in the history department of our colleges, and founded upon authentic records. I want to assure you that regarding any individual I have nothing whatsoever unkind to say. I deal, therefore, with doctrines and practices rather than with any individual.

I propose a further study of the Catholic church with special reference to the status of affairs at the beginning of the 16th century. I did not write the history of this organization. I think it I' not unkind to them for me to study what they have written, what they have said, and what history in general reveals as a matter of fact. This audience knows that about the year 1600 there was a culmination of the period known as the Dark Ages. By the close of this period Catholicism had developed from the second and third centuries into such departures as are mentioned in the preceding sermon.

I called your attention to its administrative development, and likewise to the doctrinal points peculiarly characteristic of that body. At the beginning of the 16th century the general status of affairs was as follows: first, every child born on the earth was born physically into the Catholic church. All those grown up were expected, outwardly, at least, to pay their allegiance to this ecclesiasticism, so that Catholicism boasted of a universal, world-wide membership.

Second, the church was operating at this time not by voluntary contributions, or freewill offerings, but by a compulsory tax imposed upon every individual and his property, both real and personal.

Third, the state undertook to enforce obedience on the part of its subjects to the church. It was as great all offense against the civil authorities to violate some order of the church, as it is to make liquor in the city of Nashville. Can you grasp a situation of that kind; with every citizen a member of the church; with taxes imposed upon the people for the support of it; and then the civil authorities back of that religious institution to see that all of its demands are carried into effect? When you think of just such, you marvel not at why all men were held in subjection to this great ecclesiasticism which had been built up, and which had taken possession of the rights and liberties of humanity everywhere, both civil and religious.

I call attention next to the power that had been gained by the head of the church. In the pope were vested all the powers of government. He was the supreme law giver. No law of any sort or kind, passed by any organization or court was worth a continental unless it met the approval of the pope.

He was not only the supreme law-giver, but likewise he was the supreme judge. All matters affecting the happiness, success or progress of humanity, from the smaller details of civil relationship up to the worship of God were subject to him. He was the supreme and the chief administrator of all the laws. One might defy the emperor or other officials, but when the pope pronounced a verdict against any, there was but one of two choices, either bow in subjection to his authority, or suffer whatever penalty might be imposed.

He insisted upon certain temporal rights aside from his religious prerogatives.

It was his to crown every emperor. He could depose all emperor or a king or release a ruler's subjects from their oath of allegiance. He could declare null and void, and forbid the people to obey, a law of any state, if he thought it injurious to the interest of the church. He also claimed financial powers. He charged fees for certain services at Rome, assessed the dioceses throughout the world, and levied a tax—Peter's pence,—upon all Christians.

He exercised dominion not only over all the crowned heads of that land, but it was his to fix the tax and to demand the payment of the same. Temporal power as well as religious had been gained. The first temporal power granted to the pope was in the year 728. He maintained that power down to the year 1870, when at last the people began to rise up in rebellion. But I want to say to you, my friends, it is a part of Catholicism, inseparable from it, for the pope to exercise dominion over the temporal and civil affairs of humanity, just the same as in the religious realm. As evidence of the correctness of that statement I only have to call your attention to the conflict which has been raging in Italy between the pope and the duce as to whether or not temporal power should be granted. If the Catholics could have their way, the pope would be head over all the affairs and relations of man, both civil and religious. With the passing of time and the dawn of a brighter day, there began to arise conflicts between the church and the state. Men will stand for some things a long time, but as Mr. Bryan once said, you can trust the people, ultimately, to work out, from a temporal point of view, their own salvation. The sources of these conflicts were four in number. First: the appointment of high officials. Question: whet has the right to appoint them? They are usually men of power, of wealth and of prominence. Shall the pope appoint them, or shall the emperor? Second: the clergy had grown immensely rich by virtue of the fact that the people were taxed to support the church, and the pope fixed the salary of the clergy. They had grown wealthy, and the question came up: ought the property of the clergy to be exempt from taxation? It had been for a thousand years, but the common people, upon whom the burden of taxation has always been, said this was not right, just or fair, and there was a growing demand for this class to bear its part of the taxation. The emperor said that it should. The pope took the opposite and tried to defend the custom that had prevailed.

Third: shall there continue ecclesiastical courts to take cognizance and to pass judgment upon matters of a civil nature? In all of their trials of a civil and of a domestic sort it had been the custom for the ecclesiastical court to sit in judgment. Emperors and men of the world rose up and said, "Sir, you attend to the religious part; we will attend to the civil affairs." Fourth: how far shall the pope meddle or interfere in the affairs of the state? Now the result of these conflicts, commencing as far back as the 12th century, was that the pope, step by step, was robbed of civil power and temporal authority, and finally, as already stated, when the year 1870 rolled around, there was a complete separation, as much, at least, as was possible, of the state and the church. But popery

makes wonderful claims, sounds out great statements which are impossible to be understood. I will read to you some extracts from history that cannot be doubted—matters that can not be questioned. Old Boniface VIII said this: "We declare, say, define, and pronounce to every human creature that it is altogether necessary to salvation to be subject unto the Roman pontiff." I did not say this. That is what a Catholic pope said. In trying to put the people in subjection to his power, he went so far as to declare that eternal salvation is dependent wholly upon obedience to the Roman pontiff, or to the ecclesiastical head. That is why it is ., friends, that I rebel at such all ungodly rotten doctrine. I think that I have to bow down to no pope, in order to read my titles clear over yonder, and, as all American citizen, I resent such insults to our independence and to our relationship to the God of Heaven.

Well, again, "The pope cannot possibly err in decrees of faith." Think of it. Who said that? Catholics themselves so declared, and if there is any man in Nashville who wants to question the correctness of these statements I can give him the evidence. I respect your intelligence, and I know the scholarship of Nashville. It would be far from me to come into your midst and make a statement that I could not justify from the pages of history.

Well if the pope cannot err, everything that I read in the Bible or anywhere else is absolutely false unless it perfectly corroborates the decree of the pope. Isn't that the limit? But friends I have this observation to present next. The present pope is No. 195 from the first one, Boniface III, 606 A.D. Of that particular type, 196 have occupied the papal chair. But you note some things about that. There have been 29 controversies from the first pope down to the last among Catholics themselves, as to which one was the real pope, and may be that the one who, by sheer power, was ruling, was not really the one, and therefore his fallibility would be demonstrated. But this is not all. There has been a time since the year 606 when for seventy long years no man sat in the papal chair at Rome. What became of affairs during the three score and ten years when the head of humanity upon the earth was absolutely wanting in that city? That is not all yet. At one time since the first, there have been three men, each of them claiming to be pope, and all of them squeezing down in the papal chair, until she burst asunder. That is Catholicism and that is infallibility! Believe it, who can?

I do not believe that Catholic popes are any more wicked or any more immoral than other men, proportionate to number. I would not say that. But because of their claim of infallibility, the very thought that there is wickedness and immorality about them makes it stand out the more prominent~

About 100 years ago in the city of Cincinnati, there was a great debate between Bishop Purcell of the Catholic church, and Alexander Campbell. I think I am saying that which every Catholic would accept when I say that no greater bishop has lived among them than was Bishop Purcell. In that debate Bishop Purcell, himself a Catholic, said this: "Some of the bad popes of Rome are now expiating their sins in the penal fires of hell." That is what he thought about them. I never said as hard a thing about them in my life as that, but if a lot of them were in hell then, what about the last one hundred years? If the proportion holds out, and old Bishop Purcell could speak tonight, he would doubtless add to the number that are thus writhing in agony in the penal fires of hell. My friends, I might continue at length along matters of history like this, but there are some other things that I want to mention in your presence tonight.

Hear it. The very center of Catholic theology is the sacramental system. It is surely the outstanding sacramental church of all the world. There is the antithesis of that. The Church of Christ represents exactly the opposite idea.

I want to say to you that the Church of the Bible is not a church composed of sacraments at all. The Church of Christ believes in none of them, practices none as such. The Catholic church has the very system as its center, and betwixt the two, there reigns denominationalism with more or less of the brand of Catholicism stamped upon it. Denominations, instead of having the seven, as the mother of all ecclesiasticisms formerly announced, have narrowed them down, and claim, some two, some three, and possibly more. Those commonly mentioned in the human creeds and human disciplines, are baptism and the Lord's supper.

"I want you to know that in the Book of God no such terms are used regarding either of these matters. But what do you mean by sacrament? Here is the Catholic definition. 'A sacrament is all outward and visible sign of all inward grace.' " When you begin to read other books, the principles of which are based upon the rankest Catholicism known to the world, you will find similar expressions in the creeds, disciplines, confessions on faith, and church rituals of denominationalism.

Whence came such? I answer, not from the Bible, but from Catholicism itself, the mother of the sacramental system.

Catholics teach that there are seven sacraments. First: baptism. What does it mean to them? They say that baptism cleanses from original sin. Hence every child born into the earth is born in a state of depravity, damned and doomed, unless something is done. Therefore, by baptism alone the baby is freed from a state of depravity and original sin. Baptism, to the Catholic, stripped of all antecedents, cleanses a soul from sin.

You might ask, "Brother Hardeman, do you believe that?" No, I never believed it in my life. Baptism, unless it be preceded by a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a genuine sure-enough repentance of sin, is as a sounding brass or as a clanging cymbal. My brethren have been misrepresented. I will not say intentionally, but nevertheless it has been done. A prejudice has been created by the pronouncement on the part of those who ought to know better that we teach baptism for the remission of sins. My brethren teach no such thing. Gospel preachers teach that baptism, to a penitent bel~ever, is for, in order to, the remission of sins. Stripped of these antecedents, there can be no such thing as scriptural baptism.

"The second sacrament of Catholicism is that which they call confirmation. What do they mean by that? It is the laying on of the hands of the priest, and the conferring of the Holy Spirit by such all act, thereby blending, stabilizing and fixing the member in the ranks of the Catholic faith. The third sacrament by them mentioned is the holy Eucharist. By that they mean the Lord's supper. Why man wants to invent new terms for Bible things is one of the strange ideas of the age, but with paganistic philosophies and phraseologies, he seeks to adorn that simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. Plenty of people today who repudiate Catholicism, speak almost invariably of the institution established by the Christ other than in the simple terms of Hob Writ. My friend, why do you want to do that? Can't you be content to call Bible things by Bible names? Do you think that God made a mistake, and that you can give it a better name than the Holy Spirit, or are you seeking to be wise,

above that which is written? Are you not violating that positive decree which says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"? Why not do that, and thus say to our infidel friends, that you really and truly believe God’s word?

Catholics think that when they come to the Eucharist, the priest, by his words, can change the substance of the bread and the fruit of the vine into the real body and the real blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence they talk about transubstantiation. I do not believe that the priest can any more change things material, outside of the laboratory, than can any other man in all the earth. The fourth sacrament, they style penance. By this they mean that a man guilty of sin must go to a priest in full contrition of spirit, humble himself in his presence, there make to him full confession, and pledge to God never to be guilty of a repetition of that act, and then put himself under the authority of the priest to make any sort of amends that may be demanded. Therefore, he says: "Mr. Pope, speak, impose on me any penalty whatsoever, and if I can satisfy you, it makes no difference what God may think about it." But again, No. 5, is the sacrament of extreme unction —another thing you would never learn of if you had no book but the Bible from which to get the information. What is meant by that? When a soul is subject to all impending crisis, or to immediate danger, either spiritual or physical, the priest comes again, takes the oil and pours upon his head, and thus prepares him for the ordeal through which he is to pass. Why wait till a man gets square up against it, with one foot in the grave and the other, so to speak, upon the proverbial banana peeling? If there be any virtue, and if any praise in it, why not anoint a well man and prevent the danger to which he may be exposed?

Sacrament No. 6, the giving of holy orders. What does that mean? It is a preparation on the part of a young convert, so that he may receive such power as will enable him to perform the sacred rites. He is a candidate, for instance, for a priest. Now then, the older priests, by virtue of their superiority and unusual power, may impose upon the young the ability and the right to administer the things belonging to their system.

"Then Sacrament No. 7 is that which they call matrimony. By it they mean all indissoluble union. The Catholics grant no divorces. I am not disposed to offer words of criticism, but rather words of commendation on that particular tenet and emphatic declaration of the Catholic Church. It matters not with them whether it be but a common couple, or a crowned head; they boldly say, "No!"

Friends, I have in brief outlined to you the salient features of Catholicism as it stood universally triumphant over the affairs of men about 400 years ago. Let me say to you that for a thousand years preceding that time the world was in subjection to this ecclesiastical organization, and during that time the Bible was chained to the pulpit. No man was allowed to see it, to read it, or have contact with its precious truths except the dignitaries of that wonderful organization. The world, therefore, was shrouded in darkness, and the crack of the whip from the powers that be meant for the subjects to march according to the edicts handed down by him who claimed to be infallible, the representative of God, the viceregent of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I am glad to tell you, in advance of succeeding talks, that just about this time, the clouds began to vanish, the glimmering light was seen to burst upon the earth, and the world, religiously and ecclesiastically, was to be privileged to throw aside the shackles, come from underneath the cover, and thus to exercise itself in the thoughts and deliberations that would be accountable and amenable to God alone.

You and I ought to rejoice that we live this side of that period when such a state of religion was covering the face of the earth. The great movement of which this was, possibly, a preparation was soon to burst upon the world—not in all of its fullness, but in great splendor and glory. In this period of infidelity, in this age of worldly wisdom, when good men and good women have announced allegiance to human authority and human organizations, it is all exceeding timely matter for us to think on whither we are drifting; whether or not, we are exalting the Book of God triumphant o'er human creeds and confessions of faith.

It is time, and a challenge comes to every man to rally to that institution of which t~ere is a record on the pages of God's Book. So far as I am concerned, I want membership in no institution concerning which there is not one word or one syllable in all of the Book of God. I want to be nothing, do nothing, practice nothing, that is not as old as the New Testament. When the world shall come to the adoption of that principle, and make it good in concrete application, the very angels of heaven will rejoice, and once more there will reverberate through the eternal regions the glad angelic song, "Peace on earth, and good will to men."

We stand, my friends, in our own light when we are not banded together as a solid phalanx against all human ecclesiasticism. Look into that which I have thus briefly pictured. I am glad to. call upon my friends, those who honor me from time to time with their presence, and ask them, openly and above board, to cut loose from everything except Jesus Christ as their leader, prophet, priest and king. Renounce your allegiance to every flag except the blood-stained banner of Christ Jesus our Lord. Repudiate all booklets, declarations, articles of faith, which you cannot read directly on the pages of God's Book become associated with no institution that does not bear the impress of divinity upon its brow, and the stamp of God's image upon its very heart.

There is a ground big enough, wide enough, and broad enough for every son and daughter of Adam's ruined and recreant race to occupy. In the church which He bought and built we can find our refuge and security.

God demands of us faith in the Christ, real penitence for every sin, the acknowledgment of the Christ with the lips, and all obedience to that commandment which, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit brings us into the promises of life eternal.

I am glad to announce to you the invitation. Come friends, in self-defense. Come not to gratify me. Come not to please any soul on earth, primarily, but come to please God in heaven, and to cause the approving smiles of Him who died for you to rest upon you.

3.07 - THE PRIMACY OF PETER

THE PRIMACY OF PETER

I want to assure you, my friends and brethren, that I fully appreciate the effort you make to come to these noonday services. I realize that it is somewhat of a burden upon you, and especially those of you who have other responsibilities. I think it is a compliment to you, as well as to those who have the meeting directly upon their hearts, that you are so disposed, and have such regard for things sacred as to be willing even to make a sacrifice in order to come. It shows where your hearts are, where your sympathies are, and the things you want to encourage.

I have been studying with you and others, matters historic in nature, for the last two or three addresses. I do this because I want you to know the background of that great movement from humanism back to the ancient order of things. Without this as a setting, I am certain that it will be more difficult to find out what all of our efforts are about.

I want, by this series, the world to see what the Church of Christ has in mind, what it is trying to do, and what its outstanding objective is as a religious institution upon this earth. I further the talks along the line today by announcing that the subject is: The Primacy of the Apostle Peter. I have a little book written by Cardinal Gibbons. The name of it is "The Faith of Our Fathers." It is written by a Catholic of unquestioned authority and sets forth their doctrine in such a simple way that even I can understand it. The very heart and core of Catholicism is, that Peter was the first pope, and upon him the Church of God was built, and to him and his successors all authority has been given. That is the very keystone of the arch of faith in Catholic doctrine. Rob them of that one statement and you have undermined the entire foundation upon which all else, according to their statements, must depend. No Catholic can be found but that will tell you that the foundation of all of his ecclesiastical order and unique position rests upon whether or not Peter was designated by Christ as the foundation of the church. Hence I shall not today discuss any other point at all. The Catholics claim that the church must have a head. I am not disposed to question that statement. But when they say that Peter is the head of it, I am ready to draw swords and to fight it out on that line. The head of the church is Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul said of Him (Ephesians 1:22) that God "hash put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

Again, in Colossians 1:18 it is said, "And Christ is the head of the body which is the church."

There never has been granted to any man on earth the privilege of exercising authority over the Church of Christ. Every congregation known to the Bible is a unit within itself. The autonomy of each individual congregation is as clearly taught in the Book of God as any other one thing therein found. And there is no such thing as a blending, or forming of any kind of all alliance or relationship between one congregation and another. A cooperation is taught in the Bible. Organization other than the individual congregation is unknown to God’s Book. But our Catholic friends rely, as aforesaid, upon Peter’s being the foundation of the church. And they turn to Matthew 16:18, and

read with a degree of confidence, that upon which their main hope must forever rest. That they are wrong with reference to this passage, I think there is not the shadow of a doubt, and the task is mine to examine just what is said. The occasion is that Jesus had taken the disciples from around about the shores of the sea of Galilee northward to the little quiet village of Caesarea Philippi. While there, in a period of retirement and rest, Christ elicited a confession of their faith in His identity, and Peter, with the courage and the boldness that seems to attach to his makeup, said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." In response, Christ pronounced a blessing upon him, and then said: "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." The Catholics say that Christ addressed Peter and said: "Peter, thou art a rock, and upon this rock, upon thee, I will build my church." They think that the second rock refers to Peter. Now, if that be true I am ready to admit the correctness of all their claims and to accept whatever conclusions that would logically follow.

But, friends, somehow or other I can't help but believe that the educated among the Catholics know that they misrepresent the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in the very announcement thus made.

I do not often refer to the Greek language. I know little enough about English, much less trying to expound some other language concerning which I know even less. But there are a few words in the original tongue that I have learned. It is necessary that I speak not in English but in the very language and use the precise word as did the Lord Jesus Christ. He said:

"Thou art Petros" (Petros is a Greek word). That is the word spoken by Christ and referred to as Peter. Thou art Petros. It is a noun of masculine gender. It means a rock or a stone. Now watch. "And upon this petra," a different word, a noun of the feminine gender, "I will build my church."

Friends, did Christ say, "I am going to build my Church upon Petros" or upon "Petra" ~ Now I grant you that is a little bit technical, but it did not occur accidentally. Jesus Christ, intentionally, forbade just such a conclusion as our Catholic friends have drawn, and instead of saying "Thou art Petros, and upon this Petros I will build my Church," he said exactly the reverse. Christ never once said, I will build upon Petros (Peter), but upon this different ord "petra" I will build my church. That settles matters of that kind beyond the shadow of a doubt. Christ was particular to use a different word lest somebody might be so thoughtless as to imagine that he meant to say Peter was the foundation of the church. No such all idea was ever his. Now you ask, what is the difference in the significance of these two words, the root of which is the same? Here it is. Petros means a rock or stone, I grant you, but it has reference to a bit, a fragment, a piece, a part from the mass. Whereas the feminine form of the word means a ledge, a cliff, a mass, a foundation like unto adamant.

I stood in front of Stone Mountain down here in Georgia and saw the workman chiseling out the outline of the Confederacy. At the foot of the mountain was a large collection of the fragments, bits of stone. That would represent Petros, all individual.

Then back of these fragments, broken off, towering 1,600 feet high, and seven miles around, there is that granite cliff, ledge, or mass, which would be recognized as a feminine gender. There she stands upon a foundation immovable, with her head lifted toward the heavens, and observed by passers-by for many miles away.

Now, Christ said, "Peter, thou art a fragment, or a bit, or a piece; and upon this great ledge— upon this solid mass—I will build my church." So then it follows, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Christ said anything else than that he expected to build his church upon Peter. But there is another complete prohibition to the Catholic idea. The picture and the imagery forbid their contention. Here they are at Caesarea Philippi, a city builded upon a rock and surrounded by a rock wall in which there are gates with a keeper holding the keys. The very stability of this rock founded, rock bounded, and rock surrounded city suggested the idea of the church of our Lord. Hence he said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Now get it. In that imagery Christ is the builder. The rock, which is the great foundation truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is the foundation, and Peter is out yonder at the gate holding the keys and admitting those who would pass in and out.

Now, here is a general proposition. It is a violation of the principles of every language, for one character to occupy two different positions in the same illustration at the same time. I repudiate therefore the idea that Peter can play a two-fold part in this scenery. He cannot be represented as the keeper of the gate with the keys in his hand, and at the same time be the foundation upon which the thing rests. But that is not all. Paul said, 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, "As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Therefore, instead of the possibility of Peter’s being the foundation of the church to be built by Christ, the exact reverse is true and Peter’s position, I want to insist, in this tropical language, is not underneath the structure. He is the gatekeeper and holds the keys in his hands. The beautiful imagery is destroyed if the Catholic idea were correct.

But, friends, there are some other things that I want to mention. It cannot be proved, beyond a question of doubt, that Peter ever saw Rome. I know that there is a tradition which is referred to by some historians of the possibility of such. But it is not a definitely established fact in history that Peter ever saw Rome, much less acted as pope in the seven-hilled city.

Again, at the very time, according to Catholic contention, that Peter should have been in Rome, as the head of the church, he was in prison in Jerusalem, shut up by old Herod. It therefore follows that their contention is weighed in the balance and found wanting. The church had been in existence from the year 33 to 49 at the time of Peter’s imprisonment, but there is no record, no hint in all the Bible, or anywhere else, of Peter’s having been in Rome during the early history of the church.

Again, Peter is mentioned prominently in the Bible. We are told of his having gone to Lydda, and from Lydda the historian tells of his going to Joppa, and from Joppa the Bible says that he went to Caesarea, and you will find him at various places. Is it not peculiarly significant, because of its absence, that in all of the sacred writings and history of the church, that not one hint, not one intimation, by inspiration, is ever given that Peter ever visited the city of Rome at all. Don’t you think that such is rather peculiar?

He is mentioned in minor affairs, where there is not so great a prominence attached, and yet the very one thing that our Catholic friends need, and are called upon to furnish, is evidence, either in the Bible, or out of the Bible, conclusively, that Peter ever saw Rome, much less reigned as pope, lived and died therein. The very best thing that Cardinal Gibbons had to offer along this line is this:

he said that Peter's general epistle was written from Babylon, and that it was generally conceded that Babylon meant Rome, or confusion.

I thought while reading that, if the very foundation, if the very little end of the tap root of the doctrine depends on the Figurative meaning of the word Babylon, the Catholics are indeed as a drowning man grabbing at a straw. If that is the best that I could say for my contention, I would certainly have all embarrassing attitude in the propagation of it.

Well, there is another thing. Paul spent 16 days with Peter in Jerusalem. That is mentioned in the Bible. Paul later went to Rome and spent two years, but there is no record of his having met Peter, or having seen him. As Paul neared the city of Rome, as a prisoner, a number of Christians went down the Appian Way to meet him and to greet him and to extend to him words of comfort. They visited him while a prisoner in the city. Don't you think that a man as prominent as was Paul, who had done so much for the cause of Christ, who had appealed his case to Caesar and had gone to the Roman city, should have been noticed by the pope? Don't you think that the pope ought at least to have recognized him, and to have honored him, or allowed himself to be honored by the presence of the peerless Apostle of the Gentile World? Why would the pope ignore such a-great apostle?

Friends, the absence of one scintilla of history, the lack of one single bit of evidence, or of any reference, proves conclusively that the claim of our Catholic friends is untrue to the facts in the case.

What else? In the city of Rome, the prominent Jews flocked round about Paul and said: "We desire to hear of thee what thou thickest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

What had the pope been doing in Rome? Why hadn't he told them about the sect called Christians? Ladies and gentlemen, if the Catholic claim of Peter's primacy and reigning as pope in Rome were true, there would be no occasion for such a demand as was made by the Jews. Surely Peter would have already told them regarding this sect. But yet again. In all of the Roman letter, which is rather lengthy, in which the greatest and the profoundest reasonings are found, and references are made, not only to the church as a whole, but to different individuals, is it not strange to you that when Paul wrote that splendid letter he did not find occasion somewhere to refer to Peter, and to recognize him as the head of the church? That letter is conspicuous by the total absence of anything that even looks like a reference made to the honor and to the dignity that Peter might have claimed as God's representative upon the earth. In the first church conference that was ever held, a record of which is found in Acts 16:1-40, did you ever stop to note the position, relatively speaking, that Peter had to the other apostles? They met for the purpose of discussing whether or not the Gentiles ought to be circumcised. Is there anything in the Book that looks as if Peter were the pope and all of the others came in and bowed before him, and he directed and manipulated the movements of the body? It is exactly the reverse. James is the chairman; Peter is down on the floor of the conference on a parallel with Paul, Barnabas, and the others; and after there had been much disputing Peter rose up, just like any other preacher or apostle, and said, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." Peter then took his seat. Paul and Barnabas next gained the attention of the chair and made a report of

what God had wrought by them among the Gentiles. These are significant facts. James, as chairman, finally passed sentence that the Gentiles should not be troubled. There is not the slightest evidence that Peter ever dreamed he was a distant relative of a pope. But again, friends, when the gospel was first opened up to the Gentile world, a record of which is found in Acts tenth chapter, Cornelius, having sent for a preacher, made ready for the great meeting, and when Peter came, Cornelius ran out to meet him and fell down at his feet to worship him.

Now this is a fine time for Peter to demonstrate, "I am the pope." I wonder if he stuck out his toe and said, "Smack it." I wonder, friends, if he held out the signet ring and bade Cornelius kiss it. I wonder if he said, "Cornelius, humble yourself on bended knees as you approach my presence." Why, friends, such a thought is repulsive to those who know God's Book. Peter said, "Cornelius, don't bow down to me. I am no great somebody come. I am not worthy of such homage, or worship. Stand up. I myself also am a man. That is all. I am no great Holy See. I am not possessed with the power to bless and to curse. I also am a man. 'Also' means just like you, and like common folks. I am not out of a different sort of clay made or created. Don't worship me."

How does that look compared with the modern pope into whose August presence you have to come on bended knees, and then kiss the signet that he wears and crown him in your devotion and homage lord of all?

Friends, the demeanor of the Apostle Peter at the house of Cornelius is not even a distant relative of all intimation of that which even looks like Catholicism in nature, but it bespeaks that simplicity and that humility that should characterize gospel preachers.

Finally, let me announce to you that Christ our Lord forbade and condemned all titles and honor of all official nature. He said, Matthew 23:9, "Call no man your father upon the earth." Those who so do openly violate this plain command. But Christ not only condemned all titles, but he condemned all kinds of religious garbs, peculiar dress, or outward demonstration.

He said in that same chapter, Matthew 23:5, of the Pharisees, "They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments." A phylactery was a piece of parchment suspended over the face on which the law was written. They wore it to testify to passers-by that they were a Godly set. Christ said they were hypocrites.

Christianity does not demand a peculiar dress. It is all right for men to wear long-tailed coats, and to that I have no objection. Besides, it is none of my business. But when any man has to wear a peculiar cut of coat or garb to designate his ecclesiastical relationships, I know that is outside the teachings of the Book of God, and for that reason I prefer the common dress of the ordinary citizen.

These are some of the reasons that render impossible my acceptance of Catholic claims, that Peter stands at the head of the church, and was the first pope unto whom there has been delegated authority both in civil and religious matters by the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have to look unto Him who is the head of the body, the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. Let us know no man save Jesus Christ, and in our hearts and lives, let us seek to crown Him Lord of all. There is none other in whom there is salvation.

Once more I come to ask your acceptance of Him. Can you not this noon put your hand in his wounded palm, turn away from sin, honor Him by acknowledging Him as Lord and King, walk in the light of His commandments, trust Him for the promise, and share the bliss that passeth understanding when Life's dream has ended? If such there be, once again the opportunity is yours.

3.08 - THE REFORMATION, NO. 1

THE REFORMATION, NO. 1

I am certainly glad that the effort thus far put forth, very largely historic in nature, has met with a favorable response, and has created within you all anxiety to hear what is to follow.

I come now to study the Great Reformation. This period embraces what we call in history the Renaissance, or the transition from mediaeval to modern civilization.

Evidences of this period are seen in the invention of a number of things that proved advantageous to man in driving away the clouds, permitting light to shine upon his path, and granting to him the privilege of independent thought and study. Perhaps chief among such inventions was the printing press invented toward the close of the fifteenth century. By means of it vast volumes of written matter were scattered over the face of the earth, which brought to the homes of the people such things as they could study for themselves and from which they could draw their own conclusions. It created independent thought which served as the very foundation of that independence that enabled the people to break away from that ecclesiasticism to which they had been in bondage for almost a thousand years. At this time the nations of the old world were sending forth ships on missions of exploration. England, France, Spain, Holland and Portugal had their ships plying the bosom of the different seas in search of things that lay beyond. A broader horizon was appearing, and a greater conception of independence and responsibility was dawning upon the world. That period was also characterized by the birth and development of the greatest artists the world has ever known. To it belong Michael Angelo, Leonardo de Vinci, Raphael, and others, unsurpassed even by those of the twentieth century. In literature it was the age of Shakespeare and of Dante.

These were followed by John Milton and a host of others. Coexistent and contemporaneous with this enlarged program there was of necessity a great religious awakening. Men were no longer satisfied to accept what the powers that had swayed the scepter over them expressed. A new day had dawned and a new era had begun.

Previous to this time the political powers alone had rebelled against Catholic authority, but now there is a religious element joining in with the political to defy the domination of the hierarchy. The laity were beginning to get together and to determine whether or not they should longer bow to their sovereign, the pope.

There was between the years 1520 and 1670 the greatest revolt against Catholicism that has ever characterized any other fifty years in all the world. During these years this revolt had evidenced itself so much that by the year 1570 Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, England, Scotland and Holland had been lost to the papacy. In France, in Spain and even in Italy, there was open rebellion and bold defiance of the wonderful power claimed by the pope.

You ask what the cause of all this rebellion, and of this great stir that shook the religious world as few things had ever done. Let me try to gather from the pages of history a summary of these

causes. I submit to you, first, the abuse within the Catholic church itself. Almost any school history abounds in the recitation of the ungodliness and the wicked practices that characterized Catholicism during those years. What is known as simony, a word which means the sale of church offices, was practiced openly and above-board. Those who had the power of appointment sold the office, and therefore gathered unto themselves all immense amount of money out of what was considered a sacred transition and conferring of power. Men won't always stand for those things, either in religion or in politics. A second criticism or abuse was what is called nepotism. This means that all favors, splendid positions, and places of prominence were given to kinsmen and relatives. From such we are not wholly freed even now. A general cause for all of this disturbance might be summed up in these words. There was all attack made against the popes and the bishops on the ground of immorality. These charges were preferred by men of high rank and of influential bearing, and their charges and criticisms began to prove effective. Restlessness characterized the powers who were guilty of these charges.

Then there is a third thing responsible for this wonderful transition of thought. These lay members, rising to the height of their rights, and asserting their independence, began to entertain and to practice things different from the pope's doctrine, and without his authority. As a result, a number of leaders arose to direct the minds of the people, to march out in front, and feel assured that numbers, under such conditions, would follow in their path.

Chief among these was none other than Martin Luther, who lived from 1483 to 1546. His parents were peasants, who worked in the mines. They were devout Catholics.

Martin, like many a worthy boy, resolved to secure all education in spite of the poverty round about him. It is said that he went along the streets, sang in front of the homes of numbers, then extended his hand for some kind of a donation. By this, and the practicing of the strictest economy, he was enabled to go to school. He began the study of law, which was his father's ambition for him, but, at one time, when he thought he was nearing death's door, he stopped and promised God that if his life were spared, he would dedicate the remnant of his days to the preaching of what he conceived to be the gospel of His Son. That incident changed his entire career. HE made progress in school to such all extent that he attracted the attention of the very elite of the land. He graduated from the University of Erfurt, and later became a teacher in the theological department of the University of Wittenberg. In the year 1513 the Catholics wanted to raise all immense sum of money to repair old At. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, and when they "got up against it," true to their history, they put on a big sale of indulgences. Martin Luther could no longer be quiet. He rose up and declared such a practice to be rotten, corrupt and unworthy of the endorsement of decent men.

He wrote out ninety-five objections to the Catholic church, and with a courage that you can but admire, walked out in front of all old church building, and nailed up those propositions, and asked any Catholic on earth to meet him in a discussion of the same. That brought forth the bitter denunciation in what is called a papal bull. Martin Luther defied the pope by burning his decree before the gate of Wittenberg, and expressed in sentiment what I quoted as having been said by Col. Roosevelt. As a result of this act on his part, Luther was ex-communicated from the Catholic church in 1521, and that date marks the beginning of the first denomination born on the earth. Back of 1521, there was not one of the modern denominations with which you are familiar. We cannot find one particle of history either in the Bible or out of the Bible, or anywhere else,

concerning any of them. My friends, according to the Rt. Rev. Mons. Patrick F. O'Hara, LL.D., Martin Luther was almost anything other than a saint. I have read Luther's life story, and if the record of it be true, there were wanting in him many of the elements that adorn the Christian character. But, since Christ stood before Pilate, since Peter stood before the Jewish Sanhedrin, since Paul stood before Agrippa, the grandest moral spectacle which this old earth has ever witnessed was Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms. And because of that very fact, plus all ability to expose the corruption of the old church, Luther was a leader among men. The Augsburg Confession of Faith, the Ritual of the Lutheran church, was drafted and adopted in the year 1530.

Back in those days, Catholics, Lutherans and others had quite a bit of trouble in deciding matters pertaining to the Lord's supper. Just why that bothered them as it did' I may never know. The Catholics, as I have stated, taught the doctrines of transubstantiation, that is to say, that, by the word of the pope, the bread and fruit of the vine became the literal body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Martin Luther accepted that until the day of ax-communication. He, doubtless, believed it until the day of his death. But because of the fact that he hated the Catholics worse than he did the devil, he coined him a new word. Instead of transubstantiation, he used the term consubstantiation. His philosophy and that of the Catholics are both just about as clear, even to them, as ordinary mud.

I call attention to another fact. Martin Luther is the first man on this earth who taught the doctrine of justification by faith only. Why did he do it? Because of his bitterness and opposition to Catholicism. The Catholics, then and now, lay quite a bit of stress upon works. Luther, in trying to get away from works, swung to the other extreme, and declared that justification was by faith only.

Friends, the Bible uses the expression "faith only" just one time. In James 2:24, we have this expression, but you will observe it is preceded by the word "not." James says, "Justification is not by faith only." Luther earnestly sought to get some crumb of comfort from the Word of God, and when he ransacked the pages of Holy Writ from first to last, and found no such consolation, let me tell you what he did. He turned to Romans 3:28, and in his translation, added the word "alone" to the Book of God. That verse says this: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Luther's Bible, which he translated, reads this way: "We hold that a man is justified without works of the law by faith alone." Those who have made the creeds have followed in Luther's tracks and have incorporated as one of their articles: "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." My friends, maybe it is of comfort to a man who neither knows nor cares what God says. But to people who respect the Bible, who know that such is not in God's Book, no comfort from Luther's addition can come. Christians do not add to the Word of God, nor seek to be wise above what is written. A solemn warning against such runs throughout the Bible.

It is a dangerous thing to tamper with the Word of God.

I would not say that I am free from prejudice. I think that would be saying too much. Of course, in my own judgment, I try to keep that element away, and to study matters fairly and squarely. I do not believe the Catholic doctrine think it rotten almost from beginning to end. And yet I would not be moved by it to such all extreme view as to go beyond that which is found in the Book of God. Men ought to be prompted by the highest motives, the loftiest incentives, and the noblest purposes. We ought to be mindful of the fact that we have no abiding city here. We ought to be

conscious of the idea that death and decay and passing away are written upon the wings of Time, and all timely things. We ought to be reminded that with the passing of the years our form becomes frailer, our hair becomes frosted, our cheeks become furrowed. We ought to desire to reach heaven when we die, to be transported home to glory at last. I must be careful, honest and sincere. My preconceived ideas, my prejudices, must not stand in the way of the truth of God.

Let us examine, therefore, our hearts, and know whether or not the very foundation upon which we stand, every plank of it, is in the Book of God. If it is, and from God's Book we are enabled to read our titles clear, let us press on to joys eternal, and to bliss Divine. But if not, we had better stop and make investigation. We had better pause long enough to examine that on which our hopes for eternity rest. Let not bias, prejudice or partisan spirit, or a matter of tradition, rob us of the prospects of that blissful home across which the shadows never come.

You ask, friends, what is the summary of the entire life and contribution of Martin Luther. I would put it in these words, namely: Martin Luther gave to the world all open Bible. It was through his influence and matchless courage that this Book was cut loose from the pulpit, and given to the pew. He but re-echoed that which had been propounced by old John Wickliffe, John Huss, and others who had died at the hands of the powers that then prevailed. I owe much to Martin Luther. I am grateful to him. He had a part in clearing away the rubbish, in denouncing the false, and in preparing for the dawning of a golden light, the rays of which, I think, have come in my path. But with all the things that I might say complimentary, Martin Luther did not die for me. I was not baptized in his name, and no spiritual blessing direct can he bestow. Therefore, I do not propose to wear his name, or to attach myself unto all institution founded by him.

There are, according to our federal report, twenty-one different kinds of Lutherans on the earth tonight, and I do not have to apologize to the Lutherans by saying that the Bible is a stranger to every one of that number. Not one shoot, phase, wing or branch was ever thought of, dreamed of, or hinted at, by holy men that penned this Book. I can find out something of Lutheranism in history, magazines and religious papers, but not one thing can I learn about such in all the Word of God. When you want to study Lutheranism you have no more use for the Bible than you have for all almanac.

Maybe you think this is a hard saying. Question: is it the truth? If so, it ought to be said. If not, you ought to expose me.

Contemporaneous with Martin Luther was the great Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, a man equally learned, and perhaps equally courageous. He, likewise, opposed the sale of indulgences as offered by the church, of which he was a member, and expressed that opposition by writing out sixty and seven declarations against it. Zwingli be came the leader of the Swiss reformation, and outlined some ideas much more in harmony with the Book of God than those of his contemporaries. Unfortunately for the cause of independence in religious thought, Zwingli was killed in the year 1530, when the Protestants and the Catholics were engaged in carnal warfare. Each one was striving for supremacy, and was ready to die rather than yield.

Zwingli's head was as clear as a bell regarding the Lord's supper. He said that the elements are simply symbolic of the real body and of the real blood of Christ.

I pass next to a third outstanding character who towered above his fellows. John Calvin, of France, born in the year 1509, educated far above the great masses of his people, early in life began to have convictions regarding things religious, and his sentiments drove him to side with the Protestant movement. Because of that very sympathy and disposition, he was driven out of France.

He found refuge in the city of Basil, Switzerland, and there began to write his very learned and popular Institutes. His object in this production, which is a classic in ecclesiastical matters, was two-fold. First, he wanted to influence the King in behalf of the reformation movement; and, second, it afforded him a fine opportunity to set forth his doctrine contrary to the Catholic church.

You ask, what the result? He became the founder of the Presbyterian church in the year 1535.

Now just as surely as history can be respected, and as writers have been authentic in their accounts, just that surely a Presbyterian church was then born upon this earth. Was that the Church of Christ? Of course not. Well, why? The Church of Christ was founded by the Lord in the city of Jerusalem in the year 33. Presbyterianism was founded by John Calvin, in the country of Switzerland, in the year 1535. That man does not live who can reduce them both to the same thing.

John Calvin is the author of the five main doctrines that have ever characterized the Presbyterian body. Here they are: first, election, predestination. Second, a limited atonement. Calvin seemed not to believe Paul when he said (Heb. 2:9), "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." The third point is the doctrine of total depravity. Calvinism teaches that a soul is born into this world as black as midnight darkness. Here lies the foundation upon which rests the idea of a direct operation of God’s spirit. It was this thought that suggested the practice of baptizing babies. Rob the world of the idea of depravity, and there would never have been any kind of a reason for the preacher’s laying his dirty ecclesiastical hands upon a spotless babe. But be it said that this doctrine, of Roman origin, is rapidly passing, and some of the creeds have been forced to change their long time practices and articles of faith. The fourth point or tenet of Calvinism is this: the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit. By that here is what they mean. If that man there chanced to be one of the elect, in God’s own good time, he will work upon him, and it will be impossible for him to resist it. He may sit on the stool of do-nothing, and keep on doing less, but if God sees fit to call him, he must respond. And the fifth point of Calvinism is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, the impossibility of apostasy. There is scarcely a denomination on earth but that has one or more of these unscriptural points prominent in its creed. But here is one good thing that I want to say about Calvin. I appreciate his attitude toward the Bible. He and Luther held exactly opposite views regarding the rights and privileges of worship.

Luther said, "My conception of the church and of the worship of God is this: we are allowed to practice anything unless the Bible specifically forbids it." Luther’s question was: Where does God say, "Thou shalt not?" If a thing was not directly and positively prohibited, Luther felt justified in doing it. John Calvin said, "Let us practice nothing unless the Bible specifically authorizes it." His question was: "Where does God demand it?" There is more Calvinism about me in that statement than in anything I ever read from him or about him. The difference tonight between the Church of Christ and many others in this land cannot be better summed up than by the repetition of these

words. The attitude that I propose to assume toward the Bible is this: I want to preach nothing, practice nothing, be nothing, do nothing, unless the Bible specifically and directly authorizes it. Some of my good friends have the Lutheran approach to the Word of God. They say, "I propose to practice whatever I please, whatever suits my fancy, provided God does not directly and specifically say, "Thou shalt not." The questions, therefore, of these two are opposite; that is, one asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The other one says, "Lord, what hast thou said that I must not do?" One is a positive attitude; the other is negative. One respects the authority of God; the other takes advantage of his silence. The spirit of Calvinism evidenced itself in France, Germany, England, Holland and Scotland. Strange as it may appear, Calvinism has assumed different names, and unless you become a diligent student, you may think some churches are different in their fundamentals. On the great European continent Calvinism was called the "Church of the Reformed Faith"; in France, Calvinism bore the name of "Huguenots"; in Scotland the very same body was styled "Presbyterian"; in England, they bore the name of "Puritans"; and in Holland the "Dutch Reformed Church." So then, when you speak about the Reformed Faith, when you talk about the Huguenots, and the Dutch Reformed, and the Presbyterians and Puritans, you are talking about bodies practically the same in origin, doctrine, and practice.

More than any other man who had lived since the apostles, Calvin emphasized the sovereignty of God. He magnified Jehovah, and ascribed unto him all power. He made man to recognize his utter dependence, his impotency, and his inability, and therefore stressed the dignity and the supremacy and the sovereignty of God Almighty.

There are ten different branches of Presbyterians mentioned in the religious report of our federal census at Washington. When I say to you that each of these ten branches is a total stranger to the Bible, I but tell you that which you already know.

Friends, are you willing to spend your time, your talent, your money, your influence, your all, in propagating and promulgating a doctrine and all institution regarding which the Bible is as silent as the grave? What will you have to say in that great and awful day? Why turn from that which is plainly put upon the pages of God’s Book, and lend yourself, lend your very best efforts to the fostering and to the building up of that which is purely of human origin? It is because of these facts recorded upon the pages of history, that I do not hesitate to invite you to that church bought by the blood of Christ, and about which you can read in your own Bibles. To you the gospel invitation is again extended. I respect your intelligence and your person, to the extent that I will not ask you to believe one thing, to do one thing, or to practice one thing, not directly found in the Book of God. If that is not safe, sound and sensible, then we have got the wrong book.

I do not want you to come and be Lutherans, or Presbyterians, and, of course, not Catholics. I want you to come and be simply a Christian—a Christian simply. I want you to be born again—born of water and of the Spirit—into the family of God, into that institution heavenborn in its origin. If such be the sentiment of any of you, the invitation is to you gladly tendered, while once again we join in singing the song.

Chapter 66

3.09 - THE REFORMATION, NO. 2

THE REFORMATION, NO. 2 This is a magnificent audience assembled, and your very presence indicates the interest you have in those things thus far discussed. I called attention in ~ sermon preceding this, to the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The fundamental cause of this was, doubtless, the Renaissance—that period of transition in Europe from the mediaeval to the modern world. Evidences of this are found in Italy even in the fourteenth century. The zenith, however, was not reached until two hundred years later.

Students of science, philosophy, and religion began to find out about the cause of things. The Bible, kept from the people for so long a time, was earnestly investigated. Superstition and darkness passed away and all things were viewed in a new light. Two great fundamental principles were enunciated. First, the right of private judgment. Every man could read and interpret the sacred volume for himself and according to his understanding. The second principle was that when the Bible was studied, union among Christians was possible. In the great Reformation, Martin Luther led the way in open defiance of the papacy, but instead of turning back to original principles, he sought simply a reformation of the things that then existed. As a result, he was ax-communicated, and soon after started the first of our modern denominations which have cursed the land from that day till this.

John Calvin followed Luther in opposition to Catholicism, and founded the Presbyterian church in 1535. Under various names his doctrine spread rapidly all over western Europe. The influence of Luther and Calvin, the charge of immorality against the clergy, the political feeling against the pope~ll tended to rob him of his power and lessen his prominence everywhere.

I next call attention to Henry VIII, king of England from 1509 to 1547. He was a devout Catholic, and made such all able reply to Luther’s attacks that he was, by the pope, called the "Defender of the Faith." His fame spread abroad throughout the regions of Catholicism, and he was the most favored emperor under the authority of the pope.

He had a lot of trouble with his wives, and the story regarding these relations is disgusting in its nature. He first married Catharine of Aragon, Spain, his brother Arthur’s wife. He lived with her eighteen years, and by her became the father of six children, of whom all had died except Mary. Under the camouflage and excuse that she could not possibly become the mother of a male child who might inherit the throne, he one day told Catharine that their marriage was illegal and they were living in sin. He asked that it be revoked, but, of course, you would hardly expect his wife to agree with such a statement. Old Henry thought that all he had to do was just issue the decree, and his desires would come to pass.

Now the real cause of such all idea’s having entered his head was not his wonderful interest in his wife’s becoming the mother of a boy baby, but there was a young girl of nineteen summers in waiting at the court by the name of Anne Boleyn and with her he had become enamored, and he sought, therefore, under the excuse aforesaid, to get rid of his legal wife.

Now, it was a fact that he was married to Catharine by a special order of Pope Julius II, and he had all idea that the then reigning pope, Clement VII, would readily issue a decree by which his marriage to her would be annulled. But there were two difficulties that presented themselves. First, it would have put Clement VII in the attitude of reversing a decree that the former pope had made. This is against the theory of Catholicism, even if their practice has varied time and again. But there was another reason. Charles V was emperor of Spain at that time, and he was a nephew of Henry's wife. Of course, he sided with his aunt, and, therefore, matters were complicated, with the result that Clement delayed and deferred a rendition of his decision. But you know (by observation, of course) that love will find a way. When Henry could no longer exercise patience to wait for a decree of the pope, he finally took religious matters in his own hand, appointed Thomas Cranmer archbishop of Canterbury, and then made him write out a bill of divorcement. This being done, the pope was forced to render a decision. This was against Henry who was, therefore, axcommunicated on the charge of adultery.

He resolved to break with the Roman church. The time was propitious for such all act. He immediately set out to have Parliament pass some laws according to his own fancy. I presume you know what was done. The first bill that went through Parliament along this line was to the effect that Henry VIII was made the only head on earth of the Church of England. The second law stated that there is all absolute separation on the part of the Anglican church from the papacy in any form. The third was that any man was guilty of treason who denied the rights of Henry VIII as head of the church. By the passage of this and other acts, the Church of England or the Episcopal church, was born in 1535.

I sometimes meet with my Episcopal friends, and have them say that it is rather unkind for me to declare that the Episcopal church started under conditions like these. But, my friends, you have got to change every history on earth if you destroy the correctness of that idea. Even after the Church of England was established, it was, in sentiment, as much Catholic as ever before. Henry began what is styled the High Church in Episcopal circles, and that is but a step from Catholicism itself, as a further study will show. The Book of Common Prayer was adopted in 1552. The first revision of it was ten years later, and then there came a second revision 100 years later, namely, in 1662. This little booklet contains 39 articles of faith, and it has been the guide of Episcopalians on down the line.

There has recently been quite a bit of agitation regarding a revision of the creed, and that agitation has stirred up the Episcopal Church of England, and has not been unheard of in the realms of the same on this side of the Atlantic.

During the latter part of last year, 1927, that bill introduced in Parliament to revise the Prayer Book made splendid progress, and came almost finding its way through the last ordeal. If you want to know exactly the route that was taken, it was after this fashion: That bill had gone before two houses of the convocation, back then to the bishops, then to the church assembly, and from that to the ecclesiastical committee of Parliament, and likewise through the House of Lords.

It got by all of those and there was just one more body for it to pass. When it came to the House of Commons it failed. Leading champions were on either side; the controversy waxed bitter; and a great threat was made that the Episcopal Church might be rent from top to bottom.

Let me say to you, friends, I have no disposition on earth to misrepresent matters of historic nature. Such misrepresentations would reflect upon me and lessen confidence in my statements. The English church, the Episcopal Church, is purely a state church. It is governed by politics, and is as much a creature of the general assembly or Parliament as any other law ever passed in England. No power on earth had the right, in the first place, to get up a ritual, or a prayer book, except the British Parliament, and there lives not one today who has the right to change one letter, even the crossing of a "t" or the dotting of all "I" except the Parliament which sits on the bank of the classic Thames.

Friends, the British Parliament is made up of different sorts of folks. Some of the members are, of course, members of the Church of England, some are Catholics, some are Jews, and some are Muhammadans. I want you to think of that religious conglomeration. Before any act affecting the Prayer Book can pass, not only the Jew, but likewise the Mohammedan, has got to vote upon it. Can you see this? It might come to pass that the balance of power in that British Parliament rests with the Jews, and it might be theirs to cast the deciding vote. Hence, it is possible for a Jew to fix upon the Episcopal Church the doctrine, policy and practice for lo, many years to come. But that is not all.

It might, perchance, come to this, that the Mohammedan members would exercise the controlling vote. Now, notwithstanding the fact that they reject Christ as the chief prophet, and substitute the Koran for the Bible, it could be that they might determine the doctrine and practice of the Episcopal church. The whole matter of revision leaves God out of it; Christ has no voice; the apostles' tongues are still; and the Holy Spirit is all unknown character.

There never was a greater human ritual fastened upon a body of people than is the Episcopal Prayer Book—a product of the British Parliament. We should not be surprised at their troubles in England.

Even in America that same trouble threatens the Episcopacy of this land. I have here this week's Literary Digest, in which there are two pages on the very point I have mentioned, threatening the disruption of the Episcopalian church in America.

It is their custom to meet in general council every three years. In 1925 the general conference of the Episcopal church in America met in the City of New Orleans, and a majority voted to revise the prayer book. But before that vote can be made legal, and the verdict be fastened, it must be ratified by the next conference, which will meet next October in the city of Washington.

There are in the United States 72 dioceses of the Episcopal Church. Already 45 of these dioceses have circulated a petition among the membership and they are coming to Washington with their very best efforts to prevent the passage of that resolution of three years ago.

Episcopalianism, in this country, is divided into two classes. There is what is known as the Low Church. It is quite liberal in its views and recognizes almost all Protestants as branches of the true church. And then there is what is called the High Church, or the Anglican Church. It is practically a Catholic church in its essential features. The strange thing about these two branches is that, notwithstanding they are so different, they are under one bishop and one control. Let me tell you about it.

Up here at Monteagle there is a Low Episcopal church. At Sewanee another Low church, and at Tracy City still another. But right in the midst of them, not over five or six miles away, at St. Andrews, there is a High Episcopal church. The St. Andrews church practices auricular confession; it holds its mass as do the Catholics; it practices celibacy; and right in this week's Digest there is a picture of the "Father" up here at St. Andrews, Tenn., bearing the order of the Holy Cross, and in that reliquary he has one of the hairs from the head of old Charles I, a relic he is worshiping.

Perhaps some may say I ought not to talk about those folks. But they are talking about themselves. Here is the Literary Digest that goes to millions, and in this week's copy, the story is told. Buy one of them and see the picture of that hair from the beard of old Charles I. The Bishop of Tennessee exercises authority over Sewanee, Monteagle, Tracy- City, and likewise At. Andrews, but, it seems, no condemnation of such acts has been pronounced.

If I were the bishop and thought the At. Andrews church wrong, I would be certain to speak out against it. But I don't think any less of Episcopalians than I do of any other religious order unknown to the Book of God. There is but one difference between the High Episcopal church and the rankest Catholic church in Tennessee or America. What is it? It is simply this: the Catholic church believes that the pope exercises supreme power; the High Episcopal church says, and I think correctly, "Our bishop has got as much power as your pope." You eliminate that difference, and the two could easily blend.

I say these things because I think they are true. These bodies are posing as religious organizations, when, as a matter of fact, they are purely political and governmental products, subject to powers civil rather than religious. In the year 1608, the first Baptist church on earth was born in Holland, and in 1611 another sprang up in England. In 1639, Roger Williams planted another at Providence, R. I.

I know, as well as you, that our Baptist friends have tried to establish a line of succession from the present back to the days of John the Baptist. Some have imagined they could make the chain rattle all the way, but, as a matter of fact, they never did hear it. But be it said to their credit that the most learned and intelligent, the most scholarly of the Baptist preachers no longer try to prove the unprovable idea of Baptist church succession. Long since the higher type has given up such hopes. Whenever you hear of any man's making these claims, you may assume that he is a partisan of the deepest dye, and hates to give up that which must be done in the light of intelligence and historic references.

There never was but one Baptist recognized by God on earth, and he said plainly that he was going to quit. In John 3:30, the Baptist said, "I must decrease." A record of any other Baptists must be found in some other book than the Bible.

Baptist doctrine is made up of Calvinistic theology plus congregational government. There is not a single distinctive doctrine taught by the Baptists necessary to salvation, they themselves being judges. As a religious organization they are wholly unknown to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Baptist preachers know that just as well as I do. The only difference is that I will say it and they won't. Everybody knows those things. Why should I be forbidden to tell this great audience, of possibly six thousand, matters of this kind?

Now the next in chronological order is the great Methodist church. I speak of it candidly but with feelings of absolute respect. Some of my people lived and died Methodists, as well as Baptists and Presbyterians. I have nothing unkind to say regarding any individual, but I am talking about the doctrine, or rather, the church as a whole.

Methodism is a by-product of Episcopalianism. It is a step which was first taken, not to establish something new, but to overcome the coldness and ritualism that prevailed in the Episcopal church.

Methodism centers around John Wesley. As all ordained deacon in the Episcopal church, he looked over the field in 1725 and saw the coldness, formality and emptiness in the services and undertook to bring about a reformation of conditions. He thought the church needed some warmth and spirituality injected into its cold and almost lifeless, frozen form. So, together with three other young men, namely, Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham and William Morgan, he met, and they began to think over it and meditate upon it, with the result that others joined them and their meetings continued. Their purpose was not, I repeat, to start a new organization, but because Episcopalians refused to be reformed, such was the result. The history, therefore, of Methodism traces back to the year 1729. At that time, Wesley was all unconverted man. He declared that he did not receive forgiveness of sins until 1738—nine years after Methodism was born on the earth.

Maybe some of you people would like to know where you can find these statements. Bishop McTyeire, of the Methodist church, has written a history of Methodism. You can secure it from the Methodist Publishing Co., here on Broad street. On page 125 he reports what I have said regarding John Wesley's unconverted condition at the time Methodism was founded.

It wasn't determined as to what kind or character of church the Methodists should be until the year 1784. At that time it had developed and grown to be so much like its mother, that it was decided to let it bear her name. Hence, it is the Methodist Episcopal church.

Again, the Methodist discipline is but all abridgment of the Episcopalian prayer book. While the latter has 39 articles of faith, the Methodist discipline has 20 and 5. That discipline is revised every four years' and it is doubtful if any two issues are exactly alike. They not only change the rules and polity, but sometimes the doctrine itself.

Until 1910, the Methodist discipline taught that all men were not only conceived, but that they were born, in sin. Let me recite to you some things with which you are perfectly familiar. When a good mother brings her baby up to be baptized by the Methodist preacher, he turns to his little book—not the Bible, for he has no use for it at all—but he turns to his discipline and begins to read: "Dearly beloved, for as much as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ hath said, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God: I beseech you to call upon God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous goodness He will grant to this child, now to be baptized with water, that which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with the Holy Ghost, received into Christ's holy church and be made a lively member of the same."

Then the preacher says, "Let us pray," and he reads this prayer from that discipline: "O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him," etc. He then asks the mother to "name this child." She calls him "Goliath" and the preacher either sprinkles or pours water upon it (or, if desired, immerses it in water). That was Methodism

until 1910. In that good year, at their regular conference, they changed their doctrine on the question of depravity and original sin. When they now go to sprinkle a baby, the preacher reads as follows from his changed discipline: "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men, though fallen in Adam, are born into this world in Christ the Redeemer, heirs of life eternal, and subjects of the saving grace of the Holy Spirit; and that our Saviour Christ saith, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God,' I beseech you to call upon God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous goodness He will so grant unto this child, now to be baptized, the continual replenishing of His grace, that he may ever remain in the fellowship of God's holy church, by faith that is in Jesus Christ." You will observe that all babies born before 1910, were not only born but even conceived in sin and to their case John 3:5 applied, but all born since 1910 are born into this world in Christ, the Redeemer, and heirs of eternal life. To them Matthew 19:14 applies.

What was the former passage quoted? John 3:5, which says, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." If that does not refer to baptism I would like to ask the Methodist preachers, why did you put it in your creed and make it the only scripture upon which you relied for 150 years? In John 8:5, the term water is found, but to a Methodist now, that passage is bone-dry. In Matthew 19:14, the word water does not occur, and yet a Methodist preacher can find enough to sprinkle all the babies on earth. But again, the Methodist church never decided that it would have presiding elders until the year 1792.

Regarding the Lord's Supper, Wesley wrote: "I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. . . . . .I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day."

There are but two consistent ideas about that, viz: Either partake of it on the first day of the week, or, like the Catholics, keep it forever ready. There is absolutely no authority for the observance of the supper every month, or three months, six months, or at any other period than the first day of the week.

Friends, the presiding elders of the Methodist church scarcely miss a Sunday during the year but that they eat of the Lord's supper. Why not insist that Methodists do likewise?

Consistency is claiming their attention along this line. But that is not all regarding matters of this sort. There are, in this land of ours, seventeen different kinds of Bapfists, likewise, seventeen different sorts of Methodists, but you know, and they know, and will admit it when directly pressed, that each of them is a total stranger to God's Book. The Bible knows nothing about Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists or Methodists. Do I become your enemy because I so speak?

I tell you no secret whatsoever when I say to you, friends, that in this Bible no such organizations are mentioned. No such bodies are even one time referred to. It is not possible for it to be possible for the world to get together upon anything of a nature like these organizations or bodies, the history of which I have recited in your midst.

Therefore, I think the call comes ringing o'er the restless waves, and across the regions of our land, for us to halt, to examine our platforms, and take our bearings according to His word. Our divided state is indeed lamentable. Men exalt their creeds, discipline and confessions of faith—all of which were written by uninspired men. We need to lift up the Word of God, and raise aloft the gospel of Christ as distinguished from the doctrines of men. The creeds of earth may be written by intelligent, honest and upright men, but they are human products. We have given unto us that which is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. All scripture is given by inspiration to the intent that the man of God may be perfect, in that he is thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

I want no doctrine other than that which I can read in the Bible. I need no reproof other than that the Holy Spirit has given. I need no correction other than that penned by inspiration. I need no instruction in righteousness, but that found in the Word of God, which thoroughly equips and perfectly furnishes unto every good work. Upon the Word of God as our only creed, we ought to form a solid phalanx against the onrushing tide of infidelity.

I believe that God expects and demands of us to blend our forces, combine our efforts, and centralize our powers against the dangers that are threatening the youth of our land, and are seeking to undermine the very foundation of our hallowed hopes, and our holiest desires, both for time and for eternity.

Let me say that the opposition is not on top of the Church of God, seeking to tear down its loftiest spires; nor is it on the sides, trying to tear down the walls; but, with pick and with shovel in hand, it is digging away at the very foundation. That foundation is the sublime truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That truth is denied and ridiculed in schools and institutions built and maintained by taxes that come from the pockets of professed Christian men. And while we pay the price and furnish the children, the enemy is pouring into their young heads and hearts the damnable doctrine that will tear down that institution for which Christ died. The skeptic would destroy the hopes of those of us who live here, and blight our prospects of wearing a glittering crown in that land of cloudless day.

Because of my faith in God's Book, I am here in your midst. The congregations supporting this meeting believe in that institution which rests upon the great truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We desire to teach only that which is found in the Book of God. I think I can pledge you 100 per cent of our number to forsake any doctrine or practice not so found. If you will suggest one thing in His Word which I do not preach, or try to practice, I want to incorporate that, not next week, not tomorrow, but I would be glad to do it yesterday, if such a thought were possible.

I want to be able to put my hand upon the very chapter and the very verse on which my hopes for eternity rest. I am, therefore, asking of you to accept no leader but Christ; subscribe to no discipline, prayer book or confession of faith but God's Word; be nothing except just a Christian; do nothing other than that which you know that God specifically demands; practice only those things authorized by the God of heaven; and then, with your hand in the wounded palm of His, sing the song, "Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads, I will follow all the way."

If you and I will so do, we can, at last, lean upon His everlasting arms, and know that He will initiate us into the grandeurs and glories of that blissful home across which the shadows have never yet been cast.

I wonder, tonight, if there are not others who will gladly accept the invitation while we hymn his praises.

Chapter 67

3.10 - THE RESTORATION

THE RESTORATION

We come, friends and brethren, to the closing service of this week. I want to acknowledge my appreciation of your presence and faithfulness throughout the services thus far. I rejoice that such a large number of you has followed, with apparent interest, that which has been said, though, perhaps, many have not believed all I have stated. With you, personally, I have no fault to find.

It is necessary to understand the background of any movement. To illustrate, no one can appreciate the apostasy and the falling away of the primitive church unless first he has a conception of what it was. He would be utterly unable to gauge, as he should, the value of the great Reformation, unless he had a concrete idea of the ecclesiastical order that preceded it.

Just so, unless we had studied the period of the Reformation and the history as a background, I think it would be impossible for us to appreciate another great movement that followed about three hundred years later, known as the Restoration movement. Each one of these, therefore, is connected with the other, and serves as a background which makes each stand out in its own light all the clearer, and the more appreciatively by those who really want to learn the facts concerning it. With the emergence of the world from the dark ages, those rays of light that were flashed across the Reformers' path of the sixteenth century have lent wonderful illumination to all succeeding ages.

I really feel tonight that I will never be able to express, or to pay the debt of gratitude that I owe to such men as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley and a host of others. I am glad they have lived. But for their breaking away from the hierarchy that held the world in subjection, we might still be in religious bondage, afraid to express our independence, or to worship God as we might wish.

Martin Luther gave to the world all open Bible. He caused it to be unchained from the pulpit, flung it wide to the pew, and bade humanity exercise its own judgment regarding its sublime teachings.

John Calvin, in a most scholarly manner, emphasized the sovereignty, the dignity of Jehovah. Then came John Wesley, and put into the religion of the time, heart-power, spirituality, that warmth and devotion from the lack of which the world was then suffering.

All of these men taught a great many things that were true. And be it remembered that truth is a universal matter, not to be cornered on, nor to be monopolized by any religious set or order. Whatever truth Martin Luther presented I am perfectly willing to accept. The same can be said with reference to all the others. The thing that I have condemned and sought only to emphasize, is that these men had no right to form all organization or a denomination concerning which the Bible hasn't a word to say: And instead of such organizations proving a blessing, I think a careful study of the historic past, as well as the lamentable condition of the present hour will evidence, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the exact reverse.

I come, ladies and gentlemen, to speak of another movement which had its beginning about the first of the nineteenth century.

Denominationalism had spread rapidly over the countries of Europe, and was well established in various parts of our own land. With the passing of the years, a general state of religious confusion and the retarding of the onward march of the banner of Christ were observed by those who had his cause at heart.

Good men, honest characters, souls devoted to the truth, and anxious to find it, began to make observations. Let us try to analyze some of the conditions that prevailed.

First, there was a divided church. Everybody who will stop to think about it knows that the forces of God’s people ought not to be divided. There is not a man in Nashville who can successfully defend the present status of religious affairs. The prayer of Christ, the pleading of the apostles and the admonition of the Holy Spirit were that God’s people ought to be one. And yet more than a hundred denominations had brought the world into a state of confusion more and more confounded. Each of these was jealous of the other. Each one was contending against the other, and instead of being a solid phalanx, they were hopelessly divided into detachments prompted by rivalry and denominational jealousy. While they were thus warring, fighting, and trying to devour each other, the devil’s forces marched on in a solid body. But that is not all. History reveals the fact that about one hundred years ago the most arrogant clergy of all the ages led the religious element.

Preachers do not always know as much as they should, and it is a fact that ignorance and arrogance go hand in hand. Instead of the preachers being of the common mass, they sought to make broader the chasm between themselves and the common people. They got up, so to speak, on stilts, and bade ordinary folks look up to them as lords of all. They coveted such titles and distinctions as would galvanize them into prominence and respectability. They were in harmony with what the Saviour said, "the blind were leading the blind." In those days there was a beclouded theology. The Bible, instead of being a book properly divided, was a perfect jumble, thrown together without harmony, system or order. Men considered that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ was a thing better felt than told, that man was wholly passive in conversion, and that the Holy Spirit, in some mysterious and miraculous manner, performed His wonders upon the hearts of men, who were wholly unable to resist His mighty power.

Physical sounds and noises, signs and experiences, dreams and visions, were taken as evidences of pardon, rather than what the Word of God said.

All of that but tended to retard and to hinder a lucid understanding of the Bible, and the blending together of religious forces.

Once more, that was all age when human creeds proved the general curse of the world. Let me say to you today, that creeds are comparatively harmless as to what they were a hundred years ago. Regardless of the type and the character of the man, he had to subscribe to the iron-clad rules of the creed, and if the preacher was too long they sawed him off to suit the creed; and if he was too short, they stretched him out to measure up to the full tenets of the declarations written, to which they had pledged allegiance and obedience.

Again, let me say, that the beginning of the nineteenth century was a period of blatant unbelief not far from atheism. The skepticism of Europe had taken firm root in America. Our own civilization was rapidly moving westward, but the church and its influence were not found in these border settlements.

Tom Paine had but recently written his great "Age of Reason," and it spread like wildfire o'er the face of the earth. Tom Paine was held up as all ideal, and in the great universities like Yale and various others, there were numbers of Paine societies, holding aloft the blackest banner, under which the youth of the land, in their educational period, was marching on to destruction, death and hell at last. The divided state of the world religiously was unable to meet the situation, and therefore something had to be done.

History tells us that even in the Old World they were not unmindful of these conditions, and certain men put forth every effort of their being to call a halt in the divided state of Christendom. The Haldane brothers, of the country of Scotland, devoted a long period of their lives in all earnest, honest effort to cut loose from human affairs, human denominations, and return to the apostolic order, and to the restoration of the New Testament principles.

Thomas Campbell, long before he ever came to America, as a member of the Seceder Church of Scotland, labored studiously and earnestly to bring about a oneness among the four branches of the Presbyterian Church then accepting the Westminster Confession of Faith.

While those efforts did not produce concrete results, they, doubtless, planted the seed which had effect, not only in the Old World, but also in our own fair land. In the New World, long before the days of the Campbells, or even that of Barton W. Stone, the idea of oneness and the leaven of unity had already begun to work, and be it said tonight, that in the ranks of the Methodist Church the first outspoken word was presented. The form of government adopted by the Methodist Church had brought division among them. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury believed in the prelate system and demanded all episcopal form of government. James O'Kelly, a very prominent Methodist preacher of the time, rebelled and insisted that Methodism be launched on the principle of congregational government. When they could no longer walk together, on Christmas day, 1793, over here at Manakin Town, N. C., a secession took place. At first those led by O'Kelly called themselves "Republican Methodists," but later they threw away the name Methodist altogether, accepted the name "Christian," and declared that nothing but the Bible would be their rule of faith and practice.

You may think that Alexander Campbell was the first man who ever made such a demand, but you are wonderfully mistaken. All of this occurred eighteen years before Campbell ever saw America.

Now, you ask, what became of the O'Kelly movement? Because the time was not quite ready, and due to the fact that Mr. O'Kelly did not have within him sufficient ability as a leader, he was unable to gain headway, and the cause that he espoused was temporarily buried under the onrush of episcopacy. The next movement along this same line was within the ranks of the Baptist Church, up in the state of Vermont, in the year 1800, when a very prominent Baptist preacher, Dr. Abner Jones, founded some churches at Lyndon, VT., Bradford and Pierpont, N. H., which threw away the name "Baptist," and assumed the name "Christian." They repudiated the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, and declared the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the only standard by which to

be governed. Do you call that Campbellism? That was in the year 1800. Alexander Campbell never came to America until nine years after. Was James O'Kelly a Campbellite when he discarded the name Methodist, threw away the Methodist discipline, and announced the Bible as his only rule of faith and practice?

He had never heard of such a man as Alexander Campbell, who was then but a boy back in the schoolroom in Ireland.

Friends, these are efforts that preceded the coming of that matchless leader who was able to carry such a principle against the contending forces, and make it felt over all the world. But that is not all. In the year 1801, Barton W. Stone, born at Port Tobacco, Md., had come to the state of Kentucky as a young Presbyterian preacher. He was educated in a Methodist theological school, and later held the chair of literature for quite a while. He was one of the most highly educated young men of his day. In the summer of 1801, the greatest meeting of all history was held at Cane Ridge, Ky. It is said that more than 20,000 people camped on the grounds and remained until the food supply of the community failed. Mr. Stone was doing the preaching and was assisted by a number of colaborers, viz., Richard McNemar, John Thompson, John Dunlavy, David Purviance, and Robert Marshall. Their preaching was in direct opposition to the "Confession of Faith." They taught a universal salvation and that every one, without the aid of the miraculous influence of the Spirit, could be saved. Such preaching brought down upon them the wrath and condemnation of every one loyal to the creed. These men were tried for heresy, and would have been excommunicated had they not, themselves, withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the church. When such news reached the synod, a committee was sent to wait upon these brethren and to reclaim them. Matthew Houston was one of that committee, and, after hearing their story, he was converted to the righteousness of their cause. By the year 1804, these were wholly out of the Presbyterian Church and had accepted the Bible alone as their only rule of faith and practice, with no family name except "Christian."

Old Cane Ridge meeting house, near Paris, Ky., stands unto this day as a monument to the cause of Christian unity, the discarding of human names, and the relegating of human creeds to the background. In the year 1807, Thomas Campbell came to this country. He was a Presbyterian preacher, whose influence in Scotland had been exceedingly great, and whose personality, piety, learning and devotion won for him the admiration of those who came in contact with him.

Just as he reached the shores of America the Presbyterian synod happened to be in session in the city of Philadelphia. He went before that body, and was cordially received, and was given work in Washington County, Pennsylvania. He gladly accepted the mission assigned.

There were scattered Presbyterians all over that section who were as sheep without a shepherd, and who for years had not the privilege of the sacred supper. He set the table of the Lord on the first day of the week, and invited his fellow-Presbyterians of different congregations to join in and to celebrate the feast.

Now, mark this point. It was against Presbyterian custom for members of any congregation to partake of the Supper outside of their individual church. The Baptists of today have never practiced close communion any more strictly than did the Seceders at this particular time. When news of Campbell's practice reached the synod, he was called to account for it and was severely

criticized. He argued the question with them, and made a masterly appeal. But it was all in vain, and in order to preserve his self-respect and loyalty to his convictions, but one course was left. He, therefore, said: "Henceforth, I decline all ministerial connection with, or subjection to, the Associate Synod of North America." This withdrawal did not lessen his labors. He continued to preach in the homes of his friends, where the people heard him gladly. In a special meeting at the home of Abraham Altars, Campbell made a great speech, exalting the Bible as the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. In this speech he uttered those words which have been the slogan of unity from then till now, viz.: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." On August 17, 1809, another important meeting was held, when it was determined to organize, not a church, but "The Christian Association of Washington." A report of this was embodied in that great "Declaration and Address"' which has ever been the most remarkable production of its kind in all the world. In this he emphasizes the fact that the church of the New Testament is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; that while there are local congregations, there should be no schisms or divisions among them. Furthermore, he said, "There shall be no tests of fellowship or anything practiced among us but that for which there is express authority in the Word of God."

Third, he declared that the New Testament is a perfect constitution, so that whatever is not authorized therein, or taught thereby, is not to be demanded of any man. And, again, nothing is to be accepted or practiced, unless it is as old as the New Testament.

Friends, these are the very sentiments expressed by the Methodist, O'Kelly, and by the Baptist, Dr. Abner Jones. In the month of September following this declaration, Alexander Campbell came to America with his mother and other members of the family. The father, Thomas, met them, and on their journey from the coast back to western Pennsylvania, the father and son discussed the religious situation of the hour. But young Alexander, while in Scotland, had learned of the work of the Haldanes, and had been convinced that the religious curse of the world was the division that existed. When he read this address, and the declaration of the principles enunciated by his father, it was found that their sentiments were in perfect accord. From that time, the young man resolved to dedicate the remnant of his days to the promulgation of the principles incorporated in that wonderful document. By virtue of the superior strength and natural leadership, the relative position of the father and son was soon changed, and hence Alexander Campbell began to rise in the estimation of all men and continued to be able to show forth the soundness of the foundation and the wisdom of those principles that would, if carried into effect, result in the uniting of the people of God in all matters of faith. His theory and practice was: "In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity." But this Christian Association of Washington did not want to become another church. They repudiated the name "Presbyterian," without any disrespect to the name, but on the ground that it is not the God-given name of the Bible. They would not accept the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as their creed, but said they were willing to work with the Presbyterians, rather than form themselves into a different body. They soon found, however, that the blending was not congenial and harmonious, and that there was but one thing for them to do, viz., to meet together as a band of disciples, wearing no other name than that found in the Bible, and subscribing to no other creed than the Word of God. Accordingly, on the fourth day of May, 1811, at old Brush Run, in what is now West Virginia, they assembled, thirty-six in number. Alexander Campbell preached to them and together they observed the Lord's supper.

Question: What kind of a body is that? What do you call them? They claimed to be Disciples, Christians, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, aloof from any denomination under heaven, without allegiance to any man-made book, ritual or confession of faith known in all the world. But not a single one of them had as yet been baptized. They had been sprinkled, I grant you, but that is not baptism. So a year sped by, and they were finding their way, guided only by the Word of God. Finally, in the month of June, 1812, Alexander Campbell decided that nobody ought to be baptized except all adult, a character who could believe God's Word, repent of his sins, and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of all. He came to the conclusion from the study of the Bible that baptism was for the remission of sins. He simply read that word for word as recorded by inspiration. So he set about to find someone to immerse him. He made quite a little journey up the country to the home of Elder Luce, a Baptist preacher. On his way he stopped by his father's home and his sister, Dorothea, told him that, after having read her Bible carefully, she had decided that infant baptism was untaught. Alexander replied that he and his wife had come to the same conclusion and he was then on his way to secure Elder Luce to immerse him.

Thomas Campbell and wife, James Hanen and wife, also decided to be immersed, and thus a great crowd assembled on the banks of Buffalo Creek to witness the unusual. Both Thomas and Alexander made addresses, stating their reasons for taking the step. As they talked about that, the Baptist preacher said, "It is contrary to Baptist doctrine to baptize upon the simple confession made by Peter, but I believe it is the truth." At the risk of being turned put of the Baptist Church, Mr. Luce performed the act in the name of the Lord.

Now, you ask what led them to do that? No church had so taught. No creed had made such a demand. The only influence in the wide, wide world was the teaching of God's Book. It meant to them the giving up of Presbyterianism, a doctrine then as dear to their hearts as it is to any of you tonight. But because of their having studied, and being sufficiently honest to accept God's Word, they walked in the light as it shone around about them.

It wasn't their purpose to continue as a separate organization. That was the very thing that they didn't want to do. Already there were too many denominations and religious bodies. When it was seen that they had accepted immersion as the only act, and adults as the only subjects, the Baptist organization invited them into the Red Stone Association of Pennsylvania. With the hope that other differences might be adjusted, and that those who claim to be Christians should be united, they accepted the invitation and passed into the above association, where they remained for some time.

While with the Baptists, Mr. Campbell, at their request, met in debate Rev. John Walker in 1820, and Rev. William McCalla in 1822. Both of these were Presbyterians. At the close of the McCalla debate, in a private conference, he said to them: "Brethren I fear that if you knew me better you would esteem and love me less, for let me tell you that I have almost as much against you Baptists as I have against the Presbyterians." At a meeting of the association at Cross Creek, Va., in 1816, Campbell had preached a sermon which proved to be the entering wedge of separation between him and the Baptists. That day he took for his text the "Law of Moses" and preached one of the most memorable discourses that has ever been proclaimed this side of inspiration. In that sermon Mr. Campbell taught a proper division of the Word of God. He showed that there were three separate and distinct dispensations, viz.: the patriarchal, Jewish, and the Christian. He made the

Bible a sensible, orderly, systematic book, giving to each one his portion in due season.

He also had occasion to suggest that while the law prevailed for 1,600 years, when Christ was suspended on the cross, he took it out of the way, having blotted out the handwriting of the ordinances which was contrary to us and nailed it unto the cross. He then gave us a better covenant, founded upon better promises. He also announced that conversion was sane, sober and sensible, rather than miraculous and mysterious as was generally believed. When he had finished that address, which lasted, I think, for more than two hours, the great number felt that such was the exact doctrine of the Book, but some of the leading Baptist preachers of the associations took exception and declared it impossible for them to accept all analysis of that kind. So then, when matters were no logger congenial, and the prospect of unifying their forces had been blotted out, Campbell and others withdrew from the Red Stone Association. Soon after a more liberal Baptist organization, of Ohio, opened wide its doors, and insisted that Mr. Campbell, and those with him, unite with it.

Because of all earnest desire to unify the people of God, and to bring to pass the answer to the prayer of the immaculate Son of Mary, whether wisely or not, they entered into the Mahoning Association. There they remained until about 1830, and then it dawned upon them as clearly as the rays of the noon-day sun that the Bible nowhere authorizes any kind of all association or body other than the church. Finally public announcement was made that they were not moving along Scriptural lines. Campbell preached to the people of the Mahoning Association, and declared that the very association itself was all organization unknown to the Book. The result was that the entire association was led to throw aside the Baptist name, all kinds of creeds, disband as all association, and together march under the banner of Christ Jesus our Lord, members of no organization save the church bought by the blood of Jesus. Not until 1824 did Mr. Campbell ever meet Mr. Barton W. Stone. During these years, Stone, "Raccoon" John Smith, and various other prominent men had a great following in the State of Kentucky. At this first meeting at Georgetown, Ky., it was found that there was almost perfect agreement between them. Eight years thereafter, they met again in the city of Lexington, Ky., on Christmas Day, and there decided to blend together their efforts. From that day on the followers of Stone and those of Campbell became one. They wore no name but "Christian," subscribed to no creed but the Bible, and emphasized that unity for which Christ had prayed and the apostles pleaded.

I have thus recited to you that which is a matter of history. I think Alexander Campbell was a great man, but I do not think he was any more honest, any more sincere, or that he loved God any better than did any of those others whose history I have already recited. But when I tell you that he had the advantage of them, I but speak that which you can see, with a moment’s consideration. He lived 300 years after Martin Luther, and 100 years this side of John Wesley. He had all that they had taught. He had their experience, and had observed the fruits of their labors. Therefore, he was the better prepared to size up conditions as they were, locate the trouble, and to diagnose the ailment that prevailed among the professed followers of the Lord. Since the days of inspiration, I do not believe the superior of Alexander Campbell has- ever lived upon this earth. He was great in almost every sense of such a word. I appreciate him and his labors as I do but very few of whom I have ever read or learned, but I do not wear his name or claim him the head of any church. This is not because I want to reflect upon him, but I believe that there is a name ten thousand times fairer and brighter and grander than was his. Hence, I prefer to wear the name of Christ Jesus our Lord,

rather than that of Martin Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, Alexander Campbell, or any other human that ever lived or died.

You ask me tonight, "Hardeman, did Alexander Campbell found a church?" I answer, "No." Campbell disclaimed any such. I know that some histories so state, but in so doing they fail to understand what Campbell had in mind and the purpose of his labors. The one thing he tried to impress was that churches founded by men were unscriptural, and were responsible for a divided state of affairs.

Let me review by saying, it was the purpose and intention of Martin Luther to reform Catholicism, but by experience he found it impossible. It was the object of John Wesley to reform Episcopalianism, and likewise that was a failure. Alexander Campbell, together with the host of his colaborers, never started out to reform anything. Their purpose was to restore that which once existed on the earth, and which had been buried underneath the rubbish of ecclesiasticism for hundreds of year.

They endeavored to dig down beneath denominationalism and skepticism, and to plant again that which was inaugurated by the Man of Galilee, and form themselves into all organization exactly like that which they read about on the memorable Pentecost of long ago.

There were two principles upon which they reasoned that made such a thing possible of accomplishment. First, a crop is produced proportionate to the seed planted, and second, according to the soil. They said, "If we have the same seed on earth now as Peter had on Pentecost, and if we have the same soil as they had back there, it is possible to reproduce a crop exactly like theirs."

Question: Is that good sense? Is that possible?

They verily believed that they had the same seed of the kingdom as was planted by Peter. They also believed that the ground or soil was just the same. Therefore, said they, "If we cut loose from humanism, and from things of a worldly nature, and will put into the hearts of men and women the pure, simple, unadulterated word of God, it will spring up and make nothing on earth but Christians. And if those Christians thus formed, and thus developed, will blend together, they will constitute a church like unto that we read about in the Bible.

Friends, this, in brief, is what the world calls Campbellism. This was the restoration of that thing which was begun twenty centuries ago, from which the early disciples departed and went out after the fancies of men. If you believe these principles and will accept the terms of salvation as outlined by the apostles, the invitation is yours once more. Let Christ be your Leader, His word your guide, the church He bought your abiding place, and the religion He inaugurated your life work. Faithfulness to His commands will guarantee you a home in that paradise beyond.

Chapter 68

3.11 - UNITY (No. 1)

UNITY (No. 1) My friends and brethren, I am sure that in our hearts there is profound gratitude to God for the wonderful opportunities of this hour. It is encouraging to find this great throng of people assembled. You have come, not for mere pleasure or entertainment, but with a degree of soberness and seriousness characteristic of those who are conscious of the fact that they are rapidly passing to the other shore.

I read to you from John 17:20-23. This is a part of the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ the night He stood in the very shadow of the cross.

Having lifted His voice in petition to the Father, first for Himself, next, in behalf of the apostles, He then turns and incorporates others. So He says: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gayest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and has loved them, as thou hast loved me." The paramount idea of the great Restoration Movement of which I spoke last night was the oneness and the unity of the people of the Lord. That which troubled great and good men was the divided condition among those who claimed to be followers of the Lord.

It is rather popular now for the world to talk about union. There was never a time in the history of the world when genuine unity was more in demand and more earnestly sought by real godly men than at this present hour. In the most subtle manner known to humanity the very foundation of the Church of Christ is being attacked by the combined efforts of every school of skepticism known to mortal man. All of our fondest hopes and holiest desires are threatened by the ever-increasing tide of opposition to things formerly considered sacred, holy and inspired of God.

There is, therefore, a call that comes to every lover of Bible truth to take notice of whither we are drifting, and what the responsibility resting upon us is. When I talk to you about Christian unity, right on its face division is implied. That very announcement suggests that there are Christians on the earth whose efforts are not together blended. The Saviour said, in Matthew 12:50, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

I have never been so egotistic as to say that my brethren with whom I commune on the first day of the week are the only Christians on this earth. I never said that in my life. I do make the claim that we are Christians only. But there is a vast difference between that expression and the one formerly made. But you ask what my objective is. Exactly that which prompted and moved those of a century ago. I am trying to get all of God’s people everywhere to stand together as a solid phalanx against the opposing forces now seeking to destroy the church of our Lord. I know that the cause of Christ needs its full strength. I know that in unity alone strength can exist, and I think it a calamity for those who claim to believe the Bible, to reverence Jehovah, and to wear the name of

Christ at all, to stand thus divided, and thereby invite the enemy to a victory over our scattered forces.

There are many blinded and deluded people who, perhaps, really think that a divided state of religious affairs is advantageous to the cause of Christ, and that it meets with heaven’s favor. As I now recall, I have never heard but one passage of Scripture cited in justification of such a claim. Sometimes thoughtless partisans, and preachers who glory in their sects and human denominations, try to obtain comfort out of the reading of John 15:1-27, where Christ said, "I am the true vine, my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." In all effort to gain some comfort, as aforesaid, this has been repeated in justification of the great number of denominations on the earth. They are styled branch churches, and in them, folks abide.

Friends, that is a ridiculous conclusion. First, Christ was talking, not to human denominations at all, but to His immediate disciples. To them He said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." Ye who? Peter, James, John, Thomas, Philip, Nathaniel, Bartholomew, and other individual disciples of the Lord.

Hence I know that He did not have in mind organizations of which I have had occasion to speak during the past few nights.

Second, at that time there was no such thing on this earth as a denomination like unto those with which we are surrounded today. In the third place, there has never yet been a vine producing different branches, from which one may gather different kinds of fruit. If, on one branch, clinging to the vine, you pick a tomato, every other fruit on that same vine will likewise be a tomato. It won’t be even a different kind of tomato. They are all the same kind. From such premises the conclusion follows that the man who seeks to justify religious division by the wonderful lesson taught in that connection is grabbing at a straw. So I raise another question: is religious division wrong?

I think the answer comes from every thoughtful man that surely it is.

Friends, that division is wrong is evidenced by things quite familiar to us, and visible on every hand.

There are homes in the city of Nashville, this afternoon, wherein Jesus Christ cannot be mentioned, nor his word read, nor his cause discussed. Why? Because of division in that home. The father is a member of one organization, the mother is a member of another. Each of them is jealous, envious, and anxious to build up his own denomination, and the result is, they dare not mention the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I have been invited into homes, either by the husband or the wife, and before I made my entrance there was this warning: "Now, Brother Hardeman, we are glad to have you in our home, but you understand that it won't be in order to discuss religion at all." Of course, I understand that the devil reigns triumphant in many such homes, and that Jesus Christ is a total stranger. His name cannot be mentioned without the bitterest kind of feeling and animosity on the part of those thus bound together in sacred marriage ties.

I know again that there are sons and daughters in the homes of many who are not members of any religious body at all. Stop and ask why? That respectful son knows that if he were to join Dad's church, Mother would feel bad about it, and would think he did not love her as he should. Hence he will not go with his father. On the other hand, if he went and became a member of Mother's church, Father would feel the same way as formerly pictured of her. Therefore, in order to remain neutral, and to show equal respect for both Father and Mother, he refrains from union with either of those wherein they have their membership. What the ultimate results? That son becomes hardened, grows wayward, drifts upon the bosom of the popular, current, and lands at last in hell. Why? Because of the fact that he was reared in a home where religious division prevailed, where the Bible lay unread, and the name of Christ unmentioned.

There was never a more sacred responsibility resting upon parents than that they do all within their power to blend together in perfect unity, and to make Christ the unseen guest in their home perpetually, and the word of God a matter of public and of private conversation within their realms.

I have seen neighborhoods and communities unable to make progress, unable to get together in things material, and to push forward many things for their own benefit. Why? Because of religious division.

I have known of schools that have been absolutely ruined, and educational possibilities for the children blighted because of religious prejudice, division, and partisan spirit.

I have seen small towns unable to make any progress. Whatever one side favors, the other says, "O. that is a regular Methodist trick, and we Baptists and Presbyterians are against that." And, vice versa: "The Baptists are trying to run everything in this town, and the rest of us are going to see to it that they do no such thing." What is the result? The wheels of progress are locked and a forward march is impossible.

Friends, it is positively wrong from every point of consideration, both human and Divine, for a people claiming to march under the same flag of Christ, to be torn into parties and different organizations. But let me say to you that there is a difference between the words, union and unity.

I am pleading, not for Union, but for Unity. If you will allow technicalities to be mentioned, I shall suggest to you, as best I can, what I conceive to be the difference between these terms. A unity is the blending together of particles which are identical, and of the very same kind. To illustrate: Were ~ to break the bone in that arm, and thus sever it into two parts, I would expect this bone, plus that one, to be knit together. That would be unity elements of the same kind blending together in ~ cohesive manner, and thus forming one out of the same material, and identical in nature. That is what we call homogeneous Unity or oneness. But again: Sometimes, in all operation, we are told by the physician that the skin attaches to some other organ, and hence we have adhesion. What does that mean? The blending together of elements of different kinds. Such is a

heterogeneous union. I can possibly make that clearer to you by all illustration. When our American boys, during the World War, were marshaled on the field of battle under the leadership of General Pershing, there was unity, but when the allied forces were brought together, and placed under General Foch, there was union. It was the coming together of the different nations, each with its respective constitution, idea and characteristic. For a common objective they blended together temporarily. There never was a unity of the allied forces during the whole war.

Now, what we want in this country, that thing which bids defiance to all kinds of skepticism, is not simply all amalgamation of the type last mentioned, but we want the forces of God to be one in the sense of a coherent unity of the homogeneous type. But again: This meeting, being fostered by about forty different congregations, is a unity meeting. There is not a congregation having any part in it that differs in origin, doctrine or practice from any other one in it. That is unity and co-operation.

Kindly allow me, for the sake of the illustration, to refer to a meeting recently held here, conducted by the world-renowned preacher, Gipsy Smith. I don't know just how many were blended into that, but let me say, as a matter of fact, that meeting was not a unity. It was a anion for only a brief time. There was no common flag or constitution, no common set of by-laws, rules and regulations governing the different denominations entering into it. For the time being they were together; but just as soon as that meeting was over, the union broke up and each one went back to his own denominational pen. Some of them had their feelings hurt, because they thought they had been used for their moral and financial support, and then insulted at the very last hour.

Friends, union is not the thing for which Christ prayed. As a band of Christians, we do not need that which simply superficially combines our efforts, but we need that which will make us all speak the same thing and be of the same mind and judgment. We want to be one in origin, doctrine, and practice. The ideal of the late President Woodrow Wilson, wherein all the nations of earth would blend together, would have been a union. Not until all people accept just one flag, and one constitution, will there ever be unity among the nations of this earth.

I submit to you two fundamental propositions. I mention the first this afternoon, and it is this: God Almighty demands unity. If I meet with His approval I must do all within my power to bring about that for which Jesus prayed and the apostles so earnestly pleaded.

I call your attention, first, to the Scripture read at the opening, John 17:20-22. This is in reality the prayer of our Lord. It is the last prayer that He prayed as he neared the tragedy outside the city's walls. He humbled himself, lifted his face toward the throne of his Father, and prayed that the glory which the Father had might be his to share. He prayed that he might have the strength and the courage to withstand all that confronted him. The second division of that prayer was in behalf of those who had followed him, and upon whom, as his chosen representatives, the salvation of the world depended.

He next turned to the great mass of suffering humanity and prayed after this fashion: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

Faith comes by hearing God's Word, and if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of that testimony announced by his representatives, we are included in this wonderful prayer.

Read the sentiment: "I neither pray for these alone, but for all them who shall believe in me through their word."

First, "That they all may be one."

Second, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

Third, "That they all may be one in us."

Fourth, "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

There are four points emphasized in that brief statement. "I pray that they may be one in that same sense as thou art in me and I in thee. One in sentiment, one in purpose, one in spirit, one in action" Well, why?

Jesus Christ recognized that the most fruitful field of infidelity on this earth was division among his professed followers. He knew that the devil could wield that club more effectively than any other one possible. Therefore, to leave him without a weapon, and to rob the enemy of his gigantic power, he said, "Father, I want them to be one, that the world may know that thou has sent me."

Friends, right here in the city of Nashville, there is rank infidelity in some of your great schools. I regret to say that in them there is modernism, atheism, Darwinism. The Bible is ridiculed and reduced to a common level with uninspired books by many in our schools and by some in the pulpits.

What would be the greatest possible means on the part of the professed Christians of walking triumphantly over such opposition? Surely it would not be for them to divide into a thousand factions, but for them to see to it that nothing is preached or practiced which is unauthorized by the word of God.

Each religious body should earnestly ask, "Have we got something connected with our system of church government or our method of worship unknown to the Bible? If so, we cannot expect the possibility of unity on that which is foreign to God’s word." But again: Jesus said, in John 10:16: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd"

Let me ask, how is it 1,900 years this side of the Christ’s declaration? Instead of there being one fold in America, there are about 200. Instead of there being one shepherd, at whose beck and call alone they respond, there is a multiplicity of just such. Are you respectful of the prayer of the Christ? Are you seeking to cooperate in bringing about its answer? Is it the very leading idea of your being for there to be one flock and one fold, under the leadership of but one head?

If so, you have the spirit of Christ. Otherwise, you are none of his. But that is not all. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, there are these significant words: "The cup of the blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Hear it—"For we, being many, are one bread, and one body."

Friends, that is the sentiment of God’s Book. As long as professed Christians are divided into denominations, what can be said to the infidel, who will charge openly and above board that they do not believe the Bible themselves? What answer can be made? But again, in 1 Corinthians

12:12, there is this sentiment: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."

Romans 12:4-5 : "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." My friends, division is wrong. I care not what else it may be. You may sometimes ease the situation and pacify your own conscience by saying, "Oh, our division is over a minor affair."

We sometimes get so big, broad-gauged and liberal that we ridicule all divisions of a minor type.

Let me say to you, friends, there is not one solitary division which curses the city of Nashville, but is as big as that which was condemned, in no uncertain way, by the peerless apostle to the Gentile world.

Let me read to you 1 Corinthians 1:10 : "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." That is Paul's pleading. May I cooperate with him in all effort to bring it about? When I kneel down to approach the throne of grace, am I so irreverent of His word as to thank God for so many divisions that every man can have a church to suit his choice? Will you fancy, just a moment, a modern preacher on this side of the stand, in all candor and fervor lifting his voice, and thanking God for the multiplicity of churches on this earth?

Picture in contrast the Son of God in the shadow of the cross, as he also lifted up his voice and said, "Father, I pray that they all may be one." I want to know with which of these sentiments we are spending our efforts, and putting forth our powers at this time? And Paul said to the Corinthians: "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

What was the trouble down at Corinth? There was division among them. Over what? Over their ideal of a preacher. One said, "I am after Paul, I am a Paulite; thank God for it." Another said, "I am all Apollosite, and I rejoice in his name." Another said, "Well, I am after Peter, I am a Cephasite." And still a fourth class said, "We are after Christ."

Friends, can you fancy such a condition among professed Christians in the city of Corinth, where there were 400,000 people at that time?

Here are the professed followers of the Lord divided into four parties. "Who is that crowd over yonder?" "They are Paulites." "Well, who are those over here?" "They are Apollosites." "And who are these?" "They are Cephasites." "And who are you?" "We are Christites or Christians" Such was the condition, and the things over which they were divided I want you to hear Paul's reply.

"Is Christ divided?" You know the answer is, No. Then the implication is, "Why are ye?" Again, "Was Paul crucified for you?" Of course not. Then why be a Paulite? Again, "Were you baptized in the name of Paul, or Peter, or Apollos?" Certainly not. Then Paul raises the point and drives home the argument: "Why do you want to wear the name of Paul? He didn't die for you. You were not baptized in his name. It is wrong to be a Paulite."

Then to the others: "Was Apollos crucified for you?" "No." "Were you baptized in the name of Apollos?" "No, no." "Then, my friend and brother, why wear the name of Apollos?" And thus the argument continues. I certainly do not have to stop long in making the application to present-day affairs. Friends, it is not because I dishonor any great man of earth that I refuse to wear his name or become a partisan after his order, but because the teaching of God's book positively prohibits it. Was Martin Luther crucified for you? The answer, "No." Then why be a Lutheran? That is Paul's argument. Were you baptized in the name of John Calvin? No. Then why be a Calvinist? Did John Wesley die for you? No. Then why wear the name which refers to him?

Friends, I assert in the presence of God Almighty and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, it is wrong for men to wear human names, to be divided into human parties and thus to weaken the forces of professed Christianity. All such gives the devil the advantage in the march to victory. But again, 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, let me read: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."

Well, why, Paul?

"For you are yet carnal." The word "carnal" means fleshly, physical the opposite of spiritual. Why, Paul, are they carnal? How do you know it? What is the outstanding evidence? Hear it: "For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one of you saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

Brethren, the spirit of God does not dwell in people thus divided, and so forgetful as to wear human names. I never said that. But Paul, the peerless apostle, did, and it is applicable to the city of Nashville and to every place where people are divided into organizations for which there is not one syllable of authority in all the Book of God When you profess to raise aloft God's banner, and, at the same time, wear some human name, Paul says you are carnal, fleshly, and walk as men.

If such remarks, coming direct from the Book of God, do not make us feel the fearful responsibility for the divided state of religious matters, I think, speaking reverently, that God Almighty could not make such all impression upon mortal man.

Therefore, regardless of what may be said later by way of the possibility of bringing about such a happy, glorious and delightful state, I conclude by pledging to you right now 100 per cent of my being to try to bring about that unity demanded in Holy Writ. I would be inexpressibly glad to see all answer to that prayer of the Son of God, to the earnest pleading of the Apostle Paul, and to the general sentiment that runs throughout the entire Bible.

Therefore, I maintain that the Bible alone is the only possible standard; that the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord, is the only name; and that the organization about which the Bible has so much to say is the only organization wherein such a unity is possible. Let us walk by faith, not by sight. Let us walk by the Word of God which will guide us in the same path, bring together scattered and diversified forces, and unify every man and woman on this earth who loves the Lord, and who delights in the promulgation of His cause.

It is to just such a principle and platform that you have been invited. Again we are going to stand together, and join in the singing of the song selected. While we sing it, won't you who are thus disposed come forward, extend to some brother your hand and make known to him your will and wish? My friends, we plead with you to accept the Lord Jesus Christ; to wear his name and to be guided by his word forevermore.

Chapter 69

3.12 - UNITY (No. 2)

UNITY (No. 2)

One week ago tonight I began the study of that institution established by the Lord Jesus Christ. Two talks were devoted to its study and history. As, doubtless, all of you know, I have followed the history of that departure from the New Testament order which resulted in the establishment of the greatest religious ecclesiasticism the world has ever known. I also pursued the study of the Reformation and the rise of the various denominations now prominent in our land.

After that I turned to the study of another movement known as the Restoration.

You have followed patiently. Some of you, doubtless, have been startled at some of the announcements I have made, but I believe you cannot doubt the correctness of them when you take the time to turn to history's page and there search as to whether or not the things spoken be true. And may I beg of you that before you pass adverse judgment, and evidence a feeling of unkindness, that you go into some of the libraries, delve into the history of these things and thus see for yourselves whether or not I have stated the facts. If I have stated facts, you owe it to yourself to accept them. If not, you need to tell me just what is true and thus prevent my repetition along these lines. This afternoon attention was directed to the oneness, unity, that ought to prevail among professed Christians. We had a very fine audience, but tonight the attendance is larger by several hundred. I appreciate your presence beyond my power to express it. I just regret that there is not sufficient seating capacity for all of you to be as comfortable as I would like. But, knowing you as I do, I believe that you will be patient even though many have to stand.

Let me read, as all introduction, Ephesians 4:1-6 : "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

There are seven unities manifest in that connection. I would hardly know how to begin to make all argument to him who would deny the teachings of God's Word respecting the unity of the body of Christ. On every page where the matter is mentioned at all, that paramount idea stands out boldly and emphatically. There is one God. Of course, there is but one. There is one Lord, only one. There is one faith—just one. There is one body—but one.

Jesus Christ established but one church. Our Lord shed his blood to purchase but one church. He is tonight the head of but one church. His spirit dwells in but one body, which is the church. That thing is settled and nobody but a rank, blatant infidel would dare deny the statements thus made. In the light of that, what will you and I say, when on the plains of eternal judgment we come to stand, as all apology for the variety and the great number of different churches extant in this land? Somebody is responsible for their existence. I ask you, as a dying man to dying men and women,

did the Lord organize about 200 different churches in this land? I am certain that you say, "No." Well, who did? I believe that I can plead, "not guilty." If I know myself, tonight, I have never tried to organize a church. I never expect to, and I do not want to be responsible for preaching or practicing anything that tends to bar or hinder a 100 per cent fellowship in the church bought and built by Christ.

It is one of the most difficult matters that I have ever tried, to get the conception of the church of God that I have in mind before my friends. It is hard to make them understand that the church about which I talk is not one of the denominations.

People ask why I don't give more concern to the other denominations? Allow me to say, I am not a member of a denomination. I don't want to be. I never made one step looking to that end in my life. I am against denominations, not because I hate them, nor that they are wrong per se, but because of the fact that they are of human origin and God knows nothing about such. Do you believe, friends, that when Jesus Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," he was talking about a denomination? Is that your conception of his statement?

Now, if that was a denomination, I want to ask, "Which one was it?" Do you know that there isn't a preacher in Nashville who will dare name that thing promised by Him and call it a denomination? You have as great men as dwell upon the earth, as learned and as honorable in all respects, but they know better than that. So do we all.

What shall we say about it? When Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it," I stop and ask, "Was Paul talking about a denomination?' With one accord we all say, "No."

Now, this question: Is it possible for you and me to become a member of that church concerning which Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church"? Can I become a member of that? If so, I would not be a member of any denomination.

If I know myself, that is the only institution on earth with which I want to be affiliated.

I do not claim to be a member of any kind of all organization except that very one.

Now you may think that I am not a member of it. Maybe not, but I am surely not a member of anything else. When I begin to talk about the church, my friends look upon it and seem to think it is a denomination.

Let me try to present the matter after this sort of all illustration. Suppose that 2,000 years ago there was all organization known as baseball. In a book all things connected with it were recorded. There is the outline of the diamond, a field, the various numbers required, the rules, regulations and everything governing that institution. The game was played according to its rules for a long, long time, but with the passing of the years that organization disbanded, the book of rules was laid aside and practically buried for a thousand years.

Suppose then, by some chance, you and I found that very same book and began the study of it. Finally we make a plat upon some field exactly like the diamond specified in it, select our right number of performers, lay down exactly the same rules and regulations, and start the game according to original specifications.

Question: Is that the same thing that was practiced 2,000 years ago? What would you call this game that we have now re-inaugurated? Would it be some phase of baseball, some department? Or would it not be the identical thing restored upon this earth? Of course, it would.

Beloved, that is my conception of the Church of God. I believe that by the Holy Spirit all organization known as the Church of God, the Church of the First Born, was planted upon this earth. I think that members were initiated into the privilege of the same, and that before it ceased its operations there was a book of rules giving all the details regarding it, the terms of induction, the principles governing its operations, etc. But with the passing of the years there was the gradual fading away until at last all the players and all the performers were largely forgotten. There came a time when you could not find all institution like that anywhere. The very book of rules governing it was wholly in seclusion, and kept as a matter of privacy. The years sped on, but by and by the old book of rules was found; men delved into it; they began to understand the nature of its organization, and to blend together, precisely as the book of rules suggested, and, therefore, set up housekeeping again. They were governed, regulated and ruled according to the simplicity of the old Book.

Question: Is that the same institution?

I believe it is. And that is the principle, fundamental, of the great Restoration Movement, of which I have spoken.

It demands and it has taught that the very central thought was the unity of the people of God upon this earth. They looked over the field of denominationalism; they believed that many men and women had obeyed the gospel; and after so doing, had gone and united with some kind of a religious fraternity, the origin of which was purely human, and a knowledge of which is not even mentioned in the Book of God. The Restorers sounded the invitation, and bade people come out of those things purely human in nature and stand together upon the original platform. They urged that all be governed by the original rules, and have the assurance that it is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, restored upon this earth in its ancient simplicity and primitive purity. The afternoon talk was devoted to the one thought, namely: "Division is Wrong." God demands that His people stand as a solid phalanx. Such little progress has been made that, sometimes, it is really discouraging. The army of the Lord is divided into about 200 different detachments, each one striving against the other. A spirit of jealousy and denominational rivalry prevails, while the forces of His Satanic Majesty march solidly under their black banner. The condition is a lamentable one indeed.

There are many things upon which all denominations are agreed. For instance, the existence of a God, the belief in the virgin birth of His Son, the reality of the Holy Spirit, and the inspiration of God’s word. In spite of agreement on these we are divided. Whether hopelessly so, or not, only time can tell.

I cannot now mention all of the distinctions, and matters that differentiate, but I take the time to note some of the outstanding things upon which, if we could agree, it might be possible for us to come together and adjust all minor differences. If such were accomplished we could raise aloft the blood-stained banner, and openly defy all skepticism,, infidelity, and even atheism, that curses the earth even at this hour.

What are some of those things over which we are divided? I mention them after this order. First, the religious world is divided over the question of creeds, disciplines, confessions of faith, etc.; second, over what constitutes valid, legitimate and acceptable baptism.

Third, we are divided again over the very names that Christians should wear.

Fourth, we are further divided over what constitutes acceptable worship. I stop with these four.

Ladies and gentlemen, is it possible for it to be possible to bring about a solution of item No. 1, and the world stand together, joying and rejoicing over a unity respecting a creed or confession of faith?

Now I want to proceed on this principle, and I do it not only because duty demands it of me, but because I owe it to you. I shall not ask you to make any sacrifice of faith or to give up any principle whatsoever. I tell you candidly that I would not do that myself, and I have never yet knowingly asked any man to do that which I would not under similar circumstances be persuaded in my own judgment to do. But I want you to get this distinction. There is a difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion. Faith is that which comes by hearing God's word. It is the acceptance of evidence coming from holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. To make that just as emphatic as I can, let me say that whenever I tell you I believe a thing, I have put myself under obligation to turn to God's book and read the evidence from which that faith comes. And it follows that if I cannot find the evidence and the testimony in the book of God, I do not believe it at all. It was merely a matter of opinion. The world, tonight, is divided on the question of opinion. When you ask of me to give up my opinion about a thing, you have asked nothing unreasonable nothing but that ought to be considered in the light of a desire to banish division. So, friends, let us not hesitate to ask that opinions be given up. I think this is absolutely necessary, but I am not going to ask any man to give up one iota or one syllable of faith that comes from the book of God.

How many creeds are there in the land today? I have never counted them, but it is said that there are about 1,600, or possibly more. At first, doubtless, you ask, how can these things be, if there are not more than two hundred different denominations? Friends, it is after this manner. Different denominations have a multiplicity of creeds. They are issued at regular and stated intervals so that, with the passing years, each denomination has a number, no two of which are exactly alike.

Pile up all the denominations, with their revisions, amendments and continued creed-making business, and possibly it reaches around 1,600, or more.

Question: Is it possible for the world to unite upon any creed that man has ever written?

I believe the very asking carries the answer in the negative. Without being unkind or discourteous to any soul, let me suggest, for instance, that here is the Episcopalian Prayer Book, written by men scholarly, earnest and sincere. It is a great production. It has passed the British Parliament; it stands out hoary with age, and appeals unto humanity almost everywhere. Would you Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, who would really and sincerely love to see unity brought to pass, be willing to lay down your respective books, and, for the sake of unity, accept the prayer book of the Episcopalians? I know your answer. I would not do it, either.

Well, why not? Let us fancy a Presbyterian, just a minute. He could say, "Mr. Episcopalian, you are asking of me all unreasonable thing. I grant that you have in your midst learned men and scholarly

men who wrote that prayer book, but let me tell you that we Presbyterians had as much right to make our confession of faith as you fellows did your prayer book. Therefore, I will not give up mine, which I admit is human, to accept yours, which stands on no higher ground."

Brother Methodist, what are you saying?

Hear him. "Mr. Episcopalian, while I borrowed my discipline largely from your prayer book, yet I do not aim to give it up, and accept yours instead. Mine is as good as yours." And, indeed, it is. Thus the thought continues.

Let me say, friends, that it is a matter of impossibility to bring the different denominations together by the acceptance of any human creed or discipline or prayer book the world has ever known.

"Well," says one, "Brother Hardeman, why don't you try them with your creed?" That is just what I aim to do.

"But," says one, "do you have a creed?" Of course I do.

"Well, have you got a discipline?"

Certainly so.

"Well, have you a confession of faith?"

Yes, indeed.

"Do you have a book of rules governing the church?"

Certainly, and I am glad, tonight, to give answer to these questions that are sometimes on the lips of anxious inquirers.

Friends, the Bible is my creed. The word "creed" comes from that which signifies faith, belief. I am glad to tell you I believe God's book from lid to lid. It is my discipline. It is my confession of faith. It is my prayer book. It is my church manual, church directory in all of the affairs of life. I have never subscribed, nor have my brethren, to any human product on the earth. Any man who says to the contrary, speaks ignorantly regarding that concerning which he ought to be informed.

Friends, I, therefore, without timidity or reservation at all, come to you tonight and submit that the only way possible for the world to get together on the subject of a creed is to cut loose from, throw away, and bid good-bye to all those written by men, and accept the Bible and the Bible alone as its only rule of faith and practice.

During Gipsy Smith's first tabernacle meeting he said that if he had his way about it, he would gather every creed and put them all in one pile, saturate them, and strike a match that would send them into forgetfulness. I can most heartily join in such a sentiment.

I do not say that with bitterness toward the creed, nor to any man who has subscribed. I believe, before God and in your presence, that they are largely responsible for the divided state, and a tearing asunder of people who otherwise might possibly stand together, and thus glorify the God of our being. Hence I submit the Bible as the one book and only one that ought to be recognized by mortal man.

Now, somebody may chance to say, "Mr. Hardeman, you don’t go by the Bible." That is not the question tonight. My practice is not under discussion just now. I am talking about what the world must accept. If I haven’t done it, all the worse for me. The old question of baptism has agitated the mass of the people for lo, these hundreds of years. It can never be outworn, and it never grows old, because fellowship in no church, except the Quakers, can be had only through what the world calls the rite of baptism. In this country there are three things presented for the study and acceptance of mankind. Here they are: sprinkling, pouring, immersion. On those three things the world stands divided. How can unity be brought to pass? Can the world unite on the practice of sprinkling? Our Roman Catholic friends, the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and some others, could without any sacrifice of faith. They believe that sprinkling is acceptable. But what about the great eastern Catholic Church? What about the Baptist Church, with its seventeen different branches? They could never agree to accept sprinkling. The brotherhood with whom I stand could not conscientiously unite with any people on the practice of sprinkling for baptism. It would be, to us, hypocritical in the extreme. Could the world unite on pouring for baptism? Such all effort would prove all absolute failure. My friends, if this world ever gets together on this item, immersion and that alone must become the universal practice. But some one says, "Brother Hardeman, you promised that you would not ask us to give up any matter of faith." So I did, and to that promise, I’ll he true.

"Mr. Roman Catholic, do you believe that immersion in water, to a penitent believer, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is scriptural baptism?" What do you think he will say? He must answer, "Yes."

"Well, could you accept immersion then, and not give up any matter of faith, or any principle?"

"Sure I could. I think sprinkling will do just as well, but that is all opinion, and I would not lose anything to accept immersion—in fact, I believe that is the meaning of the word ’baptize.’"

Friends, he does not have to give up any principle in accepting immersion.

I next appeal to my Presbyterian friends (and I am glad to number them by the scores). "Do you think that immersion to a proper candidate is scriptural and acceptable baptism?"

"Why, of course, I do."

"Well, then, would you have to sacrifice any matter of faith to accept it?" "Certainly not." He thinks sprinkling will do just as well and is more convenient, but he doesn’t question immersion.

Now, for the sake of! unity, why not give up that which is in doubt in the minds of some, and walk by faith, and by that which is conceded by every scholar on earth?

Ask our good Methodist friends, "Would you have to sacrifice anything in order to be immersed?" Of course not. For the Methodist Discipline says that if the candidate demands it, the preacher shall immerse him. Hence, it is a doctrine of the Methodist Church to practice immersion if they can’t get by otherwise. So then, friends, there is no sacrifice, and if the world wanted that unity, and were willing to give up those things which are in doubt, we would soon see such a coming together of the forces of the Lord Jesus Christ as would electrify the city of Nashville, and from it there would radiate a wonderful influence that would be felt all over this broad land. Is immersion in doubt? Absolutely not. Does anybody want to deny that immersion is scriptural? Not one. Where

is the question mark? It is after sprinkling and pouring, and not after immersion at all. In this act there is safety, soberness and soundness of principle. Immersion is all act of faith. The next point I want to mention is this: we are divided in this country as were the people at Corinth. Instead of wearing the name of Christ alone, many of them were honoring Paul, Apollos and Peter by wearing their names. Paul condemned them most Beverly. We are doing similarly in the state of Tennessee tonight. If you had asked them were they not Christians, they would, in all probability, have said, "Yes." But while they proposed to be Christians, they exercised the right and the liberty to wear the names of Paul, Apollos and Cephas. Unanswerable arguments were made against such party names. In spite of such lessons, a parallel exists among us today.

One man says, "I am wearing the name of Luther."

Ask him, "Are you a Christian?"

"Oh, yes, I am a Christian, but I propose to wear the name of Luther."

Another says, "I propose to wear the name of John the Baptist."

"Aren’t you a Christian?"

"Yes, sir."

Thus the world continues and division abounds because of such. Will I be out of order, will I be unkind if I say, as did Paul to those at Corinth, "You are carnal and walk as men"? When the Pharisees brought to the Master a piece of money, they asked him: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?"

He said: "Show me the tribute money," and they brought unto him a penny.

He asked the question: "Whose is the image and whose is the superscription?" Christ determined to what government that piece of money belonged by two things: namely, first, the very material that went into its makeup, and, second, the stamp or superscription it bore.

Friends, you want two things to be characteristic of you. First, you must be molded in heaven’s mint, with all sin driven away, and evil and hypocrisy burned out of your life. You want to come forth as a newborn babe, clean and spotless as the driven snow; second, you want heaven’s stamp impressed upon your brow, so that it may be known to passersby exactly where you belong, and whose you are. That unity for which Christ prayed can only be made possible by every child of God wearing the name of Christ and that alone.

If I were to ask you to give up your respective denominational names, and let us all be Campbellite, I am certain that you would rebel. While Alexander Campbell was a great man, you do not aim to wear his name, on the ground that he did not taste death for you, and into his name you were not baptized. Therefore, you would kindly and positively refuse my request, and I could not blame you. The same is true of every other name outside of that whereby man must be saved. If you reach heaven you have got to become a Christian. But you do not have to become a Baptist to go to heaven, and the Baptist preacher will tell you so himself. You don’t have to become a Methodist to reach heaven. You don’t have to be a Presbyterian to walk the snow-white streets of the city of our God, but you do have to be a Christian. Therefore, it follows that Christianity is one

thing, denominationalism is another thing, and a useless thing, in the sight of high heaven. Therefore, for the sake of unity, let us cut loose from every name other than the name of Christ.

Mrs. Hardeman, who chances to be present, honors me by wearing my name. It would not set well at all with me if she, being my Wife, wanted to wear someone else's name. I would rebel. I would say, "My dear woman, if you expect me to love you, to care for you, to provide for you, and protect you, just leave off the other fellow's name, at least until I am buried." Friends, that is the way we feel about it. The children of God are married unto Jesus Christ. He is the bridegroom; Christians are the bride. I hold that the child of God has no right to look to Jesus as the husband, and then go around this country wearing somebody else's name.

I think, if Mrs. Hardeman loves me as she ought, she does not want to wear someone else's name. And I am not afraid to say that if you and I love the Lord Jesus Christ as we ought, we will not want to wear any other name. Therefore, it is a matter of most serious concern. Are we honoring the husband? Are we honoring the bridegroom in his absence? Christ is away now preparing that house not made with hands. After awhile he will return to call the bride to himself. Will he find her wearing another's name? Let's be true to him, whose we are and honor him by making prominent his name alone.

Let us tear down our denominational fences, get rid of those things that pen us off into parties, and stand once more as a unit. But again: is it possible for us to come together on the question of worship and no one have to sacrifice a matter of faith?

Consider the following. If a congregation simply teaches God's word and preaches the Bible, can't you join in with them without any hesitancy or compunctions of conscience whatsoever? If they earnestly pray unto our Father, either kneeling in humility, or standing with bowed heads and humble hearts, can't you join in that? When they come together around the Lord's table, which is the Lord's supper, eat of the simple bread and drink of the simple fruit of the vine, surely you can have a part with no sacrifice of principle. When it comes to the contributing of your means, do it with simplicity. Simply put your hand into your pocket and give according to how you have been prospered. Give without any great tooting of the horns, or sounding of the alarm, or any claptrap method. Give in a straightforward scriptural way, in the spirit of the gospel of Christ. Everybody can join in that, without the sacrifice of a single principle. When you come to the sounding of His praises, all can do it by singing and making melody in their hearts unto God. There is nothing objectionable; there is nothing that tends to drive you from participation therein. You can do that honestly, conscientiously, believing that you are doing just what God demands. On these matters there can be unity. But when you introduce the societies of men, and the mechanical machinery that some want to bring into the church; when you begin to burn incense, and to light candles, and to wash hands, then you bring in that for which there is no authority, and you ought not to expect the world to accept such, and upon it absolutely agree. The primitive disciples had but one organization, viz.: the church bought with the blood of our Lord.

They carried the gospel, through this organization, into all the earth, and unto the uttermost parts of the world. If this program is not sober, sane and sound, big enough, broad enough, and wide enough for every man to occupy, without the sacrifice of any matter of faith, tell me that wherein it is lacking, and, if possible, I will supplement it. Suggest to me wherein it oversteps heaven's law, and I'll use the pruning knife and pare off that which is superfluous and unauthorized by the God of

heaven.

Upon the terms of admission into the family of God, the world can also agree. You think it is right for men to believe in the Christ. Everybody in Nashville so does, except our infidel friends. You think a man ought to turn from sin, and face toward a higher, nobler and better life. You believe that men ought to acknowledge the Christ with their lips. There is not one present but who says penitent believers ought to be baptized.

You may not believe as I do regarding the purposes of baptism, but we are together upon the importance of submitting to God's will, and surely this is a part of it. If you can accept the platform as thus announced, I bid you do so now. I want you to take God at His word; believe what He says; become and be what He requires; live as He directs, and trust Him for the fulfillment of every promise.

Chapter 70

3.13 - UNITY (No. 3)

UNITY (No. 3) Your presence indicates a fine interest in those things I have been discussing in your midst. I am glad to address you again along the same line of Christian Unity.

I read to you from Psalms 133:1-3 : "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

If I know myself, every utterance shall be prompted by a sincerity worthy of the subject presented.

I verily believe, friends, that the greatest hindrance to the acceptance of the gospel of Christ is a divided state in the religious world. I ought to consider most earnestly: Am I fostering division? Am I promulgating something not in the Bible which my friends and fellows cannot conscientiously accept? If so, I am treading on dangerous ground, and have a fearful responsibility resting upon me.

I wish every person in this audience would take all introspective view, and ask himself the question: "Am I practicing something untaught? Am I boosting something unknown to the Bible? Do I stand for that which is a bar to the unity for which the Master prayed?" When such is discovered, the honest soul will be glad to give it up. The partisan spirit, the biased and prejudiced individual will hold on to it, regardless, and thus subject himself and those who might be influenced by him to hell itself, rather than admit any error and from it turn away.

I have here all extract from the Nashville Banner of March 22nd, this year. In the department of "Everyday Queries," answered by Dr. Parkes Cadman, there is this question from Bridgeport, Connecticut: "Why don’t the churches of America get together and stop their waste of manpower, money and religious influence? I am not a churchman, but I believe I should be if it were not for the useless divisions that exist among men and women who profess to believe in the Lord."

I do not know who asked that, but it is a sensible question. It hits the nail squarely on the head. I believe it is about the sentiment of a great number of sober-minded citizens all over our land.

Dr. Cadman answers by saying: "Much that you say is undeniable, but church union by force would be as impossible and as wrong as enforced marriage by the state." Of course, I have to agree with that also. A union brought about by force, or by the passage of a law, would not be worth the time spent in writing it upon the books of our state. That is not the principle underlying Christianity. Unity can never be brought about as a forced matter. It can only come by our getting the consent of our minds that we are going to take the Bible just for what it says; that we are not going to be anything, preach anything, or practice anything, other than that clearly stated therein.

Now when we definitely decide to assume that kind of all attitude, a unity is possible, but if we maintain a partisan spirit, and are determined to be unyielding, regardless of whether a thing is a

matter of faith or a matter of opinion, then our hopes for such a glad day are largely blighted. The devil will march triumphantly on with that solidity which ought to characterize the people of our Lord.

I want to speak for a while about the church, and see if we cannot come to a better understanding of its meaning. If possible, I want to eliminate the idea that the church about which I read in the Bible is a denomination. It is not. And one great step will certainly be gained if we can differentiate in our minds the church which Jesus died to establish, and the denomination organized by men uninspired. The word church comes from the Greek word "ecclesia," which means all assembly, separated or called out, regardless of the character or kind of all assembly it is. The word, therefore, of itself does not carry any sacredness or holiness at all. I have attended political conventions in this very auditorium. They were assemblies, but I would not accuse them of being either sacred or holy. But the word has come to refer to that assembly under the authority of Christ, and in which his spirit dwells.

Now I think from some passages, you will be able to see why this term so aptly applies. In John 15:18-19, there are these words: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." That thing called the "church" is in the world, but it is not of the world. It is not even on good terms with the world. And there is no love lost between them. The church of God hates worldliness. The world hates the things of the church. Loyal, faithful disciples of the Lord were never loved by the disciples of the devil. The church is being led by the Son of God; the world is being led by the devil himself. These two armies are striving, the one against the other. They are the exact opposite. Each one is the perfect antithesis of the other. Therefore, if I am under Christ, and a member of the church, I am called out of the world, and am separated from it, in that I partake not of its evil. I am under the marching orders of Him whom the world hated long before it did His followers. My friends, God’s church upon this earth is God’s people wherever they are, and whosoever they may be. I wish that I could get that across to you in such definiteness and concreteness as I now have in mind For emphasis, I repeat it: God’s church is God’s people who dwell upon this earth. Every child of God, therefore, is a member of the church of God.

I read to you from 1 Corinthians 1:1 : "Paul called to be all apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth."

Every Christian in Corinth was then incorporated in the term church. That wasn’t written to some little religious body, or some partisan sect. It was addressed to God’s people, hence unto God’s church in Corinth.

I call attention to 1 Peter 2:9 : "Brethren, ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, all holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness unto his marvelous light." Who are those that constitute a peculiar people? Who are those that go to make up a royal priesthood? Who is that chosen generation, and that holy nation?

It is God’s people, God’s church. So, then, the church of God is big enough, broad enough, comprehensive enough, to embrace every child of God on earth. I would be one of the last to come into your midst, and even intimate that the institution bought with the blood of Jesus Christ,

and filled with his spirit, did not comprehend and embrace every Christian in all the wide world.

If you have, ladies and gentlemen, in all candor, done the very thing that Christ bids you do, Brother Hardeman believes that makes you a member of the family of God. Many of my friends may have done this very thing, and then have gone and joined some kind of a church or organization for which there is absolutely not one word of authority in all the Bible. Herein lies our trouble. It is the business of "joining" that has brought division and parties into our midst.

Denominational names, creeds, and peculiarities, which many honest people cannot accept, are responsible for that divided state which unfortunately characterizes us as a people. Not only is the church of God made up of God's people, but it is God's tabernacle. Hear Paul in Hebrews 8:1-2 : "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such all high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens: A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." The context shows conclusively that the tabernacle is that spiritual building known, in another place (1 Corinthians 3:9) as God's building, hence the church of God is God's people; it is God's tabernacle; it is God's building. But that is not all. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 : "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? and that the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Christians sustain their relationship to God, not by any process of joining something, but by virtue of the fact that they are Christians. That fact of itself makes them God's people, God's husbandry, God's house, God's tabernacle, that peculiar people, royal priesthood, holy nation, and chosen generation. The church of God is, in addition, styled "all habitation of God." In Ephesians 2:22, Paul says, "In whom ye also are builded together for all inhabitation of God through the Spirit." The church is, therefore, a tabernacle, a temple, a spiritual house made up of lively stones. It is composed of men and women born again, who have been translated out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Son of God. Surely we can appreciate the statement which Stephen made when he said, Acts 7:48: "Howbeit, the Most High God does not dwell in temples made by the hands of men." The church of God is not a material thing. With all the wealth of Tennessee, and the great material that might be gathered all over the earth, you could not out of that build the house of God. You could not build the church of God. When Paul stood on the crest of Mars Hill and looked over the classic city of Athens, with its multiplicity of temples in which they gloried, he saw they had the wrong idea, and he emphasized Stephen's statement by saying (Acts 17:24): "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Hence it is out of order for me to talk about some building out here on your streets as God's church.

I now call attention to the use of the word church as it applies in the Bible. First, there is such a thing in the Bible as a house church. In 1 Corinthians 16:19, Paul says: "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." In the home of Aquila and Priscilla there were Christians, and Paul said that they constituted a church in the house of those mentioned.

Wherever Christians dwell together they can properly be styled a church. Every Christian is included in it.

Second, there is such a thing mentioned in the Bible as a city church. I have read to you 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, which I repeat: "Paul called to be all apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth."

How many are embraced in that? Every Christian in Corinth. If Paul were to write a letter to the church of God at Nashville, who do you think would be included in it? Every Christian in this city would be included and thus addressed.

Every child of God in this city is a part of the church, and, therefore, the obligation to lay aside everything tending toward a partisan spirit, rests upon him the more heavily.

Third, there is such a thing as Christians in a district which make up the church in that section. Hence, the church embraces every Christian in a certain territory or region.

Fourth, the church is used in a general, unlimited, universal sense. Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." In this and other passages the church comprehends and embraces every child of God on earth. When some of my friends charge that Hardeman thinks only those who meet at a certain place are members of the family of God, they misjudge that concerning which they speak.

I believe that any man in Nashville, or elsewhere, who has heard the gospel, who has believed it with all of his heart, from every sin has turned away, has acknowledged the Christ, and been buried in his name, trusting in him, looking to him and relying upon him, has become a Christian. You may well ask, Why am I pleading as I do? I am urging all who become Christians to be one and to have no divisions among us. In private talks I have been able to get numbers to admit there is no authority for many things they do, and yet they hold on tenaciously. For instance, I want you to cut loose from some little man-made book, or creed. I do not believe in it and you admit it is purely human and unnecessary. Now let me ask, Why not discard it and let both of us stand together on the Bible alone? Who becomes responsible for division in this case? Surely it is the one who holds on to that which he admits is unauthorized.

Again, you wear some human name. Now, grant that both of us are Christians. I cannot conscientiously be a Campbellite or a Mormon or a Lutheran. Therefore, what is it that divides? It is that determination on the part of my fellow-Christian to wear some name other than, or in addition to, that of the Christ. The sin of division lies at his door.

I propose to be just a Christian—that is all. I think every man on earth can be the same thing, and have no offense attached whatsoever. I think the name Christian is big enough and broad enough and wide enough for all of God’s people, and with it they should be content. The following from Chas. Spurgeon and Jno. Wesley are in order. Spurgeon said: "We love Christ better than a sect, and truth better than a party, and so far are not denominational. He who searches all hearts knows that our aim and object are not to gather a band about self, but to unite a company around the Saviour. Let my name perish, but let Christ’s name last forever. In harmony with this, Wesley said: "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have long divided the Christian world were forgotten and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear His word, to imbibe His spirit, and to transcribe His life in our own." My friends, let’s lay aside all party names that foster division and wear the name Christian only. Let’s do away with every human creed and accept God’s word only.

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) What more do we need? What more can he say? A good lady called me this afternoon on the telephone, and asked why it was that the people, who styled themselves the Church of Christ, oppose instruments of music? I do not know her name and, possibly, never saw her, but she impressed me as being perfectly sincere and anxious to learn all she could. Her question was wholly in order, and the obligation rests upon me to answer. She promised to be present tonight and, hence, a word along that line.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century, the great Restoration Movement was inaugurated. Its object was to break away from denominationalism and human parties, and to persuade all Christians to stand together upon the word of God. Its slogan was: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is our only rule of faith and practice."

Time rolled on, and that sentiment grew. People flocked to such all announcement, until they numbered quite a few upon this earth.

I regret to say that, in the course of time, division came among them.

I want to tell you about how it came to pass. First, there grew a different attitude toward the word of God, and the Bible was preached with a different conception and from a different point of view.

Some in that movement began to look upon the Bible as a book for general guidance only. They came to believe that man was left free to be governed, in the details of worship and service, by his sanctified common sense. Whatever was not specifically forbidden was considered permissible, provided it suited their fancy. Whatever was not wrong in itself, and not directly condemned by the Bible, could be used in the worship, if a majority of the congregation desired. Following that sentiment and attitude, human societies were organized, mechanical instruments were introduced, and almost every kind of sectarian practice was accepted. That element drifted into a denomination and has become one among the many.

Others in that movement, true to the platform first announced, assumed this attitude toward the Bible: they looked upon it as a complete guide in all of the affairs that pertain to worship and service to God. To them, whatever the Bible does not authorize, whatever it does not teach, and whatever it does not specify, is not a part of God’s will. They refrain from introducing into the service of God anything for which there is no authority.

Friends, I do not know that I can present these lines of divergence any clearer than by these two general statements. One of them asks the question: "Where does God prohibit it?" The other asks: "Where does God teach it?" One of them draws the conclusion that if God does not prohibit a thing, he can do as he wishes. The other one concludes that if God does not teach a thing, he has no right to do it. Thus, you can begin to see the lines of cleavage.

It is agreed by all that the first thirty years after the establishment of the church was the most fruitful missionary activity this world has ever known, notwithstanding the great advancement, and facilities in material things at present.

It is further agreed that there was but one institution during that thirty years through which missionary activities were carried on. That institution was none other than God’s great missionary society, which was the church. With the passing of time, with the growing sentiment of denominationalism, even in the ranks of restoration, what happened? A missionary society of human origin was organized upon this earth, with the result that it supplanted the church, took charge of missionary affairs, directed the missionary, received his report, made him amenable to the society and not to the church.

Those, therefore, who were not ready to be led away into human devices, and into organizations unknown to the Bible, had a right to oppose and to declare this a departure from the sacred oracles and from the original movement.

You organize one society, and that gives you the right to organize two. You organize two, and the third is in order, and there is no end to it. Therefore, those who had wandered away from the old paths found themselves submerged in a multiplicity of societies that made the denominational world ashamed. It came to pass that the denominations were almost forced to take a patent on everything they invented, lest the digressives might incorporate it, and claim it as their own. I thank God that many of them now are sick of societies and are advocating their abandonment.

What else? Everybody knows, who knows anything about it at all, that in the New Testament, when the church of God met to hymn his praises, they sang and made melody in their hearts. And it has been but a few recent years that our digressive friends have had the courage to affirm that the Bible teaches the use of mechanical instruments. They got rather brave a few years ago and, in one of their human conventions, passed a resolution to discuss their contention all over the State of Tennessee. Their courage was admirable, but their judgment was poor. After a brief experience the matter dropped and nothing more is now heard of such a desire. My objection to mechanical instruments is not out of bitterness toward them; not because I think there is harm in the instrument, per se, but the objection is simply this: I have adopted the principle and pledged myself to the platform of not going beyond that which the Bible authorizes. My digressives brother asks me: "Where does the Bible prohibit it?" I answer, "Where does the Bible authorize it?" Christians walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). No man can use mechanical instruments and walk by faith. By searching the scriptures you will find that God does not authorize it, does not command it, does not demand it, and that there is no example in all apostolic history for such a practice. The man who is faithful and loyal to God’s word will not go beyond it. "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." But there are people just as honest as I am, who say: "If the Bible does not condemn it and you like it, what is wrong in it?" Let me answer by presenting a parallel. If the Bible does not prohibit the burning of incense, in so many words, and if I love to smell it, as do my Catholic friends, on what ground can you object? I am frank to say that I do love to smell the incense a-burning. I sat for two hours in old At. Peter’s in the city of Rome, and there enjoyed the odor of the incense continually diffused throughout that great audience. I sat there, and asked myself: "Where does God say, ’Thou shalt not burn incense’?" I could not think of a single passage in the New Testament. There is none. Is there anything wrong in the act itself? No. I asked, "Do I like it?" Of course, I do. Then why not go back to America and introduce the burning of incense? I can, on the very same ground, and by the very same argument that my brethren in error introduced mechanical instruments. They stand on the same parallel.

If there be a difference, it is simply this: I want you to see it. The instrument of music appeals to the auditory or hearing nerve. The burning of incense appeals to the olfactory or the smelling nerve, and the difference between the instrument and the incense is just the difference of nerve. That is all. Which nerve do you wish to satisfy? If you want to gratify, with pleasing strains and luring symphonies, the auditory nerve, then don't object to the Catholic when he wants to indulge or delight his smelling nerve, unless you think more of your hearer than you believe he ought to think of his smeller.

So, in the spirit that I trust actuates one moved with the anxiety for the unity and the oneness of people led by the Bible, I have not hesitated to ask my friends in error, "Why don't you, for the sake of unity, give up that which you yourselves admit is wholly non-essential and unauthorized, and let us stand together once more?" But when a man departs from the word of God there seems to be no end, and no telling where on earth he will go.

I charge, candidly and respectfully, however, that my digressive friends have gone so far that they have become as much a denomination as any other on this earth. They have forsaken the principles of the Bible; they have fled the Restoration movement; and they are divided among themselves over matters once considered fundamental.

They are disturbed over whether or not the pious unimmersed shall be admitted into the fellowship. Some of them have gone back upon the doctrine of baptism—immersion— as all act of obedience to God, and as a condition of pardon. Hence, on foreign fields, and even in this land, they have become so sweet-spirited and so anxious to be one among their sister denominations, that they will receive members into their fellowship who have not been buried with the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism. They will blend in with almost any religious body—even those whose doctrine they do not believe. Therefore, to me, they are wonderfully inconsistent, even hypocritical in the act. My brethren and friends, I allow no man to be more courteous than I try to be. I have tried to be polite and civil toward all men. But I want to tell you, when it comes to a matter of faith and a matter of conviction, I would not yield one inch to gratify any soul I have ever known.

If the time has come that men cannot speak forth their convictions, we are in a bad way, religiously, governmentally, socially, and otherwise.

I have mentioned to you some of the things that have marred the peace and happiness and unity of the body of Christ. I call upon you who are here to give serious consideration to these things. If you have named the name of the Lord, and have done that which Jesus Christ demands, and are willing to come down the aisle and give to me your hand on the principle and with the idea that you are going to accept a platform, every plank of which is found in the book of God, I pledge to put my hand in yours, and if I am not already on it, I will get there the very minute you point out wherein I am lacking. But some may say, "You want everybody to come to you." No, that is not it. I just want you to get rid of things purely human, so that I can come to you. I will do every inch of the coming, if you will throw away those barriers that stand as a hindrance to that unity for which the Saviour prayed. If this be the will and wish of any, the invitation is now extended.

3.14 - VOWING (No. l)

VOWING (No. l)

I read to you this noon Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 : "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not shine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou has vowed. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel that it was all error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of shine hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities, but fear thou God."

Then I read again from Deuteronomy 23:21 : "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee." And then, finally, from Numbers 30:2 : "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear all oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."

Those words suggest to you the subject of today, "Vowing." That word simply means a pledge, a promise, or all obligation assumed. These passages teach that when we thus make our vows, make our pledges, or give our word, we must make good, and do according to that which proceedeth out of our mouths. When I tell you that, as a people of the world today, confidence among us is largely lost, I tell you that which everybody knows. There is a restless state all over the earth.

Every kind of a suggestion is being made, the object of which is to try to still the troubled waters, restore tranquillity, and bring again that peace for which good men and women earnestly sigh.

What is the matter with things? I believe it may be summed up by saying that we are untrue to the statements I have just read in your hearing. It has come to pass that men occupying places of prestige and prominence have proved unworthy of the confidence of their constituency.

We have been taught in this country that the highest gift of the American people is to be chief executive of our land; that the heads of the cabinet departments are outstanding men of uprightness, integrity, honor and candor, whom we can trust to steer correctly the great ship of state.

What has come to pass within the last few years? It has been demonstrated that some of the heads of the different departments of government gathered around the table with our chief executive have been found rotten, corrupt, liars, and thieves of the deepest dye. Unfortunately, our President waited until public sentiment and public pressure demanded their removal and

denunciation. This country today has a right to put a question mark after many who occupy places of prominence and trust. The love of money, the root of all evil, has been evidenced until even the dignified body of the United States Senate has been compelled to exclude those who secured their places by means of corruption. There seems to be a price put upon thievery and rascality, and the greater the scoundrel in many respects, the more prominent some seem to be. So you know, friends, that with men of that kind at the helm, this country is headed toward the rocks, and the ship of state is bound to go over the mighty cataract and precipice into wreck and ruin at last.

I am not a politician, I am not making any kind of speeches. And as the good old darkey once said, "I have no reference to allusions whatever," but as a citizen I am interested in governmental affairs. The call today comes from all over the land for all outstanding leader of the American people; one who has been tested and tried, and who has come through the turmoil of political conflicts and temptations with his skirts still clean, his honor still preserved, and in whom this country might have every reason and right to put confidence and trust. We need men who cannot be swerved by petty affairs, who have genuine convictions, and, regardless of other matters, who have the courage to stand for them.

Some years ago a friend of mine escorted me through the Fourth and First National Bank of your city, showing me all of the various departments of that splendid structure. I gazed upon those gigantic walls; I looked upon the fine iron bars and the steel vaults, and beheld all of the electrical equipment. I was told it was fireproof, burglar proof, etc., and that valuables deposited would be safely guarded and protected both from fire and robbery.

I really thought that he was telling me the truth about that. I still think it, but after passing out, I said to him: "That is fine and impregnable against attacks from without, but the safety of this bank, and the greatest guaranty of security, is not the gigantic walls, nor the steel doors, nor the iron bars, nor the electrical equipment, but, after all, the guaranty and the security rest in the honesty and integrity of those on the inside."

I went to a similar bank in the city of Jackson and, while down in the vault, and being showed some safety boxes, I rented one. I never have known just what I wanted with it, but it sounded just a little bit large, and so I picked out one, and paid the rent for a quarter in advance. The cashier, or one of the officials, handed me a little key, and I deposited some papers. Mrs. Hardeman and I then returned to our home at Henderson, and along the way I said to her, "How do we know but that the fellow who handed me this key has already made him one exactly like it, and tonight, while we sleep in absolute confidence, he may take out all we put into our safety box?" Would the great walls of the building be any hindrance to him? Not a particle. Would the steel doors be any barrier? Surely not. He understood how to unlock them. What was there about the electrical fixtures that was any hindrance to him? Not a thing on earth. Let me tell you, there has been as much money stolen from banks by those on the inside as has ever been by those on the outside. Steel doors and iron bars are no protection to us as a people whatsoever. Our protection lies in the honor, the integrity, the manhood, and the truthfulness of those to whom we commit ourselves and our possessions.

We spend our money for stocks, bonds and securities. We invest it in life insurance policies, and think we are "sitting pretty." Had you ever thought about it? What is that piece of paper that you call a bond worth of itself? Possibly not one penny. I have a life insurance policy. It is a great big

piece of paper. How much is it worth? Of itself it is practically without value, and yet I prize it highly. I pay for it, and keep on paying, and must until the day of my death. Now, wherein is my guaranty? It is first dependent upon the integrity of the lawyer, the stenographer, and those who drafted that instrument. Second, it depends upon the integrity of the executors and their genuine signature. Third, it depends upon the integrity of our courts, enabling me to enforce my claims. Finally, my guaranty depends upon the masses of the people with the sentiment demanding that honesty and fairness be meted out unto our fellow citizens. As long as 51 per cent of the American people are characterized by integrity and honesty, this country is safe. But when 51 per cent are headed in the opposite direction, there is no guaranty of either life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness. Do you have a Liberty bond which you are holding, and in which you have invested? How do you know that the bill authorizing its issuance was correctly drawn? How do you know that the proper authority signed it? Maybe it is a forged affair. Friends, when we buy a piece of property and pay our hard-earned dollars for a little piece of paper designated as a deed, how do we know that it will hold? I know there is much red tape and many technicalities in our legal procedure. What is it all about? It depends absolutely upon the honesty of our officials. The thing that is most needed in this country today is a restoration of old-time, downright, rugged truthfulness and honesty.

I have to borrow money sometimes. Being both a school teacher and a preacher, you may think that ridiculously strange, but strange things happen. In our little town there are three banks. I know every official in them. I walk down to the bank and say to the cashier, "I want to borrow $500 for a month." He says, "Well, Brother Hardeman, we have the money, and you know banks make their way by lending." "All right, sir, you have a customer." And then there is a little quiet spell. Finally the cashier says, "Well, Brother Hardeman, how do you want to fix it?" I answer: "I am a preacher." He says, "I understand that, but our finance committee has decided that the very fact a fellow is a preacher is not satisfactory security, and, besides, we have a whole lot of preachers' Notes in here that we would like to let you have at about fifty cents on the dollar."

Now, ladies and gentlemen, it ought to be that the very fact that I propose to be a preacher would give me some business asset, but it does not, and I cannot borrow money on the fact that I preach. It just won't work.

I come back again and say, "I am a Christian." "Yes, we respect Christianity all right, but we have a whole lot of Christians' Notes in here that are past due, and we cannot collect on them."

I just want to ask you, since there is nobody here but us today, what advantage in the business world does a man who claims to be a Christian have? Don't you think the fact that my professed Christianity does not guarantee me any security in the business world is a great reflection upon our so-called Christianity? Of course, it is.

Now, who is responsible for that? Must I get mad and "cuss" out the cashier? No, no. He is not to blame. Some of my fellow preachers and pretended Christians have not made good their word. They have not kept their vows. They have not done that which proceeded out of their mouths. Therefore, the world has its question mark after them, and they are ridiculed as unworthy of business trust.

We have to say a whole lot of things sometimes when we don't want to say them, and I am doing that right now. I know men that "cuss," drink liquor and He in the back alleys, do things that are publicly condemned, yet, if I were the grocery man, I would rather have some of their names on my ledger than to have those of some pious, godly, sanctified preachers from whom you could not collect a dime to save your soul.

Now these are unfortunate things, and I want to say to you, brethren, I can preach faith and repentance and baptism all I please of course, I believe that Jesus Christ taught these things, and that salvation is promised unto the man who so does—but unless I make good my word, fulfill my vow, pay my debts to the very best of my ability, I am as certain to go to hell as there is one. I have no patience with, I have rather contempt for the fellow who will sit up on the front seat and warm the. church bench every Sunday morning, and then cannot be trusted three inches in any kind of a business deal.

I had a letter from all infidel just a day or two ago, in which he said: "Mr. Hardeman, don't sneer so much at the infidel. I would rather be all infidel than to be a hypocritical church member." I am not going to have any debate with that fellow on that question. I, too, would take his side of it.

"When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, or speaketh a word to bind thy soul, thou shalt do according to all that proceedeth out of thy mouth, thou shalt not break thy word." That is what this country needs. When a man says a thing we ought to be able to take it at 100 per cent. I think it a shame that in our governmental affairs there has to come any kind of a question or suspicion regarding public men. So far as I know Governor Horton is all honest man. I believe that Mr. Pope, another candidate for governor, is a man of the very highest type, and I feel certain also that Mr. McAlister represents the best type of citizenship. I would that all such men to whom we look as leaders would remove any kind of doubt, that all of us would quit trying to plan any kind of a deceptive scheme. Why not come out in the open, say what we believe, speak forth our honest sentiments, stand by them until convinced to the contrary, and then be men enough to reverse our coats and continue on the broad-gauge idea of genuine uprightness and integrity? Our boys and girls need to learn that the very finest dividends possible to them must come from the application of those old-time virtues that are being lost and relegated too much to the background. There is too much formality, churchanity, and playing to the galleries. The world looks on and points out the scoundrels, the hypocrites, and the whitewashed souls who are proposing to bear aloft the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ. The danger to the church and to Christianity is from within—from those who claim to be religious, while, in reality, they are not. There are not enough of the devil's representatives on earth, nor of his legions in hell, to stop the forward march, and the onward progress of the Church of God, and if it fails in this country, it will be by the suicide act, and not by defeat from without.

Lincoln once said, "This country need have no fear of some transAtlantic power coming and subjecting it to a state of slavery, but we will either survive or perish by the deeds wrought within and among ourselves." That is equally true, friends, regarding the church bought with the blood of Christ.

If you and I could just be content with what the Bible has to say, and transcribe into our lives the eternal principles upon which our hopes of heaven must forever rest, and demonstrate that honesty, that fidelity, and that trustworthiness in our relationships as citizens and members of the

body of Christ, there would be no need of long-protracted efforts from the pulpit. Our very lives would be all open epistle known and read of all men, and would draw the multitudes unto Jesus Christ our Lord. The criticism in this country is not against Christianity, so far as its fundamental and foundation principles are concerned, but it is against men and women who claim to indorse it in theory, and yet slap it in the face in practice.

I appreciate the work being done in this city. I rejoice over the fine practical work being wrought by the Central Church of Christ right in the heart of this city. It is a place where the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the wise and the otherwise, may go and be made to feel at home. There are none so humble but that they are received with open arms, and their physical necessities administered unto. This is the practical application of that religion that is pure and undefiled. It is but the paying of our vows and the performance of our obligations as children of God. In so doing we are building upon the rock of Christ Jesus our Lord.

If I build a magnificent structure upon the shifting sand, it is certain to go to wreck and ruin of its own accord, but if I rear even a humble structure upon the solidity of the Rock, let come what may, it is as certain to weather the storms and bid defiance to the cyclones as God's Word is true. But all of that is dependent upon my keeping my vows and paying my obligations both to God and man.

Christianity, friends, is a vow unto God. When you march down the aisle, and extend your hand, it is a pledge, a vow, a promise unto the God of the universe. Unfortunately so many have thus done, and later fallen by the wayside. The path of humanity is literally strewn with the bleached bones of those who were unable to press on to the completion of their journey.

I wonder if there are not those in this audience who would like to have part and fellowship in the work of the Lord. Won't you assume life's obligations and pledges, and, to the best of your ability, be faithful even unto the end? If so, come while you can.

Chapter 72

3.15 - VOWING (No. 2)

VOWING (No. 2)

I must express my hearty appreciation for such splendid responses to these noonday addresses. Your presence has been both all inspiration and all encouragement, and whatever good may have resulted, I am sure that all of us rejoice together.

I read to you Psalms 66:13-14.

"I will go into shine house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble." The talk today is but a continuation of that begun yesterday on the subject, "Vowing." I said to you that a vow was a pledge or all obligation, and that the trouble with the world was largely due to the fact that we are not fulfilling our sacred vows, and living up to our pledges and obligations. I said that some among us occupying places of prominence had practiced deception and that confidence had been largely destroyed. After almost every man a question mark has been placed. A nation is in a strait when such conditions prevail.

We are spending more money and giving more attention to the education of our children than ever before in the history of the world, but the great stream that comes forth from the schoolroom bearing its diplomas year after year is not such a stream as to elicit the greatest confidence on the part of the world into which it passes.

There is something lacking. They are fine specimens of humanity; their intellects have been trained and developed; their perceptive powers have been made acute; and all the intellectuality has been attained that could be expected; but somewhere there is something wrong, and the location of it is in the fact that the schools of the land are lacking in making moral and spiritual impressions upon those committed to their care.

We have got to reverse our gear before peace and tranquillity can prevail upon the earth, and confidence in our fellows be restored.

I had somewhat to say yesterday noon regarding our obligations, the breaking of our word, the failure to pay our honest, just debts, and also indicated that those with whom I am usually classed are not altogether free. All over this country there are preachers (and they belong to no special organization) who are questionable with reference to their honesty in the common business affairs of life. I have heard of preachers who would not pay their rents, grocery bills, etc.

Don’t you know, my friends, that the cause of Christ cannot get anywhere with representatives and leaders of that type?

Now I feel sure that my heart is in genuine sympathy with preachers. I know that lots of times the remuneration is so meager that it becomes next to impossible for them to "get by," but that of itself is no reason for not making good their financial obligations, or, at least, doing the very best within their power.

I would not have any preacher on earth to misinterpret what I am now to say. I know that there are various reasons for preachers changing localities, but right on its face that does not always look good. Sometimes there is attached, in spite of what might be the real facts, just a little bit of question when you see a preacher here one year, somewhere else next year, and a third place the next year, and so on. Sometimes there are debts left behind; his influence has departed; his honesty has been questioned; and, hence, he goes to parts unknown.

Now that is unfortunate. I want to tell you that the preachers who have been the most influential are those who have settled down at some place, and have there stayed and built up the cause of Christ around about them. I say it with no reflection upon the others, but I just appreciate such characters as Brother John R. Williams, who planted himself in Obion County and there stayed until twenty and four congregations were built up, most largely by his efforts.

Over at Greenfield is Brother J. L. Holland, who has been there since I can remember, and is as well beloved today as any citizen in that town or throughout the country.

Brother Joe Ratcliffe is but a synonym for Bardwell, Ky.—mention the one and the other comes to mind.

Brother M. C. Kurfees has been with one congregation in Louisville ever since I heard the name of Kurfees mentioned.

Brother F. W. Smith has been preaching for the church down at Franklin for lo, these many years.

Brother W. D. Campbell stayed with one congregation in the city of Detroit for more than thirty years. Now I think the recitation of these matters complimentary in every phase and feature. It shows that they have been able to make good not only their business obligations, but their lives have been such that there was no occasion for moving. They can look out over the field wherein they have sowed the seed and have developed the crop. It becomes to them a source of joy and rejoicing always.

Let me now call attention to some of the outstanding characters in the Bible, prominent because of the fact that they did what they said they would, and made good their obligations. In Genesis 14:1-24, there is the record of Abraham’s having pursued his nephew Lot and the citizens of Sodom far toward the northern part of their land. He wrested them from the grasp of old Chedorlaomer, who had subjected them and was carrying them away. This event is one of the outstanding features in the life of Abraham. Upon his return to the city of Sodom, he was met by the king, who offered to pay him handsomely and richly for such a wonderful victory attained.

Now there would have been nothing wrong in Abraham’s accepting silver and gold. He wasn’t prejudiced against having such, for the Bible says that Abraham was rich in silver and gold, in flocks and in herds. Well might the king have given unto him sufficiently of material things for the return of his people.

Why didn’t Abraham accept a great remuneration? Anything wrong in it of itself? Absolutely not. Would he have been condemned had he done so? Under ordinary circumstances, no. Then why didn’t he do it? My friends, there is just one reason: Abraham said to the king, "I have lifted up my hand unto God that I would not accept from a thread to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is shine." "Why, Abraham?" "I said that I would not." "Well, but, Abraham, did you

give your note or sign a bond to the effect that you would not accept anything?"

“No."

"Did you mortgage any of your property?"

“No!”

"Well, what is at stake?"

"Just my word, that’s all."

Friends, why has Abraham gone down on the pages of sacred history and his memory been perpetuated on down the line? It is because of the fact that such elements evidenced themselves when he had power to show to the contrary. Therefore, as long as time shall roll on, and God’s Book be read, the story of the uprightness and the grandeur of Abraham will influence the generations of men.

Again, in Genesis 28:1-22, when Jacob left home at the threat of his brother Esau, and started back to old Padan-aram, he came up from Hebron to Jerusalem, and on twelve miles north to Bethel. Night overtook him and, there being no hotels or places where people ordinarily stay, he simply pillowed his head upon a rock, lay upon the kindly bosom of Mother Earth, had the canopy of the heaven as his cover, and the twinkling stars as his light.

There he slept and dreamed, and in a vision there was a great ladder reaching from earth to heaven, on which the angels were ascending and descending. The result of that dream was a recognition of the presence of God. The next morning Jacob took that pillow of stone, and set it up as a pillar and designated that spot the house of God—which the word Bethel means. Then he said this: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." That is Jacob’s vow. That is the thing which proceeded out of his mouth.

Nobody went his security; no piece of property was tied up. Now I understand thoroughly that when a man like Jacob does not have anything, it is all exceedingly easy matter to make promises as to what he will do. Unfortunately, I have noted some characters who, when fortune did chance to come to them, forgot their pledges unto God and turned wholeheartedly away.

Jacob had vowed a vow, and went on his way. He met and married one whom he loved at sight; he stayed in the house of his father-in-law possibly forty years, and at last did return, rich in the affairs of the earth, but so far as history records, the time never was when Jacob failed to make good his vow. It became a law to all his posterity, that one-tenth belongs unto God Almighty.

Again, in 1 Samuel 1:1-28, there is a story of interest. A man by the name of Elkanah had two wives; the name of one was Peninnah, and the name of the other was Hannah. Hannah had not, and apparently could not, become a mother. In those days that was a great calamity. Of course, times and customs have changed. The matter grew serious with Hannah. Her desire was to become the mother of a manchild. Finally she went to the Lord in prayer about it, and made a vow

unto God, saying: "Oh, Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of shine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget shine handmaid, but wilt give unto shine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." In the process of time that prayer was answered, and Samuel was born. His very name means "asked of the Lord." The mother of Samuel kept him and nursed him and denied herself many trips and pleasures that otherwise she might have indulged in, until, by and by, the time cam' to wean the child.

Now she loved him as tenderly as any of you mothers ever loved your first-born babe, but because of her word, she brought him to the place assigned, and there parted with him, dedicating Samuel to the Lord.

Upon what ground did she part with the very idol of her being? On the principle, "I said I would."

What a fine opportunity today, with corruption and rottenness around about us, for some boy or girl to stand out, and impress the world so that it may say, "What he says you can depend upon." To be absolutely honest, perfectly reliable, plus competent, is the very best that can be had. This audience knows the pathetic story of Jephthah, who at first was cast off by his brethren, on the ground that his mother was a harlot. They thrust out Jephthah, saying: "Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman." The time came when those very sons were in subjection to the Ammonites and were struggling and longing for a leader. They decided that there was only one man able to lead them to victory and to wrest them from the oppression. That man was none other than their half-brother whom they had cast aside. With humility they went to Jephthah and said: "Come and be our captain, that are may fight with the children of Ammon." My friends, we ought to be mighty careful about kicking some poor boy aside, or ignoring someone who could not help conditions round about. That is not the only time that some big swell fellows have, in after years, had to go to some poor boy and ask of him favors. But anyhow, Jephthah came and led them, and as he passed over unto the Ammonites, he lifted up his voice and said, "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

You know what happened. The battle raged, and by and by the smoke of warfare cleared away. Victory perched upon the banners of Jephthah's army, and with joy and gladness he returned home amid the anxiety of his people, and as he neared his own house, out stepped his only child, a fair maiden, beside whom he had neither son nor daughter. Upon her approach Jephthah bowed down, and said, "Alas, my daughter! thou has brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." The daughter said, 'My father, if thou has opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which proceedeth out of thy mouth."

You ask, "What the result?" After postponing the matter for two months, the record closes by saying that Jephthah "did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." This meant that his name was to be wiped out and his posterity rendered impossible. But he stands today upon the pages of God's Book a fine illustration of a man's fulfilling his vow and making good his word.

Jephthah had not learned some things. If he had had one of our modern lawyers, he could have turned fool for awhile and had some alienist to sit on his case and declare him insane. But no such chicanery and camouflage had been thought of. In the New Testament, we have the story of Herod the tetrarch. He had married his brother Philip's wife and had been condemned by John the Baptist. His ancestry was as mean as the devil could wish. Their hands had been dipped into the blood of their fellows, but they had great respect for their word. At a great birthday dinner, his step-daughter, Salome, danced in his presence and greatly delighted him. He was so enraptured that he promised with all oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. Prompted and coached by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of that preacher, John the Baptist." Old Herod did not suspect anything of that kind. He had forgotten all about John's criticism. Men can do that, but women, never. He had made a pledge, and a vow.

Now Herod is up against this: he must either kill all innocent man or he must break his word. What shall he do about it? What would you have done? Here is the sequel: Herod sent and had John the Baptist beheaded, rather than to go down in history and transmit the story that he went back on what he said. I fancy that even God admired the high regard old Herod had for his word. When a couple march down the aisle to be united in the sacred relationships of matrimony; when they come in the presence of proper authority and stand under the sacred arch where the orange blossoms kiss the brow of beauty and pledge themselves to live together the remnant of their days, a sacred vow has been made.

How are such treated in this country? Too often it is counted as the proverbial scrap of paper, and any little kind of excuse will be used for a separation. The failure to keep these vows is a stroke at the very foundation of our civilization. Instead of the characters who thus break their vows being relegated to the background and humiliated, it seems to galvanize them into respectability, and they shine forth with a greater luster than ever before. A woman divorced, if not too old, has a better chance to get married than some who have lived in single blessedness for many years. When anybody comes in response to the gospel invitation, and acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Son of God, he has made the most sacred vow known to man. By that act he pledges, promises, and vows to God the remnant of his days to be consecrated unto His service. How many do you know who have thus made that vow, and today are back in the weak and beggarly elements of the earth? How many have grown cold and indifferent and have brought reproach upon the name of the Christ whom they publicly acknowledged? The trouble today with the church of God is not a lack of membership, but it is a lack of fidelity and loyalty on the part of those who pledged themselves unto the cause of Jesus Christ. There are enough Christians to be the light of the world, which cannot be hid, if they would only cling together and work at the job. Some of us are Christians, nominally, but not in reality. As we have, therefore, entered into this relationship, that pledge not only means a devotion to God, but my vow means all obligation to my fellows as well. This is a partnership business, and if we will but walk in the light, as He is in the light, we will have fellowship one with another assured of the fact that the blood of His Son will cleanse us from every sin. Therefore, Christians, as you have opportunity, "do good unto all men, but especially unto those who are of the household of faith."

If one of my brethren is in business, and a man not a Christian in the same business next door, and if I can get the same deal with my brother as I can from the one who is not, my obligation is to trade with him who is of the household of faith. And I do that. But I am not going to pay my brother

all exorbitant price. I am not going to be out more money in order to accommodate him. If he cannot run his business on a parallel with the others, he has no right to expect my trade. So then, I believe it to be the duty of Christians to participate in a joint program for the advancement of one another in all the affairs of life. I would like to see a closer tie and the bond of unity made stronger among us. I believe that my vow unto God imposes these things upon me. But I must close. I wonder if there are any here who have never made that vow, but who now have the courage to pledge themselves and their all to the Lord Jesus Christ? Bring all you have and place it upon the altar, use it for the glory of God, the advancement of His cause, and for your ultimate salvation. If you will do that, it is a great privilege of mine, and a pleasure genuine, to extend to you the gospel call again.

3.16 - THE WAY

THE WAY Allow me to read to you from Isaiah 53:1-12, one of the most beautiful chapters in all the Bible.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as all hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And all highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, not any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

If there is any beauty attached to what is stated, tonight it shall be embodied in its simplicity. It has ever been my chief ambition to present the matter of salvation, the principle by which men and women are to-be saved, in such a simple way that everyone who hears may understand clearly what the will of the Lord is.

I want to present to you the story, under the likeness of a way leading from earth to glory—from this to the pilgrim’s home beyond.

I know that this is all age of travel, more so than any period the world has ever known. We have largely forsaken the railroads. No longer do we consult the railroad maps, time tables, or schedules, but we now write the A.A. Association and get a map of the roads and highways over our land. We study them, and are directed accordingly.

Let us fancy that we wanted to make a journey to the city of Memphis. There are certain things we would desire to know. First, I would want to ask, is there a road or a way leading from Nashville to Memphis? If that were answered in the affirmative, then I would ask a second question: where is it? That being answered, I would ask a third: where can I learn all about it, and get complete information respecting it? The fourth query is, how can I reach that road? Next, I would inquire, are there any hindrances to my entering into it? With these answered satisfactorily, I would have one more question, how can I keep in it? Are there any signs put up? Are there guides along the way? With all this information before me, I would know positively that if I ever got into the road or way,

and then would keep on going, never letting up, I would be just as certain to reach Memphis as I proceeded in my onward journey.

Now that is quite simple. All of us have had experiences like that. Now, I want to ask this: is there a New Jerusalem, a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?

I am constrained to believe that there is. Next question: do I want to reach that destination when life's journey shall have passed, and its dream ended? Of course, every sober, sane, sensible man would like to share the bliss of that wonderful land. So I become wonderfully interested in it, and want to ask some things regarding it.

Friends, is there a way that leads from this to that destination? If not, then we might close out all of our religious services, and write "Finis" over every church building's door, and stop our activities in every way. We might haul down the blood-stained banner of Christ Jesus our Lord and erect the blackest flag that a blatant infidel could possibly fancy or picture. Is there a way? Standing upon the hilltops of Israel in the long ago, Isaiah had somewhat to say along this line. In Isaiah 35:8, "All highway shall be there and a way." Now, I submit to you that Isaiah pictures two ways. How are they designated? One of them is called a highway, and the other is simply styled a way.

I do not think there can be any doubt about there being two different ways. Isaiah plainly pictures the coming of the Christ and the evidence by which he shall be known. He says, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as all hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

I turn to the New Testament about 800 years after and find that Jesus Christ did come. I look round about for these evidences of his appearance, and the illustrations are abundant' and examples are a plenty, where the eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, and other evidences thus pictured. In that memorable sermon on the mount, Christ said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Isaiah said there would be two ways to challenge the attention of mortal man. Christ presented them. Isaiah distinguished them as the highway and the a way. Christ calls them the broad way and the narrow way. Hence the high way of Isaiah is the broad way of Christ. The a way of the prophet is the narrow way of the Lord Jesus Christ. But look at it again. "All highway shall be there, and a way, and it"—not the highway, but the a way—shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

Friends, I am thoroughly convinced that there is a way. I need no further argument along that line, and I am glad, therefore, to repeat that which is in Holy Writ, viz: there is a way from this world to the eternal shore.

Now the next question: where is that road? What is it? Allow me to read to you, from the first part of John 14:1-31, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself;

that where I am there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way you know. But Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Christ never said, "I am a way," "I am some way,'' "I am one way," but He said, "I am the way." And to give emphasis, He added, "I am not only the way, but I am the truth and the life; and no man can come unto the Father but by me."

I have a great many friends who tell me after this fashion, viz: "Brother Hardeman, all of us are seeking the same objective. I am going one way, you are going another, but we will land at the same general union depot after all." That could not be true. The Bible knows nothing about any except one way, and it is positively stated that it is impossible for a man to reach that destiny by any other way whatsoever.

Friends, that thing is settled. "I am the way," and beside Him there is none other.

Well, the next question. Having learned that there is a way, and that it is Jesus the Christ, then I ask, where may I learn about it? Where may I get information regarding it? In John 5:39, Christ said, "Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify for me." But who is the "me"?

"I am the way." Therefore, all information, every chart, all manner of instruction necessary is found in the sacred oracles. Hence, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright God’s word." It will direct you, and lead you into the way of truth and of light. With these points thus far answered clearly, the next one naturally comes. How can I get to Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life? In what manner may I approach, or come unto Him who is the way? In John 6:44, there are these words: "No man can come unto me"—and remember, "I am the way"—"except the Father which has sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

I know good and well that teaches that a man must be drawn unto Jesus Christ, who is the way.

Just at that point much theology and speculation have been brought in. None of us rejects the statement or denies that a man must be drawn. If we allow ourselves to fancy how it may be done, without a further study of the Bible, we reach varied and scattered conclusions.

I cannot imagine tonight how any man can be drawn, even by God, aside from God’s power. The only way possible for me to draw men my way would be by my power, and if a man must be drawn unto God, or unto Christ, it is done by the matchless power of Jehovah. But you ask: what is that power by which men are drawn? The answer is found in Romans 1:16, wherein Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth." Therefore, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." God’s drawing power must be exerted. But John 6:45, says the same thing, and now I bid you hear John 6:44-45 together: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Who is "me"? "I am the way." Man comes unto Christ by hearing, learning, coming.

Friends, the Christianity of this book is all intelligent affair. The religion of the Bible is a thing that man learns: and learning is the first step toward Jesus Christ, the way that leads from this to the other shore. No wonder, then, it is declared, "They shall be all taught of God." No wonder that the Christ said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." And again, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." For it has pleased God, by that which the world calls the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.

Therefore, friends, a man comes to Christ, is drawn unto him by hearing, by learning. But as a result of hearing men receive faith. "Faith comes by hearing God's word," and when a man is led to believe a thing, the very next step, naturally and logically, is that he turn toward its acceptance. Hence, the items in the plan of salvation—faith and repentance are those things that draw a man unto Jesus Christ. But what does unto mean? A very small, little word, I grant you, but words are the signs of ideas. They are the wrappers in which God's thoughts are conveyed to mortal man. That word simply signifies, "to, toward, in the direction of." It never means transferred from without to within, but it carries the idea of approach, coming toward, moving in that direction. Every step that you took, tonight, from the time you left your home until you were yonder at the front door, was a step of unto. That brought you up to the margin of the tabernacle. There you fulfilled all the significance of the word unto.

Then what? It was necessary, in the illustration, for you to take another step, and that next step was not characterized by the word unto but by the word Into.

I know there is a mighty little difference in the spelling. Just drop the "u" and put all "I," and you have the other word, but it has a different meaning and carries with it this thought, viz: transition from the outside to the inside.

If I wanted to get this knife within that hat, it must first be brought unto the hat. Hence, as I move it toward, or in the direction of the hat, the word unto prevails. It has now been brought to the margin. Now you want to put it into it. What does into mean? From the outside to the inside. All right. I transfer the knife from without to within.

I walk up to the home of some neighbor, and knock at the door. I have come unto his home. I knock, and courteously he opens the door. He does not say, "Walk unto the house," but "Walk into the house."

Back in the country, when I was younger than I am now, we use to slip off and go to the old mill pond. We didn't go in bathing either, we went in awashing. Of course, I would say now, "Let's go in bathing," I remember quite well how we hastened toward the margin of the creek and removed the little paraphernalia we were accustomed to wear. Those were steps unto. Then we jumped into it. I knew exactly what these words meant before I ever saw a dictionary, or learned anything about the Bible.

Friends, make the application further. How come into Christ Jesus? Faith that comes from hearing and learning God's word, plus turning in the direction which I have learned, are those steps that bring us unto those things we desire. That's the way the Bible talks about it. In Romans 10:10, Paul said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The word into never follows faith. The idea of a man's having faith into a thing is contrary to good sense. Nowhere, in the Bible or out of the Bible, is it correct to talk about a man's believing into. You could not believe into the Masonic

Lodge to save your life. In addition to that faith you have in it, you must ride the goat.

You cannot believe into the Odd Fellow Lodge. I once was a member of that, and I know whereof I speak regarding it. You may have faith in it, but you cannot have faith into it, because the word does not so signify. So Paul said, 'With the heart man believeth unto." Acts 11:18, "Repentance is unto."

Those are steps that bring a soul unto Jesus Christ, who is the way. My next inquiry was this: are there any stop signals? Is there a bar across my passage? How may I enter into the way?

I wonder if it would be possible for all of us to be willing and candid enough just to accept what the Bible says about it without any comment or explanation? In the sixth chapter of Romans, I begin with verse 1 and read four verses, which I bid you hear carefully:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Now I never put that in the Bible. God said that. But you ask, "Brother Hardeman, what does that mean?" I think I know. It means this: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." That is what it means. Now if you ask me how do I know, here is the answer: that is what it says, and I do not think that God was joking about it, or merely playing upon words.

Friends, Paul says, "We are baptized into Jesus Christ." Now what does into mean? Transition. From where? From the outside to the inside. But you know that you could not possibly baptize a man into Jesus Christ, unless first, that man had come unto him. It would be impossible for you to come into this tabernacle without having come unto it. You took certain steps that brought you unto it. You took a final step that transferred you into it. The idea of a man's thinking he can be baptized into Jesus Christ without the proper antecedents of faith and of repentance, is all idea foreign to the teachings of God's book.

Again, Paul said, in Galatians 3:26-27, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ."

How many are in Christ? "As many of you." How many? Just as many. Any more? No. Any less? No. We are children of God by faith in Christ.

You who have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put Him on. Friends, that is the way it is in your Bibles. Numbers of people, up in Alaska, may not believe it, but it is there nevertheless. But some of my good friends say, "Well, Brother Hardeman, I cannot understand it." My friend, I do not much believe you can misunderstand it. I doubt if there is a responsible man in Nashville who is able to misunderstand that by himself. He might get some expert help, and, finally, have the matter clouded, and imagine that he does not understand it, but that would be a mere fancy. But again, 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." That body is the church, the family of God. Who is the way? Jesus Christ said, "I am the way." How get into Christ? The

Bible says we are baptized into Him. Friends, that is all I know about it. But that is enough.

Question: am I willing to accept that, or will I raise a question of doubt, and try to ease my conscience by respecting the commandments of men? Do you think that because Christ commands a soul to believe, to repent and to be baptized, the matter of grace is eliminated from salvation? Can it be by grace, and yet upon the terms that grace imposes? There is not a man or a woman in Nashville who believes that salvation is by grace any more than does your humble servant. With all my heart I believe that it is by the grace of God, and through the faith of man. But a faith that stops short of obedience is not the faith that brings the salvation or blessing.

But, says one, "I don't believe in baptism." Hardeman doesn't either. I believe in Christ. He is the object of all my faith, for He is the way, and I cannot believe in Christ, and disbelieve in anything that He said. Faith in Christ implies all acceptance of what He says. When any of my people get sick, I send for the doctor. My faith rests in him, but it would be a sorry faith that would not do what the doctor said.

But, friends, having entered into the way that leads to Memphis does not mean that we are certain to reach that city. We are now ready to commence to begin. To stop now would be futile to our first ambition. We must travel in that way until the journey is over. There are marks all along to guide and to assure us of our safety. So when a man enters Jesus Christ, who is the way, he must likewise continue his course until the end is reached and the crown is won. That straight and narrow way has its signs all along. On one you see written, "Pray without ceasing." On another, "Practice the principles of pure and undefiled religion." Still further, this, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." And then, "Let your light so shine." Finally, "Be thou faithful unto death." As you near the end and come to touch the waters in that last stream, you may ask, Master, what is this? The reply will come: "Hold fast your hand in mine." A little later, the white caps may burst round about you and the waves sweep over your brow. Jesus will then say: "This is the end of life's journey, and I now transport you into the golden glories of our Father's home." Will you, my friends, enter into that way and pledge the remnant of your days to His service? If so, I now bid you come, while angels watch and wait.

Chapter 74

3.17 - AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY I want to discuss today the question: What Constitutes Authority in Religion?

I read from Matthew 7:21-29 : "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; For he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The Christ is here pictured in contradistinction to the scribes then prominent. By virtue of the fact that they copied the Law of Moses repeatedly, they were supposed to know quite a bit about what it said, hence were often consulted regarding legal matters.

Christ came publicly announcing that while Moses said this or that, I say unto you otherwise. Thus he impressed the world from the beginning that he spake as one clothed with authority from on high.

Therefore, he said all power in heaven and in earth has been delegated or given to me. My friends, in the religious world today, as well as in the political and social, there is much disturbance. A spirit of restlessness prevails. I may not know the cause of it, but, in my humble opinion, very much of this disturbance and chaotic condition everywhere in evidence is due to the fact that we are lacking in the recognition of the right standard of authority to govern us in our respective affairs.

Men do not always see matters in the same way. Disputes arise; conflicts over our rights and privileges abound; and, but for the fact that there has been established in this land, civil courts by which our troubles are to be settled, we would be hopelessly in a continued state of confusion.

I recognize full well that when I am abused, or my rights are trespassed upon, I can appeal to the courts of our land. These are arranged as a graded system so that from the lower I can appeal even to the supreme court of our state. The decision then rendered becomes authority and beyond it I cannot go. In the business world there are standards to govern our transactions. I go into the grocery store, to buy, for instance, a dollars worth of sugar. How do I know that I am getting 16 ounces to the pound? Of course, I see the merchant’s scales, but sometimes there has been

doubt as to their correctness. What are you going to do about it? In the department at Washington there are standard weights and measures, and everyone's scales are right or wrong according as they conform to the standard adopted by our government.

How do you ladies know, when you buy a yard and three-quarters of dress goods, that you are getting 36 inches to the yard? Of course, you see the merchant measure it, but there may be some doubt of its correctness. Our government has a platinum stick 86 inches long. By this others are to be determined, and thus the controversy is ended. In every department of life, there must be some standard of authority to determine our affairs. In religion it is, perhaps, more essential than anywhere else that a correct standard be adopted. With reference to what that standard is, there are two schools to which all conceptions and ideals may be reduced. These two opposite thoughts are challenging our attention and demanding consideration.

They are designated by terms that are rather new, namely, Modernism and Fundamentalism. The question then comes, Am I a Modernist? or, Am I a Fundamentalist? With one or the other I am almost forced to take my stand.

What do these terms mean? If I am to discuss matters that now attract attention, I must acquaint myself with these words, and find out their use and significance. I have read the literature and journals of both these schools of thought. I think I know what they themselves mean.

"Modernism" is a word coined by Pope Piux X, and first applied to teachers in Europe who, he thought, had departed from the original teaching and platform of the fathers. It has culminated into a great force, and there be many today, not among the lower, ignorant class, but among the very best minds of the land, that have drifted into its teachings, and stand as propagators of the theory summed up in it. What does the word mean? Modernism represents that attitude of the heart and trend of the mind which rejects the Bible as authority, and substitutes each one's intellect as his sole guide and criterion.

I have nothing to gain, but all to lose, in misrepresenting anything, regardless of what I think about it. I have, therefore, been rather careful to try to frame up, from the writings of Modernists themselves, just what they indicate and signify in such a statement. So I repeat, Modernism rejects the Bible as authority; relegates it to the background; reduces it to a common plane with uninspired writings, and exalts the intellect of man as the sole standard by which one is to be governed.

I want you to think on that just a moment. Since the drift of men's minds is not always in parallel lines, there will be, of necessity, everlasting conflicts. The ultimate analysis of that very thought would mean this, viz: each individual would become a standard of his own, and, therefore, the world has never dreamed of the confusion, the contradiction and the wonderful chaotic state of affairs that would result if such a thought were universally adopted.

Under such conditions, I would become amenable to no power on earth. In the courts of our land I could appear in my own defense and announce that what I have done meets with my approval. I see nothing wrong in it. My conscience is clear. Therefore, I am guilty of no wrong whatsoever. The ultimate thing to which Modernism objects is the idea of miracles. The theory is that whatever cannot be understood and thoroughly comprehended should be rejected as unworthy of acceptance. The adoption and the acceptance of a thing that one cannot understand is belittling to

his good sense, and a reflection upon his mentality. Such is the essence of modernism.

But, friends, a moment's reflection ought to suggest to you that this world is filled with miracles. There are hundreds of things I know to be true and, yet, I do not understand them. As to what life is, we know no more today than did the first pair in paradise sixty centuries ago. I know quite a bit about its principles, about the laws governing it, the rules and regulations for its perpetuity, and so on. But what is that thing which, having, a man moves around among his friends, and having not, his body lies cold in death and we bury it away in the kindly bosom of mother earth? What is that thing? The chemist can go into his laboratory, take a grain of corn, analyze it into all of its physical elements, and tell you exactly its composition. Then he can take the very elements out of which it was created and bring them back together in such accurate proportions and present you with a grain of corn that you cannot tell from the genuine; but you plant his into the soil, and you can bid it good-bye. Pluck one from the ear, and plant it, and it will burst through the crust of earth, be kissed by the sun, and caressed by the showers, and at last bring forth others after its kind.

What is that in the one, that is not in the other, that thing we call life? Why doesn't the chemist put it in his? Don't blame him. He would if he only knew how.

Friends, when you go into the dining-room to partake of the good things this country has, and eat to your satisfaction, do you understand how it is that some of that food goes to supply bones, some muscles, some nerves, etc.? A part of that food will make your nails grow and other parts will send you to the barber shop. Does the professor in the school understand these things? He does not, and yet, we all accept such as facts. The same food will produce white skin on you, black skin on the Negro, and yellow skin on the Chinaman. Why all this? Miracles never bother anybody in the kitchen or dining-room. It is only in the pulpit or in the school room. It becomes ridiculously absurd for us to talk about the rejection of miracles.

I wonder if some professor in Nashville can tell me why it is that a black cow can eat green grass and give white milk from which we get yellow butter?

But, friends, the serious part of this is, that Modernists reject the Bible on the ground that it contains miracles. Inspiration is a miracle. I don't propose to explain it. I don't understand just how God enabled Holy men of old to speak. Because of this inability, Modernists claim that the Bible should be rejected as all inspired volume and be reduced to a level with Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Milton's "Paradise Lost," or any of the great classics that have come down through the ages.

Modernists reject the Virgin birth of Christ, on the very same principle, namely, they cannot understand it. Well, of course, they can't.

They begin to reason as follows: In the vegetable world there must be two kinds of plants, male and female. They talk fluently and intelligently regarding the transportation of the pollen from one to the other, and the depositing of the very germ out of which new life springs.

They go to the animal world and ask of our boys and girls, did you ever see all animal, unless back of it there were both male and female as parents? Of course not. Then they make all appeal unto humanity. Did you ever know of a character born on this earth of just one parent? Surely not. Now, upon that process of reasoning they conclude that the story of the Virgin birth is incredible.

Because he cannot understand it, and it is contrary to any of his observations or experiences in life, the Modernist thinks it belittling to his intellect to go along blindly, and accept that which he cannot understand.

Again, he asks, with a spirit of superiority, how is it that the blood of a man shed two thousand years ago, and eight thousand miles away from Nashville, can affect the sin of a man here in 1928?

Well, I don't think he can understand it. I don't myself. Then, because he doesn't understand that, and see just the philosophy and just the connection, then what? He rejects the atoning power and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. But he wants you Christian parents to know that he believes the Bible all right; he just doesn't accept its inspiration, and the atoning power of the blood of Christ.

Then again, the resurrection from the dead is contrary to our experience and observation. There is no data from which one can lay down premises and from them draw a sensible, logical conclusion, that all the dead will come forth. It is miraculous, and the Modernist says, "I cannot accept it on the ground that I do not understand it."

Friends, to a Modernist there is no resurrection; there is no power in the blood of Christ; the Bible was not penned as the Spirit moved holy men of days gone by; Jesus Christ was but a man. Notwithstanding all this, they have the monumental gall to tell me they believe the Bible. Not so. Absolutely not.

If they had the boldness to express their real sentiments, they would come out plainly and repudiate the Word of God.

If Christ has not been raised from the dead, and if he did not ascend to the Father where he was crowned both Lord and King, surely he will not come to earth again. Hence Modernists reject the second coming of Christ.

Modernism stands for everything on earth that was ever taught by old Voltaire, David Hume, our own Tom Paine, or any other skeptic of whom you have ever heard.

It has some exceedingly nice terms to be applied to such as I. By Modernists, I am called a reactionary, a non-progressive, uneducated, unscientific, uncultured, all ignoramus, all old mops back, a back number, a bigot, a crank, a legalist, etc. But these things move me not. These go to make up the devil's effort to brow-beat, to bulldoze, and to run rough shod over all opposition. They announce that all the educated, the first class, and the learned of earth are marching under the banner of Modernism. That is not so.

God be praised because thousands there are who believe His word and crown Him Lord of all.

There are many more today as devout, as learned, as intelligent, and as scholarly, who accept God's word, than there are of those who bid defiance unto Jehovah, repudiate his word, and make light of the cause for which Christ died.

I now turn to the other line of thought and call your attention to the term Fundamentalism. This word is the exact opposite of Modernism. Whatever one means, the other signifies the reverse. They are antithetic in all respects.

Modernism relegates the Bible to a common level with uninspired writings. Fundamentalism exalts the word of God and believes it was penned by inspiration. Modernists ridicule the story of the Virgin birth. Fundamentalists accept Christ as the Son of God. Modernists repudiate the atoning power of the blood of Jesus; they sneer at the resurrection; and they blight the hope of our Lord's coming again.

Fundamentalists believe that the blood of Christ can cleanse a soul from sin; they entertain a hope of the resurrection, and look for his glorious appearance at the last day. To a Modernist, this life ends it all. To a Fundamentalist, this is but the beginning. He believes there is all existence beyond this vale of tears.

Unfortunately, Fundamentalists are divided into three classes, viz: Catholics, Denominationalists, and Christians. All claim to believe the Bible and to accept every miracle it contains. They are, therefore, classed as Fundamentalists. You have a right to ask, wherein do they differ? May I answer that the difference among these three classes is purely a difference of what constitutes authority? When any matter of doctrine or polity arises in the Catholic church, by what authority is such determined? Is the question settled by the Bible? Absolutely not. The pope calls together his cardinals who, with himself as chief justice, form all ecclesiastical court. Any question unsettled is thoroughly discussed and, at last, a verdict is rendered. That decision is by them counted infallible, and it is fastened upon the churches throughout the world. Their opinion is authority for any doctrine or practice among them.

Denominationalists and Christians repudiate their claims of infallibility and hence, while all are Fundamentalists, they are hopelessly divided on the question of authority.

But, practically all denominations are only a step removed. In becoming a member of them, one must take a solemn pledge and make a sacred vow to support the discipline, confession of faith, prayer book, etc. These little manmade books govern the denominations and become authority among them. Who made the creeds? Of course, they are written by uninspired men, and hence, they become authority in every denomination accepting them. Ask any member of these human organizations about any point of doctrine or practice, and he invariably turns to his creed for authority regarding such. They are all creed bound, and are as much under the authority of the uninspired as any Catholic in all the land. Among our digressive friends, the same principle prevails. They have accepted no human creed but parts of their doctrine and practice are determined by a majority vote of their members. The organization of societies, the introduction of mechanical instruments, and the reception of the unimmersed as members are all determined by the voice of uninspired men. These matters are voted on, and the worldly-minded and untaught usually are in the majority. This then becomes the doctrine and polity of the church. These things are fastened upon them by human authority, and they make of our brethren in error one among the denominations which hinder the progress of the cause of Christ and render impossible that unity so earnestly sought by Christ and the apostles.

Christians claim to be fundamentalists, but they cannot indorse such practices, neither can they recognize human authority. To them, the Bible and the Bible alone is the source of authority. Whatever it teaches, demands, or commands they are ready to accept. Beyond its declarations they dare not go. To them the Bible is to be taken in full or it is unworthy of serious consideration. It is either the sum of all authority or it is none at all. It is either the work of God or it is a product of

man. It is either a lamp unto our feet or it is a shadow along our way.

Christians propose to take God at His word; believe what He says; become and be what He requires; try to live as He directs; and trust Him for the promises.

They claim to be nothing, preach nothing, practice nothing, for which there is no authority in the word of God. When any matter is presented, they ask: Does the Bible authorize it? Does God demand it? If so, they are ready to accept it and make it a part of their religious program. In the brief time allotted, I have submitted these conceptions of authority. I beg of you today to accept the Christian idea, and to plant your feet upon the Bible and upon that alone. If such be your will now, the invitation is extended.

Chapter 75

3.18 - IS THE BIBLE CREDIBLE?

IS THE BIBLE CREDIBLE? Your continued presence and evidence of interest in these talks are genuinely appreciated not only by me, but by those brethren who are making possible this meeting. Allow me to read to you 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Again, I read 2 Peter 1:3, "According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness." With the passing of the years, issues change and a different line of preaching is in demand. The paramount issue today is not what the Bible teaches on some special subject, but whether or not the Bible itself is credible and reliable. The time and place of the establishment of the church, the design of baptism, the operation of the Holy Spirit, etc., are, for the time, largely relegated. Men who claim to be educated are ridiculing the Word of God, and declaring it unworthy of the confidence of man. In discussing matters today, one must know the meaning of certain terms and be able to defend the claims of Christianity. I call attention to such words as Integrity, Genuineness and Authenticity. What do we mean by these words? Without being tedious, let me submit that by the integrity of all ancient book is meant its wholeness, or its uncorrupted preservation. That integrity has been preserved when it has come down the ages without material change. The branch of science treating of this subject is called Textual Criticism or Biblical Criticism.

There is not a writing of antiquity but that in passing down the ages has had some change in it. A restoration of the original text has ever been a useful and important work. Christians believe that our Bible today is a true and accurate statement of what God revealed through holy men of old. They accept the integrity of this sacred volume. By the genuineness of a book is simply meant that it was written by the one whose name it bears. In case no name is attached, its author would be determined from other considerations. Was the letter to the Romans written by Paul, or did another write it and forge his name? The authenticity of a book raises the question of its credibility or reliability. In order to be authentic, a book does not have to be infallibly accurate, but it must possess that degree of reliability which belongs to historical writings of the better class. In the light of this setting, is the Word of God authentic? This involves the science of Historical Criticism or Higher Criticism. This again is of two classes. Christians are interested in Higher Criticism of a constructive kind. Infidels are engaged in the destructive type. To determine the authenticity of any writing, certain canons have been formulated. The following are generally accepted:

1. The writings of a contemporary, who is credible, and who has had opportunity for personal knowledge of the facts recorded, have the highest degree of credibility. Under this head, public records, monuments, and inscriptions, made by contemporaries, are included.

2. Those of a writer who may be reasonably supposed to have obtained his information from eye-witnesses possess the second degree of credibility.

3. Writings based upon oral tradition have the least degree of credibility, but when the traditions of one people are corroborated by those of a foreign and even hostile people, their value is wonderfully increased. Their value depends upon the improbability of accidental agreement, and the impossibility of collusion.

4. The concurrent testimony of independent writers greatly increases the probability of all event; and their agreement has the greater force when it is purely incidental, as when one only alludes to all event which the other narrates, or mentions a circumstance incidentally explained by another.

All application of these canons to the writers of the New Testament will be classed as follows: Of the four Gospels, Matthew and John come under Canon 1, because they were eye-witnesses of what they wrote. The same is true of Luke regarding that portion of Acts in which he speaks in the first person; and of Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John in their epistles, so far as they record things that took place under their observation. The two Gospels, Mark and Luke, and a part of Acts come under Canon 2, because they wrote such events as were narrated to them.

So, out of the eight writers of the New Testament, six possess the highest degree of historical credibility, so far as opportunities to know are concerned, and only two have the second degree. The high character of these writings evidenced by the purity of the sentiments expressed, lifts them above the suspicion of being untrustworthy, and secures to them a credibility equal to that of the very best historians.

Unless there is special reason for doubt, their writings should be accepted as readily as any of the facts which go to make up history. The evidence from external sources regarding Jesus is indeed meager, but there are reasons for such. At the time he lived, the world was absorbed in military greatness. Only heroes and heroines on the field of battle attracted attention. Worldly glory and deeds of earthly valor were worthy of mention, but moral force and spiritual achievements were passed into obscurity. The weapons used by Christ and His disciples were hot carnal. He had no great armies, clad in brilliant uniforms, bearing aloft His unfurled banners. He had no great political powers or men of wealth to sing His praise. He was from a despised town and lived among the poorest of the earth, and hence, why should a historian take notice of one so humble?

Among Jewish writers who possessed information necessary to speak with any degree of accuracy, there is only one. Of course, I refer to Josephus, the son of Matthias. He was by his mother descended from the Asmonean family, which for a long time had the supreme government of the Jewish nation. Josephus was born in Jerusalem in the year 37 A.D. This was four years after the death of Christ and the establishment of the church. James was beheaded in the same city when Josephus was seven years of age. He made such progress in school that, at the age of fourteen, the high priests and some of the principal men of the city came to consult him about the right interpretation of the law. At the age of sixteen, he retired into the wilderness, where he spent three years in seclusion. Having learned fully of the three sects, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, he, at nineteen, determined to follow the rule of the Pharisees. Thus he entered public life.

Governor Felix had sent some priests to Rome to be tried before Caesar, and Josephus, being then twenty-six years old, resolved to go to Rome and plead their cause. He had a bad voyage; the ship was wrecked; and out of six hundred on board, not more than eighty were saved. He met

in Rome the emperor’s wife, and through her interest procured the release of his clients. Upon his return to Judea, he found things in great confusion. His people were revolting against Roman rule. After the war Began, he was sent to take command of forces in Galilee, and there he fortified the cities as best he could from the attacks of Rome. He was finally shut up in a city for forty-seven days, and then took refuge in a deep cavern with forty other men of prominence. A woman revealed his hiding to Roman authority and only Josephus and one other escaped death. He was present when Titus marched against Jerusalem and he saw the ruin of his city and his country. After the war, he went to Rome and was made a citizen. He drew all annual pension the remnant of his days and died in the year 100.

He was prominent as a great writer, and herein he is best known to us. His works are considered authentic. He wrote History of the Jewish War, The Jewish Antiquities, and his Autobiography. In all his writings, he had but little to say about Jesus. Well might we expect to look to him for all account of the stirring events of the early church, but in this we are sadly disappointed. Perhaps there is a good reason. He could have given no truthful account of Jesus or the church which would not have been a story of shame for the sect to which he belonged. His chief purpose was to elevate his own people in the minds of both Greeks and Romans, who hated them most bitterly. Hence the best policy was that of silence regarding the Christ. Others have adopted the same policy toward those who claim to be Christians only. Experience has taught them that discussion is fatal to their views, and their extorts are centered on fighting Christianity by letting it alone. The silence of Josephus and all early Jewish writers is illustrated by the following story: Less than a hundred years ago, the Congregationalists and the Baptists of England sent each a deputation of two ministers to visit the United States to ascertain the true state of religious societies in the new world as respects doctrines, practices and parties. They were then to report the same, truthfully and faithfully, to the nation of Great Britain. They came and later made a voluminous report. In this country there was a community of Christians of about 150,000 members, with various periodicals promulgating their views through every state and territory in the Union. They were, however, unpopular with the leaders of these two sects which nicknamed them "Campbellite" and their profession, "Campbellism." One of their teachers had said: "The most successful way of fighting Campbellism is to let it alone." In giving a full and accurate report of religious societies in America, the Congregationalists had this to say: "In this disorganized state, Mr. Campbell came among them (the Baptists) with his new lights, and nothing now is heard amongst them but Campbellism, as it is called. The people of this denomination, and especially the teachers, had made too much of their peculiarities as Baptists. Campbell came amongst them, and made everything of them, and has succeeded to all alarming extent. He denounces everybody; he unsettles everything, and settles nothing: and there is great present distraction and scandal." The Baptists made the following report: "In the State of Kentucky there was some distraction in the churches in consequence of the introduction of Campbellism." Do not wonder then that Jesus, the apostles, and the ancient Christians received so little consideration from Josephus. Human nature still runs in its ancient channels. But he does corroborate the Bible in his discussion of many matters. His testimony is all the stronger because it was never intended to strengthen the sacred oracle. In giving all account of a war between Herod the Tetrarch and his father-in-law, Aretas, King of Petrea, he tells of the intrigue between Herod and his half-brother’s wife, Herodias. While old Herod was visiting Rome, it was agreed that when! he returned home she would go and live with him. A part of the contract was that the daughter of Aretas was to be put away. A war arose

between Herod and his father-in-law and the former’s army was practically destroyed.

Josephus says: "But some of the Jews were of opinion that God had suffered Herod’s whole army to be destroyed as a just punishment on him for the death of John, called the Baptist."

He also says, "Herod had killed John who was a just man, and had called upon the Jews to be baptized, and to practice virtue." The details of all the above are not mentioned by Matthew, Mark and Luke, but they do tell of the incestuous marriage described. Here, there is perfect agreement on matters of fact, and it is evident that the reports are quite independent of the other.

Josephus also gives all account of the death of James, the Lord’s brother. In that account he calls him "the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James." This shows that these two persons, and especially Jesus, were well known in the heathen world.

I next call your attention to the first Roman writer of note. Caius Cornelius Tacitus, whose ancestors are unknown, was born about the middle of the first century and died in the year 117, Thus he lived contemporary with the apostles and early Christians. He was chosen praetor of Rome in the year 88, and was made consul in 97. He wrote, Description of Germany, The Life of Agricola (his father-in-law), History of Rome, and Annals of Rome. He is one of the most reliable of Roman writers and his superiority of style is such that two of his books are used as texts in our best colleges. Tacitus had no respect for Christians and speaks of them in the bitterest terms. His evidence, therefore, is the evidence of a foe, and becomes all the stronger because of such. Summing up his testimony, we offer the following:

1. That Christ is the founder of the sect of the Christians.

2. That Christ was put to death as a criminal.

:3. That He was put to death by Pontius Pilate.

4. That Tiberius was then Emperor of Rome. Hence- 5. The Messiah was born in the reign of Augustus.

6. This "pernicious superstition" was then checked for a time.

7. This "pernicious superstition" broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, but reached the city of Rome.

8. That Christians were persecuted in Rome as early as the year 64, about thirty years after the death of Christ.

9. A vast number was discovered and condemned, not only because they were accused of burning the city, but because of their hatred for mankind.

10. They were hated as the offscourings of the earth, and as the filth of all things; their executions were so contrived as to expose them to derision and contempt.

11. They were destroyed, not out of regard to the public welfare, but to gratify the cruelty of one man.

Tacitus hated the Christians, because they refused to worship his idol gods, and thus disparaged the national religion which, as a Roman statesman, he delighted to honor. There is no crime charged against the disciples of Jesus in all the volumes of this great writer.

If the New Testament had failed to come down to our age, these statements alone would have furnished all account of the origin, progress and sufferings of the church, practically as found in the New Testament which we have. This testimony, independent and even hostile, according to Canon 4, enhances the probability of the facts themselves. The next Roman writer is Pliny, "the younger," to distinguish him from all uncle bearing the same name and a man of some repute. Pliny was born near Milan, Italy, in the year 61 A.D.

He was all elegant writer of the epistolary type. He witnessed the eruption of old Mount Vesuvius in the year 79, as it buried the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii thirty feet beneath the surface, and he has written the best account of that tragic event. He was made consul of Rome in the year 100, and was proconsul of Bithynia under Trajan in the years 106-108.

Upon entering Bithynia he found a great persecution waged by government authority in progress. For a while he continued it, but finally wrote a letter to Trajan, the emperor, in which he stated the facts he found and asked for instructions of procedure. From his letter the following points of information are gathered.

1. A vast number of Christians were then in Bithynia, of every age and rank, of both sexes, and in all parts of the country.

2. Such was the influence of their teaching, that the heathen temples were almost deserted, and the victims for heathen sacrifices could hardly find a purchaser.

3. None who were really Christians could, by any means, be compelled to make supplication to tile image of Caesar, or the statue of the gods.

4. After the most searching inquiry, including the torture of certain Christians to force confessions from them, he had found no vices among them.

5. They suffered for the name of being Christians, without the charge of any crime.

6. They were accustomed, on stated days, to hold two meetings, one for singing "in concert" hymns to Christ, and for making vows to live righteously; and the other for eating a "harmless meal."

7. Those who were Roman citizens were sent to Rome for trial. This testimony comes from all independent source and is prompted by all anxiety to know how to handle this sect.

It is in perfect harmony with the New Testament narrative. The sending of those who were Romans to Rome is parallel with the experience of the Apostle Paul.

"If any suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." The most skeptical of earth are forced to accept the evidence that comes from Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny and other classic writers. But should there be any discrepancy between these and those of the New Testament, the preference would be with the latter because they were much better informed on the subject. The period covered by New Testament history was characterized by frequent and

complicated changes in the political affairs of Judea and those countries round about. None of these are accurately described in the New Testament and yet it contains many allusions to them in all incidental way. Josephus gives a detailed account of all. This fact affords a most excellent opportunity to test the accuracy of sacred writers. Agreement can be accounted for on no ground except perfect information on both sides. The New Testament reader who has no other source of information is left in great confusion. In the history of Matthew and Luke we read of "Herod the King." In Matthew 2:1-23, we find that Herod the King dies, yet in Matthew 14:1-36, Herod appears again and is called "the king" and "the tetrarch." In Acts 12:1-25, Herod the King beheads James. In these statements not a word of explanation appears. In Matthew 2:1-23, Archelaus is king of Judea, and in Matthew 27:1-66, Pilate is governor of the same region. In Acts 12:1-25, Herod is king of Judea, and in Acts 23:1-35, Felix is its governor. No explanation is made, and yet by consulting Josephus, all is in harmony with the facts of history. The Herod under whom Jesus was born died and was succeeded by his son Herod as ruler of a part of his father’s dominion with the title of both king and tetrarch. The Herod who beheaded James was a grandson of the first, and was made king by Claudius Caesar. Herod the tetrarch was deposed by the Romans and procurators were sent to rule in his stead. They came as follows: Coponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annius Rufus, Valerius Gratus, Pontius Pilate. The government of Palestine was again changed and Herod who beheaded James was made king over all the land. Upon his death three years later, governors were again appointed, of whom Felix was one. Thus it appears that the Bible is absolutely accurate in all these matters pertaining to political changes so frequently made. In Luke 2:1-7; Luke 3:1-2; Acts 25:21, we find that Augustus Caesar issued a decree that all the world should be enrolled. When John begins his ministry, it is the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, yet many years after Paul makes all appeal to Augustus. Here is apparent contradiction and confusion. Unless one has made a study of the political affairs of that land, it is impossible to get through this tangled network of allusions. But, as already stated, the name "Herod" Noms attached to both son and grandson of him who was king at the birth of Jesus. The government was first a kingdom; then it was divided into four parts or tetrarchies; then placed under procurators; again changed into a kingdom; and at last back under governors. The Augustus who appears in Luke as if dead and alive again was none other than Nero who bore the title of Caesar Augustus Nero, and by his flatterers he was styled Augustus. No other record of that decree, other than Luke’s, could be found and infidels boasted that no such a decree ever went forth. Their conclusion was that Luke or someone else forged it. More than 1900 years went by with none other found, but, in the Memphis Commercial Appeal of December 18, 1927, Mr. William T. Ellis has all article declaring that on the walls of all unearthed building in Angora, Asia Minor, the original decree has been found, and Luke has been corroborated in full. Let me say that all discoveries during the passing of the years have served to confirm the Word of God and render its statements credible.

Thanks be to those who are spending millions in the field of archaeology. Many times their object may be to find something contrary to the Bible, but every time the result is the exact reverse. God is the author of that sacred volume and its statements are absolutely reliable and wholly dependable. The New Testament was written when Palestine was under the dominion of the Greeks and Romans. Jewish coins went out of use when these nations gained control and others took their places. In the New Testament no mention of this change is made, and yet there are many allusions to the coins then in use. The shekel, the one most common among the Jews and the one found in the Old Testament, is not even mentioned in the New Testament at all. Had these

last writings been of a later age, and after the Jewish nation had dispersed, they could not have contained such thorough familiarity with these matters. All this evidences all accurate knowledge on the part of those who wrote the New Testament and renders their words credible. The Bible represents a woman of Samaria as being surprised that Jesus should ask her for a drink of water. She explains by saying that the Jews and the Samaritans have no dealings with each other. Luke says that on one occasion, Jesus and his disciples were going towards Jerusalem, and that they wanted to lodge in a Samaritan village, but "they did not receive him because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem." These statements were made, incidentally, in giving all account of other matters, and no word of explanation is made regarding the cause of feeling between the two peoples. Josephus gives absolute corroboration of the inspired record by telling of the same animosity. He says it was the custom of the Galileans when they went to Jerusalem to the festivals, to pass through the country of the Samaritans; and that on one occasion certain persons belonging to the border town of Ginea came out against a company of the Galileans thus journeying, and killed a great many of them. This led to retaliation on the part of the Jews, and to contentions before the Roman commanders, which finally culminated in a settlement of the contest by all appeal to the emperor (Antiquities xx, 6). In Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts, constant reference is made to the Pharisees and Sadducees; but there is not one word explaining their origin or their full peculiar) ties. The writers assume that they were well known among the people and hence, all references to them are made in quite all incidental way. Josephus mentions them frequently and, being himself a Pharisee, his statements regarding them are authentic. By comparing his formal account of them with the allusions made in the New Testament, perfect harmony prevails. Matthew represents Jesus as alluding to the reputation of the Pharisees for righteousness of a high order. He said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Josephus says, "The Pharisees are a certain sect of the Jews who appear more religious than others, and seem to interpret the law more accurately" (Wars, I, 5, 2).

He also declares that the Pharisees have so great power over the multitude, that when they say anything against the king, or against the high priest, they are presently believed. And again, on account of their doctrines they are able to greatly persuade the body of the people; and whatever the latter do about Divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform according to their directions. This is the exact kind of influence ascribed to them in the New Testament and this is why Christ devoted so much time to all effort to break down their power over the people. The writers of the inspired record are corroborated on every point, and that, too, by one unfriendly to the claims of Jesus.

One of the greatest difficulties of writers and travelers is the maintenance of geographical and topographical accuracy. This is peculiarly so when one is trying to give all account of any country with which he is not perfectly familiar, and even then egregious errors appear. When the Encyclopedia Britannica first appeared, although its articles were written by experts in the various departments, it contained so many errors in regard to places in America, that the publishers of the New American Cyclopedia issued a pamphlet exposing the blunders of its rival. When Tacitus wrote his Description of Germany, it had so many mistakes in geography and topography that some doubted its being the product of all author so well known for reliability. The principal task of those writers who have visited Palestine, for the purpose of describing its localities, has been to

correct the topographical mistakes of predecessors. Even the guide books written for the special benefit of tourists have been found quite erroneous in these particulars. Let it be said without fear of contradiction that in the New Testament not a single error along this line can be found. Whether the writers speak of Palestine or of foreign lands, their statements are absolutely reliable. The argue-eyed critics of twenty centuries have been unable to find a blunder made. Very few of us can speak of places here in Tennessee and know whether it is up or down from where we are. But in both the Old and the New Testament the writers are never at fault. The man who fell among thieves was going "down to Jericho." Everybody went "up to Jerusalem." They went "down to Gaza"; "down to Caesarea"; "down to Lydda"; and "down to Antioch." Such accuracy, in these matters as prevails throughout the Bible, can only be accounted for on the ground that those who wrote were guided by a higher power. My friends, if the Word of God is found to be in harmony with authentic writers on matters it mentions incidentally, how can you and I doubt its statements made direct regarding the issues of life and death? The Bible was by inspiration given. Its statements are reliable and its promises are dependable. I am begging you to accept it and let it be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. Won’t you accept it even now, while we sing the gospel invitation? For much of this sermon I have quoted and copied statements made by Brethren A. Campbell and J. W. McGarvey

3.19 - THREE PRAYERS

THREE PRAYERS In Luke 23:1-56 we have all account of the trial and the crucifixion of the Son of God. I read to you a part of that story, beginning with Luke 23:32 : "And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

I read again from Acts 7:57, in which we have a record of the death of Stephen: "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.... And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Then in 2 Timothy 4:14-16 : "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

I have read to you three prayers, one from Christ, one from Stephen, and one from Paul. Regarding these I would have you think for the time allotted.

Some years ago a man by the name of Sheldon, of Kansas City, wrote a very fine little book, the name of which was, "In His Steps." Its very name carries the idea that is described and splendidly discussed throughout the same. I think it would pay every one in this audience to read that little book and meditate, and to take all introspective view as to whether or not he is thus trying to walk and to follow. The author outlines the life of Christ, picturing that straight and narrow path so wonderfully described by Him and then appeals to the reader, by the way of questioning, "Are you walking in His footsteps, are you always doing good?" My friends, the purpose of Christ Jesus upon this earth was to show humanity how to live, as well as how to die. He was a great philosopher and theorist respecting life’s affairs. Not only did He teach things in theory, but His very life was the practical application of these principles enunciated time and again.

Along at the first of His career He preached that memorable Sermon on the Mount, in which he said: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was Christ a mere theorist when He taught this? My friends, Paul also taught lessons like this. Romans 12:19-21 : "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if shine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." "If any man does not have the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Those are the statements and theories announced by the Man of Galilee, but they were said, friends, when there were no enemies gathering round about. As yet his pathway was clear, and the sky was unclouded. As

long as everything is lovely, matters going our way, it is such all easy thing to be sweet-spirited, kindly disposed and wonderfully charitable in our relationships toward our fellow men. But when we get up against it, face to face with the carrying into effect of our own philosophies, there is, many times, a different story to be told.

I wonder how it shall be in the study of the life of Him who said, "Love your enemies, pray for them that hate you, and do good unto them that despitefully use you, and persecute you."

I read to you from Luke 23:34, which is another part of the story pertaining to the life of Christ. He is standing at the very end of His earthly pilgrimage, with life's conflicts largely past, its relationships to Him all in the background. He has now withstood the vile epithets, the fiery darts, and poisonous words intended to bring sorrow and grief to His heart. With all the rebukes, the troubles, the storms, and the sarcastic things cast at Him now in the past, Christ comes to make good the declaration of that Sermon on the Mount. He is standing at the time of the enemy's triumph. The dark hour to Him has come. He is in the custody of the opposition, with death glaring Him in the face. On the tree of the cross He hangs suspended, and receives the sneers and the jeers of a cruel world. Will He make good that which He taught yonder on the Mount? Will He verify those principles He enunciated to the disciples, or shall He fail?

It is the climax of the Savior's career. Hence, in the darkest hour, measuring up to the full application of every philosophy suggested, and of every theory taught, surrounded by the triumphant enemy, that now rejoices and joys at His humility, Christ comes out gloriously, lifts His voice heavenward, and says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

How great the contrast, how noted the distinction from the time when thousands gathered around Him and were swayed by His matchless power! How wonderful the converse of the time when He raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the deaf ear, and walked upon the bosom of blue Galilee! Those were hours of grandeur and of glory, and of earthly renown, but now, the reverse. He was in the hands of those who hated Him and who would despitefully use Him. Even now He could have pronounced a curse upon them and, possibly, have wrested himself from the cross. But, knowing the hour had come, He gracefully yielded to the will of the enemy, and simply said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Jesus lived upon the earth. He left us all example, that in His footsteps we should walk, and, therefore, the recitation of these matters is to us timely, and I trust may be fitting and emphatic to all who chance to hear. Was that prayer characterized by a spirit of earnestness? Did the Father above lend a listening ear to that last petition of His dying, agonizing Son?

I tell, you, friends, if I thought that prayer was not heard, I would never have the courage any more to lift up my voice to the Father of Spirit? with any hope of response from the eternal world. If I were to decide that the prayer of the Christ was unheard, it would destroy my faith that I now have in the Book of God and in the promises of Holy Writ. But I want to ask again: was that a conditional, or all unconditional prayer? When Christ raised that voice and said, "Father, forgive them," did He mean regardless of any act on their part? Was it implied that they might go ahead in their wayward, wicked, murderous way, and still Christ expect God to forgive them? Has it ever been a principle of God's dealings with humanity to forgive men unconditionally?

I believe, upon second thought, that you are constrained to say that that prayer must have implied certain conditions with which those for whom He prayed had to comply. So far as I know, have right or reason to believe, there is not a statement in all the Bible announcing forgiveness to humanity independent of its submission to the terms that have been interposed.

Therefore, I am going to conclude, in perfect harmony with the entire Bible, that when the Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," there was all implication that time might be granted, and opportunity be afforded when their hearts should be touched by the story of redeeming love, when they would come to a state of penitence, bow in submission to heaven's will, and thus bring about the answer to the prayer of the Son of God. This petition was made on the cross. That afternoon He died, was buried, and three days passed, but that prayer was not answered. He rose from the dead, walked about among men, demonstrated His identity beyond the shadow of a doubt for a period of forty days, at the end of which that prayer back yonder on the cross had never been answered by the God of heaven.

Another ten days go by, and Jesus Christ bids good-bye to the things of earth, wends his way back to the gloryland, and dispatches the Spirit from heaven to earth. As yet, that prayer uttered 50 and 3 days ago has never been answered by his heavenly Father. The day of Pentecost finally comes. Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven are gathered to attend the memorable feast. On that day the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit; a great demonstration was made; multitudes gathered together with various charges and different explanations, all of which failed to explain.

Finally Peter, unto whom the keys of the kingdom had been given, gained the attention of that wonderful audience, and spoke to them, for the first time, the story of the resurrection of the Son of God. The gospel was that day first proclaimed, and, in that sermon, there is evidence that this prayer is not yet answered, for Peter said unto the same crowd that gathered round about the cross, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know: Him being delivered by that determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

There was the same company who some time ago had stood about the cross, and had put to death the Son of God. Here they are today, on Pentecost, with their hands dripping with the guilt that attached to the greatest murder and the greatest tragedy recorded on the pages of history. Peter brings home to them their guilt by saying, "You have taken, and by the hands of lawless men, have crucified the Son of God." He drove home that thought to their hearts. He made them feel guilty in the presence of God Almighty, and then opened to them the possibility of forgiveness through that same Jesus whom they had executed.

Hence he climaxed that wonderful address by saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ." As yet, that prayer, prayed by the Son of God, when he said, "Father, forgive them," has not been answered. And when they cried out, having been cut to their heart, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" there is again the implication that they were not yet free from sin, that they had not been forgiven, that the prayer of the Son of God had not been answered. In response to their query, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the

remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

"And with many other words did Peter testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

Then what? "They that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added about 3,000 souls." My friends, the very minute they rendered obedience unto Christ as stipulated and demanded, there was a glad response from high heaven, and the prayer in their behalf, fifty and three days ago, was answered. Angelic hosts in heaven rejoice together with those upon the earth, because those Jews, bloodstained by the crucifixion of the Christ, now stand forgiven. Christ's prayer in their behalf is answered.

Friends, that is the teaching of God's book from beginning to end, and there has never yet been a single prayer answered in behalf of humanity, unless man had done his best to comply with the conditions made obligatory upon him.

Therefore, it is my duty today to pray for my fellows everywhere. If I walk in His steps, I must so do.

We sometimes embody a great truth in our petitions. While praying for all mankind, we say, "Lord, we cannot consistently ask Thee to save them in their sins, but grant them time and opportunity to hear again the story of the cross, that by it their hearts may be touched and tendered, and that they may repent of their sins, and obey from the heart that form of doctrine which has been delivered."

After this manner I pray for sinners today. I know that God will not save them as they are. I know that Christ has never promised to pardon any man, until that man submits to heaven's terms. My prayer, like that of the Son of God, is that they may have the privilege of hearing the gospel story, that, as were those Jews on Pentecost, those who hear me may likewise be cut to the heart, that I may have the courage and the boldness to announce to them that which Peter preached. I know that when I do this faithfully and they hear, believe, and obey, God will pardon their sins and add them to that church bought by the blood of His Son.

There is no other way of salvation outlined in God's book. Implicit and absolute obedience is demanded of all men. But from that now I turn to the second. Stephen was a man filled with the Holy Spirit. He was selected as one of the first deacons to look after the daily ministration to some Grecian widows. He was a man able to preach the gospel of God's Son with power. Such preaching always elicits criticism and bitterness on the part of those who are to the contrary. He was finally accused of speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God. They came upon him, caught him and brought him before the Council. The elders and scribes were told that he had said that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy this place and change the customs delivered by Moses. To all the Council, his face appeared as it had been the face of all angel. To these charges Stephen was privileged to reply. Never has there been so much history crowded into so short a space as was recited by Stephen on that occasion. He went back to Abram in Chaldea and traced the story of the patriarchs as they descended into Egypt and spent 400 years in captivity. He told of their deliverance by Moses. He recited the story of Aaron and his golden calf. He mentioned the building of the tabernacle and the temple, but assured them that now the most high God dwelleth

not in temples made by the hands of men. He concluded by saying: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and in ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." When they were conscious of the fact that they could not successfully answer his speech, they gnashed upon him with their teeth. They cursed him, said all manner of evil against him; surged about him, and led him out through the eastern gate that, today, bears his name, down to the foot of the hill by the side of the brook Kedron, opposite the Garden of Gethsemane, and there those pious Jews laid aside their long robes and stoned him to death. Just here we are introduced to a young man, for the first time, by the name of Saul, who held their garments, and gave consent to that atrocious deed enacted. And as Stephen, underneath their blows, bowed down in the very agonizing hour of death, he forgot not that he should walk in the steps of his Lord and Master. Perhaps he had witnessed the death of Christ and had been wonderfully impressed by His last moments. He now determined to duplicate the spirit of Jesus in behalf of his own enemies. So he lifted his voice unto the Father, and said, "Lord, lay not this sin unto their charge." And having so said, he fell asleep. My friends, how came him to manifest such a spirit? The answer is: he had learned what it means to be a Christian. The influence of the Master had made a lasting impression upon him. He remembered the Savior's teaching and was determined to carry it out. He walked in His steps. Therefore, he died praying a similar prayer. But I wonder if Stephen meant for God to overlook their crime regardless of their penitence? Was his prayer without implied conditions?

Stephen knew then, just as well as we know now, that the gospel demands obedience on the part of humanity. He understood full well just when those who killed the Christ were pardoned. His prayer implied that those who stoned him might come to themselves. "Lord God, grant that they may hear the story of the Christ, that they may recognize their great sin, that from it they may turn away, and walk in obedience to heaven's demands."

But, friends, that is not all. There was a young man by the name of Saul who watched this great tragedy. At that time he was not interested in Christianity. He was then a young Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, who believed that Jesus Christ was all impostor and that every one following in His footsteps ought to be put to death. But in spite of that, he was evidently impressed with the way and manner in which Stephen died. Here was a despised Christian praying for those who put him to death. Such a scene could not be forgotten.

Finally Paul himself was led to accept the Christian faith. On the road to Damascus he was arrested by the shining of a great light brighter than the noonday sun, and there he heard the words of Christ who said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutes" thou me?" The result of that arrest led to the ultimate conversion of him who had held the clothing and given consent to the stoning of Stephen some time before. From that moment Paul championed the faith which he once sought to destroy. He became the most outspoken character to the Gentile world in behalf of Christianity. It was he who raised aloft the banner of Christ, and carried the flag of high heaven into the region of Asia Minor, wherein he had formerly lived. It was none other than Paul who heard the Macedonian call, and gladly responded. He set out across the waters of the Aegean Sea and planted the banner of Christ on the foreign field for the first time.

He led a wonderfully checkered career. His experiences were such as you and I will never be called upon to endure. He counted all else but loss that he might win Christ. Having suffered,

sorrowed, and sighed, he came at last to the end of life's journey. The past stands ever present before him. Life's battles, conflicts, and toils are practically over. He spends his last days in all underground prison and there pens his final message to his faithful son. In 2 Timothy 4:14, he said: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works; of whom be thou ware also: for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

I ask you, my friends, where did Paul learn how a Christian should die? He never saw the Christ crucified, but he had seen Stephen suffer death. While at that time he was not a member of the body, there was all indelible impression made upon him, such as could never be erased. And when he came face to face with his last moment on earth, he duplicated the spirit of Stephen, and, likewise, that of the Master, by praying: "Father, lay not this sin to their account." My friends, if I have not that spirit today, I am none of His. It matters not how much of God's Word I may speak, or how wonderfully I may proclaim His great truth. I am conscious of the fact that if that same spirit is not mine, and has not become a part of my being, I am weighed in the balances and found wanting. But I want to say this to you: I do not believe that God demands of you and me forgiveness until there is evidence of penitence on the part of those who have sinned against us. I must differ perhaps, with some of my own brethren, when I announce to you that God has never promised to forgive any man short of penitence on that man's part. I have got to be made over before I could do such.

I cannot forgive a man who is still my enemy, obstructing my progress, hindering my onward march, blighting my happiness, and destroying my pleasure upon the earth. So long as that man persists and continues, it is not in me to forgive him. God does not ask it, and the Bible does not require it. The Saviour said in Luke 17:3, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." I am glad I can do that. In my relation to my fellows, I have got to be mighty careful to know whether or not my own skirts are clear. There is great danger of my thinking the other fellow is wholly wrong. When convinced and assured that I have done all on my part that duty demands, then I must stand in that attitude of forgiveness, or else God's spirit does not abide in me.

Let me insist that those of you who have sinned against your fellows manifest a spirit of penitence, and if they will not forgive you, the fault and the responsibility is theirs.

Such is the Christianity of the Bible. It is surely the spirit of Christ that prompts Christians to pray for the salvation of the world. Let us hope that our friends and foes, if such there be, may hear the gospel, repent of their sins, confess the Christ, and be buried in the sacred ordinance of baptism from which they can rise with sins forgiven and the hope of eternal life theirs to share.

If any of you have never confessed your wrongs, it is none too early for you to begin.

If you have never bowed in submission to the authority of high heaven, nor rendered obedience unto the gospel of Christ, this is the hour you should do so. While today you are here in the enjoyment of reasonable health and strength, come and stand upon his promises. Life is wonderfully uncertain. Death is absolutely sure. Tragedies are happening all around us. Today is, therefore, the day of salvation. If you would hear His voice, harden not your hearts, but respond to His call. Come saying, "Lord, speak, thy servant heareth. Command, and I will obey." Put yourself

in that attitude where God and man may forgive you. If you have sinned against the Church; if you have sinned against some man; repent of that wrong, and, to the extent of your penitence, there is not the shadow of a doubt but that God will forgive you. Any Christian will do the same thing, and thus you may go on your way rejoicing.

We are going to stand together once again and sing to you the gospel invitation. While we sing that song gladly respond to the call of Him who said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

3.20 - THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

We come, my friends, to the closing service of this series of meetings. I feel that great good has been accomplished, and I recognize the fact that this was made possible by faithful brethren who have gone before and prepared the way.

Long before I ever tried to tell the story, the foundation for this meeting was being laid by faithful, godly men, who sacrificed much more than I have ever done, to plant the cause of Christ within this splendid city.

Unto God be all the praise for such loyalty and fidelity and sacrifice on their part. Those of us still here ought to be greatly encouraged to press on with a zeal greater than ever before. This meeting has been characterized by absolute simplicity. There has been no effort to entertain you, other than by the hymning of these good songs and the recitation of stories recorded by the sacred oracles. The financial part of it had been arranged in advance in a quiet manner by those who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the finest evidences that good has been accomplished is the discussion on the streets, in the places of business, and the very kindly criticisms that have been offered through the public press. I want those who have seen fit so to do, to know that I think none the less of them. I appreciate the man who has convictions, and then the courage to press them to the ultimate result.

I noticed in today’s Tennessean a criticism from a Mr. Taylor. I understand he is yet a schoolboy, and perhaps this fact explains his rushing in where others fear to tread. He felt that our Lebanon friend had made a complete failure in his attacks, and hence, this young man seeks to save a last hope. Doubtless Mr. Taylor is a bright boy. I feel sure he knows more now about some things than he will in the years to come. I once heard of a young fellow who had so much knowledge that a part of his brain had to be removed to make room for what he knew.

Mr. Taylor should bear in mind that "larger ships may venture more but smaller boats should stay near shore." It is a great pity that such stupid fellows as Drs. Westcott and Hort, whose Greek Testament has become standard, did not consult Mr. Taylor on Matthew 16:18. Even the great Joseph Henry Thayer, the Greek lexicographer, lived and died without the benefit of such wise counsel.

I appreciate all these criticisms. They make the truth stand out the more prominently. Those who so desired have had ample time and I hope no one will take advantage of my absence and hurl his darts. This would indicate cowardice on the part of him who so does.

Let me read to you from Luke 14:25-33 : "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And

whosoever cloth not bear his cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth all ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hash, he cannot be my disciple." The subject tonight is, "The Cost of Discipleship." What does it cost to become a child of God, and to meet His approval in our onward journey?

There were great multitudes that frequently gathered round about the Christ, prompted by various reasons. Some of them followed for the loaves and fishes which He was able to multiply. Others followed, doubtless, out of curiosity, and to behold the great miracles, signs and wonders which he was accustomed to evidence in their presence.

Jesus once said to the company, "The foxes have holes, the fowls of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." As much as to say, "Don’t follow me with the hope of dwelling in a palace on earth, or of sharing the good things this world may have, for such I do not possess."

I want to say to you, friends, that it really costs much to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." To this multitude, in Luke 14:1-35, He has this to say: "He that will come after me must hate his father, his mother, his wife, his children, his brethren, his sisters, yea, and his own life. If that be not true of him he cannot be my disciple."

There are many hard sayings in the Bible, things that challenge our very serious concern, and call upon all within us to make that decision which is fraught with much expenditure on our part. I just wonder if it is possible for us to become disciples of the Lord.

Upon the condition that one must hate his father, his mother, and those generally nearest and dearest, who can be a disciple? Friends, I think I know what the word "hate" means in modern speech, and I am frank to admit to you, tonight, that I cannot comply with such, if that be the idea expressed in this scripture. And if the significance of that word be as I now understand it in ordinary use, I must confess, I am not a disciple of the Lord.

I do not hate the father responsible for my existence upon the earth. When I was wholly unable to provide for myself it was he who cared for me, made provision, and guided my feet in what he thought was the right path, and though for twenty years he has been gone, his memory lingers still. I feel certain that the time will never come when I can say, "I hate him."

What shall I do about it? Christ said that I must hate, not only my father, but likewise my mother. My mother died when I was about fifteen months old. I never knew what it was to recognize her. All I know about her is what others have told me. But from that, I cannot say that I hate her. I know that her very life trembled in the balance and was suspended quivering on the pivot when I first opened my eyes to be greeted by the light of God’s day. I do not hate her.

Likewise may I say regarding the brothers and sisters that I have in this world. But Christ said, "Hardeman, unless you hate your father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, children, all, you cannot be my disciple." For twenty and seven years I have walked down the pathway of time side by side with her who decided to share my sorrows and my joys. I would not say that every step has been absolutely harmonious. She has a head of her own, and many times her judgment has been contrary to Nine. I might not admit it, in her presence, but I must say to you that, sometimes, just once in a while, she has been right on a few points. Regardless of any differences whatsoever, I cannot say that I hate her. In our home there have been three children born. All of them are now grown to manhood and womanhood. In their interest our very hopes and ambitions are centered; and upon them we may be forced to rely in our declining days. Of course, I do not hate them. And then, my own life is as dear and precious to me as the ordinary one. For that life the Bible says a man will give all that he has. And yet Christ says I must hate my own life, or else I cannot be his disciple.

Brethren, what shall I do about it?

I am glad to say that I never have in my life tried to find one passage in the Bible to offset or to contradict any other statement made. I know that God is the author of this book, that every word of it is true. I know that all truth runs in parallel lines, and if there be a seeming discrepancy, or a contradiction, it lies somewhere in my own mind, and not in Him who spake the word, or caused it to be penned. But words do not always carry the same significance. The word "hate" is one of that number. Tonight, it means to despise; to dislike; to detest; to abhor; to abominate, etc. But it does not mean that in the Bible. All expressions of emotion and physical passion as used in the Book of God are comparative in their nature. In a parallel passage, Matthew 10:37, Christ said this: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." But again, in Genesis 29:30-31, there is more light that will help us to all appreciation of what is here said. The Bible teaches that Jacob ran away from home and went to Padan aram. There he married Leah, the daughter of Laban, and seven years later, Rachel, her sister. The Bible says, verse 30, that Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah. But the next verse says, "And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren."

What is the point about that? Simply a comparative idea. God says that Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah, and the very fact that he loved Rachel more justifies the next statement that Leah was hated, or loved less.

Hence the text tonight reads with a different idea when I submit to you that general statement regarding this word. "If any man will come after me and does not love me more than he does father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, yea, his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

I want to say to you that with many of us that test has never come. And yet there are those possibly dwelling in your city, and may be in this audience tonight, who have demonstrated in their lives the thing thus presented.

Suppose a man wants to become a Christian and decides in his heart to obey God, but his wife rises up in rebellion and files all objection. The man, therefore, is put to the test. Shall he obey God, or shall he respect the whims and wishes of his wife? The man who will yield to the latter is unworthy of the sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ. If that father of whom I have spoken had

objected to my becoming a Christian and I had yielded to his demands, rather than have gone forward in obedience to Christ, it would be all exhibition of the fact that I am unworthy of discipleship with the Lord.

Many there are in this land who have been told, in advance, that their becoming a Christian means that another home must be found.

Christ would say, "Go right on; become a child of God, pay the price." Unless you are willing thus to do, you will be unworthy of that relationship you hope to sustain.

Friends, I believe that men ought to become children of God prompted by the loftiest incentive, and the highest motive known. I have never yet had so little respect for any man as to ask him to become a Christian other than as he was moved by a conviction of the truth of God's Book. I know that it is fine for husband and wife to be members of the body of Christ together. But, hear it, any man who will profess to become a Christian just to please his wife is unworthy of the name of the Son of God. And any woman who has no higher conception of rendering obedience to (loaf Almighty than simply to please her husband will, I think, die and land in hell at last.

Therefore, my friends, let us take Christianity out of the idea of its being a kind of social club. Let us be moved by genuine convictions, and higher ideals.

If you think a thing is the truth, accept it, and stand for it four-square. If you do not believe it is the truth, let no consideration of earth induce you to the acceptance of the same. The Church of Christ is calling, not for great numbers to swell the roll, but it is calling for men and women genuinely, really and truly converted to the truth, with a backbone and a courage to stand for it against public sentiment, against criticism, against everything; and to hold aloft the banner of Christ everywhere.

There is nothing but that must be subordinated to the will of God.

1 John 2:15 says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." That is also a hard saying. My friends, I am frank to tell you, I do love this old world out of which I was created, and on which I dwell, from which I get my support, and in the kindly bosom of which I expect, at last, to pillow my head, and gently dwell in her tender and encircling arms.

I love the beautiful birds and the sweet-scented flowers that cheer us along our way and make pleasant the path in which we move.

I love the glittering chandeliers of the sky twinkling from their far-discant home, and lighting up the earth, after the sun has sunk behind the western hills. But I do not think that the passage forbids my having regard for these things. The word "world" does not in this passage refer to things material, but it is used in contradistinction to the term "spiritual." Therefore, we speak of a man's being worldly-minded, yielding to carnality, and to fleshly appetites, lusts and passions. The Bible outlines quite a little catalogue of things that are incorporated in that term. In Galatians 5:19 there is this recitation: "The works of the flesh (and he might have said the attributes and characteristics of the world) are manifest," and here they are: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Therefore, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Friends, this story, read in Luke 14:1-35 carries another fine consideration. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that be hold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth all ambassage and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hash, he cannot be my disciple."

You ask what is the point in that splendid illustration. I think it may be summed up after this fashion; hear it, if you contemplate fighting against God, going through life, and meeting the judgment in disobedience to him, you had better sit down, my friends, and count well the cost.

If you are marshaling your forces against Jehovah, it would be well to think seriously, and come to a decision to send all embassy and seek peace while the opportunity and the time is yours. As a matter of fact, you are certain to be defeated, if you wage war against the authority of God. Every thought suggests that we had better come to terms with the great Father of Spirit?. But friends, when I begin to count the cost of a thing from a business point of view, I raise the question, will it pay for me to make this investment? If I spend so much, do I have assurance of a return? Is there a guaranty of any remuneration whatsoever?

I want to call your attention to some of the characters of earth who have invested in the service of God Almighty, and let you decide whether or not that investment was wisely made.

Along the lower course of the river Euphrates, in that splendid, rich, alluvial valley Abraham was, so far as I know, well fixed. He was there with his family and friends, enjoying the good things of earth. The call of God came and bade him forsake all that he had, and start out into a land later to be revealed. With a faith undaunted and a courage heroic, Abraham launched out and invested all in the call of the God of the Universe.

Up the Mesopotamian valley he went, until he came to Haran, where he buried his beloved father. Around the Arabian desert he swept to the south and west into the land premised some years before.

Time rolled on. Many were the experiences and the things unpleasant that Abraham had to share. He was practically alone as a standard bearer of God. He was a stranger in a strange land, but he had put himself and his all in the service of God Almighty. Question: did it pay?

Let that remain for just a moment.

Moses was adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh, tutored and disciplined in Egyptian learning, and was a mighty man in word and in deed. With the passing of the years he reached his majority, and came to the point in life where a decision had to be made. In response to the God of the universe, Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and invested everything with the people then in bondage.

He made that investment on the ground that he counted the reproach of God greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. Was that a good investment? That is what Moses did. That is not all. When Daniel was carried away into the land of Babylonia, a demand was made that he eat of the king's meat and drink of the king's wine. True to his convictions, he rose to the height of his manhood, and positively refused to be corrupted or rendered impure by any such practice. He cast it all upon Him who cared, and invested 100 per cent of his affairs in the promises of God.

Again, the disciples came to the Master once, and said, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed after thee." What shall we have? We have invested everything; all else has been given up. The peerless apostle to the Gentile world forsook the fine opportunities of the Pharisaical realm, counted all things but loss, and the very refuse of earth, that he might march under the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Friends, these are some of those who invested.

There is another record in Luke 18:18-30. It is the story of a man clothed with riches and wealth. Christ demanded of him that he sell all that he had, pay the price, and follow after the Lord. But he clung to his riches; refused to pay the price demanded; turned away; and so far as you or I know, he was shut out of the kingdom of God. He went to that country where hope is a stranger and where mercy has never yet been known. Does it pay to become a disciple? Were these characters mentioned justified in the acts described?

You know the story of Abraham. He wandered in a foreign land for about a hundred years, sorrowing and sighing. Disappointments and calamities to which humanity is heir were his to share. By and by the wife who had traveled so long with him, sickened and died. He bought a burial ground from the sons of Heth, and there deposited her in the cave of Machpelah at old Hebron. And after a while, at the age of 175, he bowed his head; gave up the ghost; and was buried far from the old homestead, and likewise, in a foreign land.

I reflect upon his varied career, and ask tonight, did that choice that he made, that investment back yonder at Ur, turn out well? Had Abraham not done this, you and I never would have heard his name called. He would have been unknown and unsung, except by a very small, limited number; and even then, for only a few months or years. But as it is, notwithstanding the fact that almost four thousand years have passed; forty centuries have come and gone since Abraham made that investment, he has been and is called the friend of God, the Father of them that believe. "If ye be Christ's, ye are Abraham's and heirs according to the promise." So long as time shall continue and men and women are born and buried upon this earth, Abraham will be to us a household word. He stands as God's great example of undaunted faith.

He towers above his fellows like some peak above the lofty plains. He took God at His word; believed what He said; lived as the Lord directed; and trusted Him for the promises. When Moses cast his lot with a despised people subjected to the most cruel bondage, he did not know what the result might be, but with the passing of the years he was privileged to stand as the leader of the greatest number of people ever marshaled under one command.

He led them across the Red Sea, and to the foot of old shaking Sinai. He ascended its heights as the confidant of God and there received the decalogue, which has become the foundation of all

laws of all civilization from then till now.

Under the Divine guidance of Jehovah, he led them for forty long years. At last he climbed to the summit of old Nebo, and there, but a youth of 120, with his physical forces unabated and his eyes undimmed, he caught a vision of the promised land. From that summit, four thousand feet in height, Moses could look to the east across the great Arabian desert and view all ocean of golden sand. He could then look southward over that land where they had wandered for those forty years. Turning northward, he could catch a vision of old Mount Hermon, ten thousand feet high. Then he could look to the west across the River Jordan and behold the fields of ripening grain, silvery streams and the beautiful hills of that land which flowed with milk and honey.

While enraptured by these splendid scenes, God came, took him, and buried him in some secluded spot, as yet unknown to man.

But, friends, was that all? Oh, no. Fifteen hundred years from that time the Christ, together with Elias and Moses, stood on old Mt. Hermon, where Jesus was transfigured in their presence. Moses was privileged to talk with Christ regarding the tragedy that was soon to come to pass. Then Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

But, friends, that is not all. When time's knell shall be sounded, and the ransomed of the earth shall be gathered home, on fairer fields and in brighter climes, we will sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, in the glad by and by. Of course, it paid to make that investment.

You ask, what about the peerless apostle? At the close of his wonderful career, Paul said, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, all house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." His parting declaration was, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

You ask about all others. David sums it up in a general blanket proposition, when he said, in Psalms 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread."

Friends, neither have you. The time has never been when the really righteous souls of earth were forsaken, or their seed begging bread.

Isn't it fine, beloved, as we contemplate our investment in the matter of Christianity, that such splendid sentiments and thoughts come down the line to inspire fidelity, loyalty and genuine perseverance on our part? We ought to rejoice and be glad, because we can say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to He down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Brethren, if we who have invested in Christianity can but be faithful to the end of life's way, we are certain to receive the fullest fruition of all our hallowed hopes and fondest desires. We can approach death with a smile, and meet it with the joy and gladness characteristic of the child of

God.

Friends, I believe it is worth your while to invest in the service of God. I think it the greatest investment you ever made. The time will come when life's race is run; when its battles have been fought and its victories won; when you must launch out into the fathomless depths of the eternal beyond. Are you ready for that day to come? Where will you spend eternity? Make your decision tonight. This is all important hour. The very angels crowd the galleries of glory to watch, with breathless interest, the struggle in your soul. Turn your face toward the Master before the hour of choice shall pass away forever. Invest your all in the service of Him who died that you might live. Pay whatever price is necessary; become God's child, regardless, and then lean upon His everlasting arms while the shadows are passing. If this you'll do, heaven will surely send a company of angelic pall-bearers to gather round about your dying couch, and when the spirit takes its flight, they will gladly bear it home to glory, where it may nestle in the bosom of a Father's love, while eternity's ages roll by. As we sing the last song of the meeting and extend the last invitation, come without delay.

Chapter 78

3.21 - THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST I have been requested to speak tonight on The Crucifixion of Christ.

I read Matthew 27:15-26 : "Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, what shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; See ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be upon us and our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them. And when he had scourged Jesus he delivered him to be crucified." This is one of the historic accounts of the greatest of all tragedies. To appreciate this matter as we should, it seems to me necessary to go back and review the history leading up to the coming of the Christ and his execution on the cross. In Genesis 12:1-3, we have these words: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The first religion ever established upon this earth was purely a family religion. There were not so very many people, of course, and wherever a family chanced to go, or be, the father had the right and the privilege to offer a sacrifice unto God, assured that his doing thus would meet the approval of Jehovah. Twenty-five hundred years passed during which time that order prevailed.

God called Abraham out of his native land of Ur of Chaldees and gave him the promises I have read. With a courage undaunted, and a faith centered in Jehovah, Abram bade goodbye to family ties, friends, financial relationships, and the old home, and started out under the leadership of Jehovah, not knowing where he was going. Because of that one thing, Abraham has become God’s great definition of faith. If you want, therefore, to know just what faith means, the answer is, Abraham. He took God at his word; believed what He said; did as He required, and trusted Him for the fulfillment of the promises.

He took with him Sarai, his beloved wife, his father Terah, and his nephew Lot. This quartette left their homes and started up the Euphrates river, for a distance of something like 500 miles. They

stopped at Haran, in Mesopotamia. There Terah, the father of Abraham, died, and he was buried in that strange land. The Lord bade Abraham go on. The promises to him were two-fold. God said, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Six of these promises refer to a literal posterity, and the inheritance of a land into which the Lord would lead him. All of these were developed during the passing of the years.

When, in the course of time, it seemed impossible for Sarai to become a mother, she said to Abraham: "Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai." This audience knows how that Ishmael was born of Hagar; how that later he was driven out and Abram made to know that the nations were to be blessed through a son born in his own house and of his own wife. The time had passed, according to natural law, for Sarai to become a mother. By a miracle's being wrought, Isaac, the child of promise, was at last born. In every phase and feature, Isaac became a type of the Christ, the ultimate seed to whom the promise was made. Time rolled on, and at the age of forty, Isaac married. At the age of sixty, two sons were born, namely, Esau and Jacob. The years sped by again, and Jacob went back to the land of Padan-aram. There he married Leah and later his beloved wife, Rachel. At the end of about forty years more, he returned to the old home with his family, flocks and herds.

Due to a great famine, they passed into the country of Egypt, about seventy and five in number. There they remained for a period of 430 years, during which time they multiplied and became a nation of, possibly, three million souls.

Under the leadership of Moses they crossed the Red Sea and came to Mt. Sinai, at which place a new religion was inaugurated upon this earth. No longer now was it a mere family affair, but here God inaugurated a national system of religion. The posterity of Abraham, separated from the country of Egypt, marching on to the land promised unto their father, were especially protected, guided, and governed by the Lord. They became Jehovah's chosen people, through whom the promised seed was to come. At shaking Sinai, God gave to them the foundation of that law which was to govern them for the next 1,500 years. This law forbade their association, mixing or mingling with the nations round about. With the fall of the kingdom under Zedekiah they were subjected to Babylonia, and there was never a king of the seed of Abraham to occupy a throne until the resurrection, ascension and coronation of Jesus Christ. Therefore the character reigning tonight is the climax and the culmination of that promise vouchsafed to Abraham. When I tell you that the first promise, of a physical and literal nature, was fulfilled by Abraham's posterity occupying Palestine, I tell you that concerning which nobody has ever had a doubt. In the fulness of time, Jesus of Nazareth was born upon the earth. He was of Hebrew ancestry, with a sprinkling of foreign blood injected by the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. He came in perfect harmony with every prophecy from the hilltops of Zion. He came in absolute fulfillment of every prediction, and of every type presented in the Old Testament. There is not one single thing outstanding in the life of Christ but that was clearly prefigured and certainly announced long before his advent upon the earth. The life of Christ was in perfect harmony with the law of Moses. For it he had absolute regard, and he lived in strict obedience to its demands.

Finally, he died a felon’s death, just as the prophets and the law had declared. At his death, this law, which pertained purely to a national religion, having served its purpose, was fulfilled. It was then taken out of the way and a better covenant founded upon better promises was given to humanity. A world-wide system or religion was soon inaugurated for the consideration of all men of every nation, kindred and tongue.

I said to you that Christ lived in harmony with the law. I want now to call your attention to some phases of that wonderful theocratic form of government, which prevailed from shaking Sinai down to bleeding Calvary. May I raise the first question? Unto whom was the law ever given? In Deuteronomy 5:2-3, Moses had this to say: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." That was just two months after that host had come out of Egyptian bondage and across the Red Sea. Therefore, unto Abraham’s seed was the law made. The next question: Why was it ever given at all? In Galatians 3:19, Paul said: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator."

Paul said that the law was added because of transgressions. There may be several phases respecting that one idea, but there is this that I want to emphasize to you tonight, viz: that law stood as a middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile; the express purpose of which was that Jewish blood, from Abraham on down, should be kept absolutely pure.

But, friends, I think you ought to be able to see that when the law had served the purpose of preserving the purity of the Hebrew blood from Abraham down to Christ, it would no longer be necessary to preserve it. Our next question is: For how long was the law intended? Was there any limit of time regarding it? The very verse, Galatians 3:19, answers also. Hear it again: "It was added because of transgressions till." Friends, that fixes the end of it and suggests the duration. Well, until what? "Until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." That law was given at Sinai to the posterity of Abraham because of transgressions, and intended to last until the promised seed of Abraham should come.

Question: Who was that seed? In Galatians 3:16 the peerless apostle said, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Paul declares that when God said to Abram while yet in Ur of Chaldea: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," he referred to Jesus, who is called the Christ. This being true, I now ask: What was the attitude of Jesus toward that law under consideration? In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am come not to destroy; I have come to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

Jesus Christ was not a law violator. He was a fulfiller. Hence, said He, "My purpose is not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it."

Thirty and three years passed, during the life of this man called the Christ, when, at last, the tragedy outside the city’s walls culminated.

While suspended between the heavens and the earth, Christ bowed his head and said, "It is finished." What finished? Among other things, I am certain there is included that which he came to fulfill, namely, the law.

I ask, finally, if the law was thus fulfilled, and finished, what became of it? In Colossians 2:14, there are these words: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." It was on the cross that he said, "It is finished." Read Ephesians 2:14-16.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one." Both who? Both Jew and Gentile. How did he do it? "Having broken down the middle wall of partition between us, and abolished in his flesh the enmity." What was the enmity? "Even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The time came when Christ fulfilled all the prophecies, and all the types, and finally broke down the middle wall of partition which was the law of Moses. It was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross. But why all this? Hear the answer: That he might make of the twain—these two nationalities, Jew and Gentile "one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." As long as that law stood it was indeed a wall separating the two great nationalities. By the law, the Jews were forbidden to mix or mingle, marry or associate with the Gentile world.

During the personal ministry of Christ, and also the twelve under their limited commission, and likewise the seventy who followed, he said: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was their first, limited and restricted commission. After the death of Jesus, all barriers and distinctions having been done away, He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Since the greatest of all tragedies, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female, bond or free.

During the life of Jesus, the Jews were divided into three sects, viz: Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. Two of these are prominent in the New Testament. The Pharisees and Sadducees were bitter enemies. There was a spirit of jealousy and of rivalry between them. They were agreed upon one thing only, and that was, that the teaching of Jesus was contrary to their particular doctrines, and, if accepted, it meant the death knell of their religions. Therefore, it was their combined sentiments that something must be done with this man who is called the Christ.

You ask, how did they proceed? May I answer, just about like humanity has ever done. Their first effort to get rid of the Christ and his wonderful teaching was to ridicule, to ignore, to sneer at, and to make light of him. When he first began to attract attention, and some told others respecting him, it was received with a sneer and with a jeer. The very fact that Christ came from Nazareth was evidence that there was nothing to him. By such insinuations, they sought to hinder any influence that might be by him exerted.

I want to say to you, friends, that many times, such is all effective way of killing the influence of some man. Ignore him, disregard what he has to say, cast insinuations and reflections upon him, and he will naturally fade away. But that didn’t work. It mattered not with the Christ if he had come from the very humble of the earth; it made no difference if he was clothed in the very garb of humility and poverty. His greatness depended not on the city wherein he lived; neither upon the

garb he wore nor the humiliation he endured.

There was real merit and genuine worth in that which he had to say, and he had the courage to say it regardless of the ridicule and the innuendoes hurled against him. When the enemies saw that their first method was not producing the desired result, they inaugurated Method No. 2.

You ask, what was it? They began to ask him questions, to file objections, and to try to entangle him in his speech. They concocted different schemes, outlined different dilemmas, and approached him with hypocrisy and flattery upon their lips. The Sadducees came and presented what they considered a very plausible objection to the teaching of Christ by telling the story of a woman who had married, and had seven husbands, all of whom had died. They denied the resurrection, and they thought that if Christ's theory of the resurrection be true, there would be a wonderful state of confusion on the other shore as to which one of these men would want that woman, or which one would have to take her. This appeared to them unanswerable.

But, without a mental strain, Christ said: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." In that blissful paradise beyond, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Earthly ties and human relationships do not prevail. Therefore their question was wholly out of order.

Then the Pharisees, together with the Herodians, a bunch of politicians, said, "Lord, tell us, what thinkest thou, is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" His answer was convincing. He said unto them, "Show me the tribute money." And they brought unto him a penny. And he said unto them, "Whose is the image and the superscription?" When he found it was the image and the superscription of Caesar, he said, "Render unto Caesar that which is his, and unto God that which belongs unto him."

Therefore, having been defeated, the Bible says they turned away, disgusted at their inability to involve him in any kind of difficulty, or in any state of confusion. Friends, when that method failed, and their objective could not be attained, the last method humanity has ever used was theirs to execute. They must get rid of him whose teaching was exposing their rottenness and sounding their doom.

Hence, the death plot was secretly formed. They entered into a conspiracy with Judas Iscariot and made clear their plan of execution.

But, just at this time, it is necessary for you to know the political history of the land wherein they dwell. Palestine was under the control of Rome. She selected procurators or governors for this little country, and from the year 26 on to the year 36, embracing the time of the public career of Christ, Pontius Pilate had been sent to rule over them.

Now bear it in mind that the Jews were kindly treated, in many respects, by the Roman government. Rome cared nothing about their religion. She allowed them to worship as they saw fit; to execute any of their laws; to reprove, rebuke and administer punishment unto any of their number. There was just one thing the Jews were prohibited from carrying into effect, and that was, capital punishment. This they could not inflict without the authority of the Roman governor. So then, when the Jews agreed and declared that Jesus Christ should be put to death, only one trouble remained, and that was, to get the consent of Governor Pilate.

Christ was arrested in the lonely Garden of Gethsemane, and during the same night was rushed through various trials. First, he stood before old Annas, the ex-high priest, and the father-in-law of Caiaphas. After that, he was brought before the Jewish court of which Caiaphas was the chief justice. There he was condemned as worthy of death When he acknowledged himself to be the Son of God, Caiaphas rent his clothes, saying, "What further need have we of witnesses? He has spoken blasphemy. What think ye? They said, He is guilty of death." He was then carried before Governor Pilate; next, to old Herod, who had come down from Caesarea, and then back to Pilate for final disposition. Just at that time a great feast was on, and it had been the custom all along the line for the governor to release to the crowd some one person of their own selection. At this particular feast there were two prisoners in the custody of the country. One of them was Jesus of Nazareth, and the other was a noted robber by the name of Barabbas. He was a murderer who had raised all insurrection against the government. He had been tried by the Jewish court, condemned and put in prison to be executed.

Therefore, on this great day, the governor came to that multitude and asked: "Whether of the twain, Jesus or Barabbas, will you that I release unto you?"

I think I can see Governor Pilate as he seeks to hide behind the great Jewish nation, and put them in the lead. He thought they would surely demand that Jesus be released. He knew there was no cause for his death. He expected them to insist upon the death of Barabbas. But, contrary to his expectation, they answered and said, "Give unto us Barabbas, let him go free, rather than the other." And then old Governor Pilate said, "But what shall I do with him who is called the Christ?" And the answer came from the crowd and the mob that had been worked up by their leaders, "Crucify him." The governor then asked, "What evil hath he done?"

Instead of trying to give a just answer, they came back with their demand, saying, "Away with him, this man is not worthy to live."

Three times the governor went through a formal trial and each time announced that Jesus was innocent, and that there was no just accusation against him. The multitude would not accept that decision, and, while Christ stood there humiliated, that judgment rendered by Pilate in his behalf was taken away, and the judgment of the mob was forced in its stead. Hence, there was the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 53:1-12, where it is said, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away."

Friends, don’t get it into your minds that Christ ever lost his balance, or that his judgment had fled away. That is not the thing taken away. That judgment rendered by old Governor Pilate was not allowed to stand, and the immaculate Son of Mary stood hopeless and helpless. In the crucifixion of the Christ, that Hebrew prophecy had its fulfillment. When I was here some years ago, and made mention of that fact, a Jew of Decatur, Alabama, wrote me a letter, saying that I had missed the interpretation of Isaiah 53:1-12. He said that was fulfilled in the year 70, with the destruction of the Jewish nation. They were led as sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before the shearer they opened not their mouths. But, he failed to understand that Isaiah said "he," not "they." Furthermore, the Jews had waged a constant losing fight from the year 65 to 70 and were not led as sheep to the slaughter. They died fighting to the very last hour. Isaiah 53:1-12, referred to none other than Jesus of Nazareth. When that judgment was taken away by the cries of the surging

mob, Pilate was at the very crisis of his career. Numbers of cases had been to him appealed, and he had passed judgment upon them, but this was the most trying hour, the very crucial moment, when his destiny was trembling in the balance, and suspended upon a quivering pivot. Have you ever stopped, friends, to think how Pilate must have reasoned about this matter? Consider what possibly passed through his mind, favorable to him who is called the Christ. First, he knew Jesus was innocent. Of that fact he hadn't a shadow of a doubt. Three times had Christ been brought before him, and three times he had said, "I find no fault in him."

Second, he knew that because of envy Christ had been delivered into his presence.

Third, he knew that he had the power to release him. One word from the governor in his behalf would have meant legal freedom.

Fourth, after the governor had been called from the night's sleep to enter into the court, old Mrs. Pilate had a dream, and it so disturbed her that she rushed a message to her husband, which said, "Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." All these things were favorable to Jesus. Conscience cried out to old Pilate saying, "Release him, have the courage and the backbone to do your duty." But there is another side to the question. Now note these things against the Christ in the mind of the governor.

First, "I am the governor of the people whom I serve. It is the duty of all official to recognize the voice of the people."

Second, Pilate looked out upon that crowd assembled and saw that they were a wild set. The vast majority did not know what it was all about. They were only echoing that which their leaders had announced. The governor possibly said, "Doubtless it will do no good to object. This crowd is determined. They have already voted. They will carry into effect that which they have in their hearts. They are not only going to get the Christ, but the chances are that they might get me as well. Therefore, in self-defense, I must yield to their wishes."

Third, possibly, the straw that broke the camel's back, was the charge that, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar's." Why? "This man has said in your very presence that he, himself, is King, and to that end was he born. Therefore, governor, we will report to headquarters that you are disloyal, and that you are recognizing a man who claims to be a king in opposition to him who sits upon the throne in the City of Rome."

Then what? Pilate weighed these matters pro and con, back and forth, with his conscience saying, "Release him," but with self-interest saying, "Yield to the people." When the governor saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was raised, he took water and washed his hands in their presence, and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man." The last thing old Governor Pilate ever said about Jesus was, that he was a just man. And yet he didn't have the moral courage, the manhood, and the stamina to go against the great throng, and declare liberty and freedom to him who was both innocent and just.

Hence the Christ was led away, while those who were his accusers gladly said, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children." The greatest mistake any favored nation ever made on this earth was when this responsibility was invited upon them and their children. It was all the result of a partisan, prejudiced spirit. It only sounded the death knell and announced the doom that came to

pass but thirty and seven years thereafter. As a people, they were scattered abroad o'er the face of the earth. From that hour they have been wanderers, strangers and pilgrims in every nation under heaven. They have ever had their faces turned toward Jerusalem, under the delusion that the real Messiah is yet to make his advent, and gather them from the various nations of the earth. My Jewish friends, I think you are sadly, woefully and sorrowfully mistaken in such a prospect as that toward which you look, and I would to God this night that that splendid nationality of people which has maintained itself, and made its impress felt wherever it has gone, would accept Jesus Christ as the culmination of its prophecies, and in their hearts crown him Lord of all.

It is possible for that nation to be forgiven, just the same as those multitudes, yea, as thousands of them were, fifty and three days after that tragedy came to pass. When Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven, assembled in Jerusalem, Peter, one of their number, stood in their midst and said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by that determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by the hands of lawless men, have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." By his triumphant resurrection he plucked the very rose of immortality from the midst of the hadean realm, and planted it upon the bosom of his open grave, thus evidencing the sublimity of his matchless power. Peter told that great multitude just what they might do to cleanse their hands, and to free themselves from their guilt. As a result, conviction was brought to their hearts, and they cried out to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is not only to you Jews, and to your children, but it is also to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything or uncircumcision." What does? A faith that works by love. In Christ Jesus, all barriers are torn down. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." I can clasp hands with any Jew on earth, and rejoice in the fact that the wall of partition is gone. I do not want to be distinguished. I love the sentiment, "You are all one, and if you be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

I said some nights ago that I propose to be a child of Abraham. In Romans 4:11, also Romans 4:16, Abraham is said to be the father of all them that believe. He is my father in spirit, as he is the Jewish father in the flesh. Since the spirit is far superior, why not let us all stand together spiritually in that promise made by God to Abraham?

Let us be heirs of that promise, and look not to physical Palestine, with its rolling hills and silvery streams, but let us look to that Palestine beyond—the New Jerusalem.

I have now talked long enough. I conclude by saying that the invitation of Jesus Christ is just as big and as broad as was the provision for the plan of salvation. Just as he tasted death for every man, so every man is included in his invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest." Come tonight with your faith centered in Christ, the Son of God. Abandon every sin, and resolve to acknowledge him who died that you might live. Come with a full purpose to follow all the way, to be buried in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from which you may rise to walk in newness of life. Then by his grace walk in his counsel the remnant of your days. If this you'll do he will gladly conduct you home to glory that you may dwell in his paradise forevermore.

4.00 - Title

H A R D E M A N S TABERNACLE SERMONS

VOLUME IV Eighteen Sermons Delivered at Ryman Auditorium at Nashville Tennessee from October 16 to 31, 1938. By N. B. HARDEMAN, President FREED-HARDEMAN COLLEGE HENDERSON, TENNESSEE Manuscripts Taken and Prepared Underthe Direction of L. O. SANDERSON NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE GOSPEL ADVOCATE: COMPANY NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 1975

4.00.01 - FOREWORD

FOREWORD In the words of a great Bible character, I am sure we feel, and are ready to say: "It is good for us to be here." This occasion is vividly reminiscent of similar efforts in other years, when the churches of Nashville came together with a commendable unity of purpose, to stand solidly behind like meetings, to make them a triumphant success. As I look over this vast concourse of people here assembled, I am persuaded that the same unity of purpose is again to characterize you in this meeting.

We are moved immeasurably as we contemplate ourselves standing, as it were, amidst the sepulchers of our fathers in the gospel. Near by, "upon the lap of earth," rest the heads of Lipscomb, Sewell, Elam, Smith, and McQuiddy. These esteemed men of God sacrificed their lives on the altar of loyalty to the word of God to prevent the removal of the ancient landmarks of Holy Writ. It is altogether fitting and proper, therefore, that this great meeting—the object of which is to add emphasis to the restoration plea—should be conducted in the shadow of the monuments of their endeavors.

Modernism today is removing the ancient landmarks of Biblical facts. The spirit of compromise, and of halting between two sides, is removing the ancient landmarks of Biblical commands. The church, therefore, needs constant admonition to "contend earnestly for the faith." Christendom, my friends, needs more Nehemiahs to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. She needs more Ezras to restore the law of God. Christendom needs more Zerubbabels to rebuild the temple of God. In your selection of a preacher to lead you in your gesture here toward these ends, you have chosen a man who has combined in himself the qualities of the afore-mentioned three. Like Nehemiah, he would rebuild Jerusalem’s fallen walls; as Ezra, he would uncover and restore the "law of grace"; like Zerubbabel, he would rebuild the temple of God. In this all important work, Nashville for the fourth time becomes the field of assertion. And now it is my very great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, to present to you the speaker of this occasion, N. B. Hardeman.

J. LEONARD JACKSON.

Franklin, Tennessee.

4.00.02 - INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION The same motive prompts the publication of this volume of eighteen gospel sermons preached by N. B. Hardeman in Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee, that prompted their delivery. To know why the meeting was conducted is to know why the book is published. To refer to it as the Fourth Tabernacle Meeting might be a trifle misleading. More than ten years had elapsed since the last of the three previous meetings. Those meetings were unique in some respects, including their physical proportions. All had been conducted by the same man in the same building and the audiences attending were largely the same. In addition to the three meetings, Brother Hardeman had engaged in a public discussion there with Ira M. Boswell of the Christian Church, with Instrumental Music in the Worship as the issue. He had also delivered a series of LECTURES based upon a trip to the Holy Land. Five volumes had been published and offered to the public. All had met a hearty response. The affinity between the man and the building is interesting, if not unique. Possibly no other man has used this remarkable building more; certainly none has put it to a better use. On the other hand, the building has surely received the cream of the best thoughts of his life. He has received more from the building, and the building has received more from him, than from any other man or building. His every utterance there has been published. A knowledge of these facts may have weighed in some hearts. Some may have felt that it was fitting to add another meeting and another volume of sermons to that record. Neither is there any way to determine the spirit and motive of those who attended the fourth meeting. But with the general indifference that pervades the church, to say nothing of any other consideration, it is doubtful if the latter meeting would have been suggested upon these grounds. The members of Eleventh Street Church in Nashville, and the individuals and congregations who cooperated with them in arranging for and supporting this meeting, prefer to believe that this was a special meeting with a special purpose. It was in no sense a "spite meeting." Believing that the church is drifting away from its doctrinal moorings, and contracting the spirit of sectarianism, the supporters of the meeting hoped to awake some to the situation, and crystallize sentiment for a return to original ground.

They were unanimous in believing N. B. Hardeman to be the logical man to achieve such a purpose. In fact, their confidence in him was such that there was no official conference with him as to the ends sought. They felt that the experiences of the past decade had suggested to him the same needs as to themselves. In this they were correct, for the preaching done fitted the purpose of the meeting better than if the supporters had undertaken to outline and suggest what Brother Hardeman should say. The meeting was successful from every standpoint, in so far as it is possible to judge from appearances. The number baptized was not disappointing, as the meeting was primarily directed toward the amelioration of internal conditions of the church. The fundamentals of the gospel were restated. By example and exhortation distinctive preaching and active opposition to all error was encouraged. Crowds exceeded the expectations of both speaker and supporters. It was not the best attended of the four meetings, of course; but considering the general indifference of church members to all preaching, and the diminishing number of regular

churchgoers, as well as the divided sentiment prior to the meeting, the attendance was remarkable. At the six Sunday meetings no more could have conveniently been accommodated, and at some of the other sessions the great auditorium was practically filled. The singing, led by Ben H. Murphy of Nashville, was very effective and inspiring. Incidentally, it was the second of these meetings in which Brother Murphy was the song leader. The reactions following the meeting have been favorable. There is a better feeling among brethren in Nashville. A firmer stand is being taken by many. All have been awakened to trends and issues. A number of private and semipublic studies in premillennialism have been started recently. There has been more preaching on this subject. Many seem to have decided that the only way to settle this issue is to investigate it and settle by the Divine Standard.

Prepublication sales of the book of sermons bid fair to approach the three thousand mark by the date of delivery. There were perhaps more out-ofNashville and out-of Tennessee visitors at this meeting than any of the previous meetings. Interest in the meeting seemed to be more intense throughout the brotherhood, proportionately, than in Nashville. It is expected that many of the books will be sold, and it is the prayer of those who labored to promote the meeting that the spiritual harvest from the distribution of the sermons in printed form may even exceed the good which resulted from their delivery.

W. E. BRIGHTWELL.

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4.01 - THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING

Friends and brethren, I want to acknowledge my profoundest gratitude for such a magnificent audience this afternoon. I count myself exceedingly fortunate, in the providence of God, to have been preserved for this hour, and I appreciate, far more than I can express, the confidence in me on the part of brethren in and around Nashville responsible for this occasion. I have never heard a more fitting introduction than that delivered by Brother Jackson. I now read to you from the tenth chapter of Acts as all introductory scripture. Cornelius was the first Gentile convert. An angel appeared to him, bidding him to send to Joppa to call for one Simon, who lodged in a house by the seaside. "When he comes," the angel said, "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Upon receiving that instruction from the angel, Cornelius dispatched messengers to Joppa. They met with the preacher, were lodged overnight, and after they had started back to Caesarea I begin with the story. "And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and shine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come." Now note: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is acceptable with him." This is from the record of the first Gentile convert. That occasion was fraught with momentous circumstances. The apostle, in response to the call, and by order of the Holy Spirit, was treading upon dangerous ground. There was bitter opposition to any Jews going among the Gentiles. But Peter went, believing in God and dreading not any sort of trial that might follow. And when he arrived at the place, found out what it was all about, and that a great company had assembled, he asked the purpose of their sending for him. Cornelius told him, and said: "Now, Peter, here we are—all of us present before God." Brethren, there was a fine company assembled. It was made up of kindred and friends of Cornelius. They were conscious of the fact that they were in the presence of God Almighty. So they said, "We are all here before God." It was a solemn occasion. They were conscious of their responsibility. We have sent for the preacher, and we are prepared to hear all things commanded of God.

Note: Cornelius did not say we are all here to listen to any kind of theory that you may have; or to listen to varied philosophies that might be yours; but we are here for one purpose, and that is to hear all things commanded thee of God. I believe, friends, that the adoption of that sentiment on our part would be an explanation to our friends everywhere as to why we are assembled.

I am made this afternoon to recall some of the meetings of years gone by. It has been sixteen and a half years since I first came to the Ryman Auditorium, wherein a wonderful meeting was held. That was followed by another in 1923; and that meeting immediately followed by a discussion of some points of difference among those who claim to love the Lord. Then ten years ago, another meeting was held. Most of the sermons of each meeting were put in book form. The influence of those meetings is, I think, yet going on. As I recall, first of all, it made the brethren of Nashville conscious of their strength and who they really were. I believe it told to the people of Nashville, as nothing else could have done, who we were. I believe these efforts impressed the people of Nashville and the great brotherhood far and near who earnestly accept the faith once for all delivered to the saints. And throughout the length and breadth of the land these have served as a great encouragement to the cause of Christ. And here we are for a repetition of those efforts.

"When I came unto you then, brethren, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I was determined to know nothing among you, save Christ and him crucified." Such is the sentiment prompting my presence this afternoon. I have not come to discuss the social problems which challenge our attention day by day. I am not here to talk about political affairs, nor of world-wide relationships, only as incidentally and illustratively such might come. Neither am I here to discuss personal matters or individual differences. "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" I am fully aware of the fact that if an angel from heaven were to come to the city of Nashville and preach any other gospel than that which you have received from inspiration, the very curses of God would rest upon him. I want you brethren and friends to be fully aware that Hardeman is not unmindful nor unconscious of the responsibility assumed in this meeting. But you ask: Why have a meeting of this sort? Well, first, it is customary to have protracted meetings, and to engage in a series of such efforts to accentuate further the principles that we believe to be correct. But so far as I am concerned, I am not here conforming to custom. I care but little about that. This meeting ought to be held, first, because there is great enthusiasm aroused by a congregation of this kind. One stick of wood may burn pretty well, but if you want a rip-roaring fire that will make you sit up and take notice and talk about it, pile them on and then sit back and watch it blaze. The influence of it radiates as it could not possibly from a single stick, however well it might burn. So for this reason the meeting is advisable. Then again, in the great distressing times that have been on for the last ten years, conditions have served to take, the minds of people from things sacred and center them on matters purely material. And because of this common distress, not only among us here, but also among the nations of the earth, those who have proclaimed the gospel for years and have stood for it when bitterness was against them on every hand, think that congregations of this land are drifting away from the old landmarks, and from pioneer principles characteristic of apostolic times and, likewise, of the great Restoration Movement that, more than a hundred years ago, shook this old earth from center to circumference, and made the world to tremble in all phases of error. I think, friends, that it is very timely, therefore, for us to reexamine the platform upon which our campaign was launched.

Paul said to the Corinthians, "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves!" I used to ride the trains much more than now. When they pulled into the city of Nashville, I could see a man come along by the car, with hammer in hand, tapping every wheel. I did not get alarmed over it. I knew the purpose of it—not that he thought the wheels were faulty, but there was so much at stake that he just wanted to tap it to see if it rang clear again. Now I appreciated the thoughtfulness therein manifested. That is the preventive idea—that precaution taken for security. I know there are men who have deeds and mortgages and various kinds of papers, upon which they rely, who frequently open up their deposit boxes and go through again, checking over—what for ? Not that they doubted, but they just want to see again how these things stand. I believe, therefore, it is certainly worth while for us to examine the fundamental planks of our platform and to see whether or not we are steering clear of counterfeits or deviations from the old paths.

I think another reason for this meeting is to restate those old fundamental principles, and I have here, with rather an apology for reading, a declaration and address, delivered by Thomas Campbell, in September, 1809, upon which, as a foundation, ringing true to God’s word, the movement, known as the Restoration, was launched. The purpose of this movement was to uproot denominationalism and to turn back to the principles delivered in the long centuries gone by. May I read to you several statements, to which I subscribe one hundred per cent—not because Campbell said it, but because he spoke the truth in denouncing error? Hear it: "From a series of events which have taken place in churches for many years past, as well as from what we know in general of the present state of things in the Christian world, we are persuaded that it is high time not only for us to think, but also to act for ourselves, to see with our own eyes, and to take all measures directly and immediately from the Divine standard. To this alone we feel divinely bound to be conformed. As by this authority we must be judged. Moreover, being weary and fully aware of the sad experience of the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians, tired and sick of bitter jarring and janglings of the party spirit, we would desire to be at rest, and were it possible, we would desire also to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to the brethren throughout all the churches as would restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole church of God."

Now note again: "It is a pleasing consideration that all the churches of Christ which mutually acknowledge each other are not only agreed in the great doctrine of faith and holiness, but also materially agreed, as to the positive utterances of God’s institution, so that our differences at most are about the things in which the kingdom of God does not consist. That is, about matters of private opinion or of human invention. What a pity that the kingdom of God should be divided over such things! Who would not be the first among us to give up human invention in the worship, of God and to cease from imposing his private opinion that our breaches might be healed? Who would not willingly conform to the original pattern laid down in the New I Testament for this happy purpose? Furthermore, let us declare that we will receive as a matter of faith or practice I nothing which is not expressly taught and enjoined in the I word of God either in express terms or approved precedent, that we would not relinquish that so we might return to I the original constitution of unity of the church and in this I happy unity enjoy the full communion with all brethren everywhere." And then again: I beg your indulgence, because I think it is timely, to state some fundamentals. First, "that the church of Christ upon this earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one." Again, "that nothing be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith; nor

required of them as terms of communion which is not expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God." Also, "that the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the guidance of Christians under Christ as was the Old Testament for the guidance in the days of Moses; that division among Christians is an evil. It is antichristian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself. It is antiscriptural as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority, a direct violation of his expressed command. It is antiscriptural as it excites Christians to condemn, to hate, and to oppose, one another." And further, "that ministers duly and scripturally qualified inculcate none other things than those very articles of faith and holiness which are expressly revealed."

Friends, brethren, I have read to you from that original document some of the fundamental principles upon which the Restoration of a century or more ago was launched. To those principles preached down the ages, we owe our existence today. Some good brethren think that a spirit of yielding is abroad in the land; that there is a tendency to compromise with evil; and because of that fact, I think it very well and exceedingly timely that these matters be restated and enlarged upon for the next two weeks. But there is another purpose prompting this meeting. All of us are conscious of the fact that Christian people need to be revived. We have been up against it—beset on every side by problems confronting us, as we have been, until many have grown cold and careless, indifferent and unconcerned, regarding their eternal welfare. Such is characteristic of man’s nature. Therefore, the warnings of the Bible were given. Peter said, "Brethren, this second letter write I unto you to stir up your pure minds by way of putting you in remembrance of the things spoken both by the holy prophets of old and by the commandments of us the apostles of Jesus Christ." Paul went to the district of Galatia, preached the gospel unto them, and turned them from the Jewish religion to that of the gospel of Christ. But with the passing of time and the cooling of their ardor, they became unmindful of duty. So in writing to them, he said: "Brethren, you did run well; what has hindered you" —what has come to pass that has caused you to be indifferent ? So Jude said that it was manifest that he should write and exhort that "ye earnestly contend for the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints."

Let me say to you, friends, that if judgment begin at the house of God, Peter raised the question: "What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of Christ?" And "if the righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Instead, therefore, of our efforts being centered entirely on the matter of new recruits for the banner of the Lord, I think the call is from every part of the country: Let us try to save ourselves, and revive Christian people with a presentation of a lively hope once again. If, then, this meeting shall serve to make one follower of the Lord more devout, more determined to continue in his footsteps, I think it will not be a failure. But I pass from that. Another purpose that all of us have in mind is that of trying to convert sinners to and by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus extend the borders of the church until the sons and daughters of men, lost, ruined, and recreant, may come within the bounds of gospel promises. In order to do this, what we call primary principles should be repeated. And I want to suggest some things that I think are exceeding worth while. Why preach again first principles of the gospel of Christ? I look out over the audience and see silver-haired sires along with other brethren that have been knowing the truth for numbers of years, and I wonder if you do not think: "Is he to preach again on faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins? Why, Brother Hardeman, we understand that." Doubtless a

large part of you do; but mark it: There are people attending this meeting now and shall hereafter, who know no more about the gospel today than some of you preachers did twenty-five or thirty years ago. It is just as necessary to show this present generation the distinctive plea of the gospel of Christ as it was for our ears to have been greeted by it in the years gone by. Second, there are people accountable to God today that were not accountable last year, and for that reason let us tell it over and over again. In the third place, there are people interested now who were not, at the last meeting in Nashville. Well, how do I know that? By general observation. I know there are experiences and things that come to pass in our lives that make us feel more keenly that we are rushing on down to an open tomb, that make us more conscious of the fact that we are beating funeral marches to the confines of the dead. Some spell of sickness, the burial of some loved one, some tragedy has come so close as to make people recognize the danger, thus prompting them to resolve within themselves: "I expect to become obedient unto the gospel of Christ." Therefore, preach the first principles. Why? People attending that never have before; some accountable now that were not when the last meeting was held; some by virtue of varied and sundry circumstances interested now who have not hitherto so been. With these several reasons stated, I have another matter, all of which is purely preliminary. I want to raise the point: How shall I proceed? And what endorsement shall you lend? There are two schools of thought right along that line. Denominationalism, as it has expressed itself in the various creeds and writings of men, has this to say: Jesus Christ was begotten of the virgin, incarnated in the flesh, lived upon this earth, suffered, sorrowed, bled, and died, was buried, and rose again. Now watch it—that he might reconcile his Father unto man. Now that's one side of the matter. Hence, some of you can recall how we used to meet at early candlelight and start the meeting by various ones telling their experiences, then carrying on until the wee hours of the morning sometimes, begging God, pleading with Christ, imploring the Holy Spirit, with one petition after another, "Lord, come down, convict sinners and convert mourners, and, therefore, be reconciled." And after working at it until midnight, some good brother arose to say: "Thank God it is not of works" and generally added, "lest any man should boast." Now that is one conception— that the whole business is an effort on our part to get God reconciled to man. Friends, hear it! There is not a syllable of truth in that theory! The Bible is absolutely and positively to the contrary. There is not a line in God's book on the matter of reconciliation, but is exactly and precisely the opposite of that sentiment. The scheme of redemption drafted by Jehovah as the great architect included every son of Adam upon the face of the earth. So, then, God already is willing for man to be saved, so much so that his love for mankind prompted the sending of his only begotten Son. Jesus Christ came to this earth—and note the purpose of it—that he might do, not his will, but the will of the Father that sent him. Hence, when he died the tragic death on the tree of the cross, poured out his blood which he freely shed, and cried, "It is finished!" I wonder —actually wonder—is there any soul so thoughtless as to want to bow down this afternoon and pray God Almighty to get up another scheme of redemption? Are you satisfied with what he has done ? Do you think his plan is big enough and broad enough and inclusive enough for you to share its benefits? All right. Would you kneel this afternoon and pray Jesus Christ to come to this earth and travel over Judean hills and Samaritan plains again, suffer the shame and the ignominious things of this life; would you plead that he might die another death, and his body be suspended between the heaven and earth; that his side be pierced again and the life-giving current freely flow that you might live?

That, my friends, is already done. Why plead for such again? Would you bow down and pray God’s Spirit to come to this earth and make another revelation of Cod’s. will? Jude said, "This is that which once for all was delivered unto the saints!" When the pen of inspiration was dropped from the hand of John, on the lonely Island of Patmos, never again to be grasped by mortal man, it we. the doxology and the valedictory of God’s revelation unto l man. The scheme of redemption was complete! I am not, therefore, a subscriber to the thought of that school which l teaches that we should plea with God, or Christ, or the l Holy Spirit, to make us another plan of salvation. I am l not here to plead with Christ to try to get his Father reconciled to man. That has already been done. Now listen to l the scripture: "All things are of God who hath reconciled l us unto himself, and hath given unto us the ministry of l reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling" | —now observe the direction—"the world unto himself!" | Friends, is this a movement on the part of God toward| man? Or is it intended to be a movement on the part of l man toward God? "We are, therefore, ambassadors for l Christ as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you l in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God." "Knowing l the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Hence, the purpose of this meeting is not to plead with God for another l scheme of redemption, nor with Christ to execute the Father’s will again, nor with the Holy Spirit to make another revelation, but we urge upon those who may chance to hear, a full acceptance of that which the Spirit of God has already revealed.

Therefore, I lay down this afternoon five planks in our platform. I beg you to hear them. First, let us resolve to take God at his word. Second, to believe what he says. Third, to become and be what he requires. Fourth, try to live as he directs, and, number five, trust him implicitly for the fulfillment of the promise. Upon that kind of a platform our campaign for the next two weeks in now launched. And to the further deliberation and consideration of such matters as shall grow out of these fundamentals, I solicit your attention, your presence, your prayers, and your interest everywhere. Should there be one or more present this afternoon who, from former teaching or study, understands the will of the Lord and has it in his heart that he wants to become and live a Christian, to accept Jesus Christ as his leader, the Bible as his guide, resolves to worship God as it is written, and to practice the principles of pure and undefiled religion, the invitation is to be extended while we stand and sing.

4.02 - IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD?

IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD?

Several years ago our greatest audiences that assembled at their respective places of meeting were at night. With the passing of the years, however, and the interest of humanity in other affairs, such is not true in modern times. In view of all of that, I am delighted most wonderfully tonight with such a fine audience, even in the absence of the additional delegations that were here this afternoon. I rejoice and congratulate myself always in being permitted to share in a service of this kind.

I have for our study tonight that which I believe to be the supreme issue before Christians at this hour—"Is the Bible God's Word?" Is it true? All of us have been interested in many matters, and issues of different kinds, and we wish not to lessen their importance; but there has never been anything to challenge the consideration of men equal to the question as to whether or not the Bible is the word of God. Have you ever stopped to think just what depends upon that? If this book that I have here before me is not God's word, then it must, of course, be the work of man. If the work is of man, it is the greatest imposition and the grossest deception upon which I have ever gazed; because, from beginning to end, it claims to be by inspiration given. If that claim is untrue, then this volume must be relegated, not only to the level of man-made books, but far beneath them. The result will be that the odium attached thereto can never be removed because of its false claim to be given by inspiration, and that holy men of old spake as they were moved by God's Spirit. It is rather strange that any of us should think it is definitely in order to discuss a matter of this kind, for time was when we were called upon to discuss matters that are taught in the Bible altogether. It was then assumed that the Bible was the word of God. But in *The general outline of this address is based on Notes made while hearing William Jennings Bryan speak along this line. these modern times, of independent thought and infidel considerations, the Bible itself has been brought up and subjected to various criticisms and doubtful questionings.

I feel like suggesting, as did Elijah when he called upon the people, asking why they halted between two opinions— if God be God, recognize and serve him; if Baal is God, then serve him. He challenged the worshipers of Baal, the opponents of God, to a showdown. Let it be said that they were good sportsmen—they accepted his proposition. "Let us build two altars," he said. "You build one to your God, and call upon him; if he answer, him will we serve. Then I will build an altar and call upon my God. Whichever answers our prayers, by fire, will be the true God." They replied that the thing was well spoken—"we will agree to a matter of that kind." "Now there are 450 of you prophets of Baal, and just one of me, so you go first." They prepared the altar, got all things in readiness, and then began to call upon their God to touch it off with fire. They started early and prayed earnestly, until after a while Elijah began to emphasize the matter and to make it uncomfortable for them. "Why," he said, "you fellows are not praying loud enough. Cry a little bit louder—maybe your God does not hear well, or, if not that, perhaps he is asleep—rouse him up. Or maybe he has gone on a long journey." Thus they continued to pray, agitated and aggravated,

until finally they inflicted punishment upon themselves, hoping their God might finally answer; but ultimately they gave up.

Well, it came Elijah's time. He built the altar and put the wood at the proper place, and then said to them: Bring a barrel of water and let us saturate the whole thing. They did it, and then he said: "Get another—put two barrels of water on it; and then do it three times, until it is soaking wet." The water filled all the ditch round about. Then he bowed and prayed unto God Almighty. The result was that high heaven heard his call and answered that wonderful prayer. And all the people said, "There is no God but Elijah's," and he ordered those 450 prophets to be slain.

Now then, to all enemies of the Bible, I make this kind of a challenge: If this book is an imposition, and not the word of God, man ought to be able to write a book that would bring more comfort to the sorrowing and more consolation to the distressed and point us to brighter prospects of the by and by than hitherto we have had. Now if some man cannot do that, instead of proving that man has evoluted, if he does not mind he will prove the opposite of that, and I suppose that word would be "devoluted." With all the advantages of the twenty centuries, the opportunities and experiences of life, if we tonight cannot produce a better book than did those of the days gone by, it shows that we are making progress—in the opposite direction. My friends, all is at stake. If the Bible be not true, our conception of God is all wrong. There is no such character as Christ. We worship in vain, and we have nothing toward which we can point the youth of the land, if, indeed, the Bible be a book fraught with error from beginning to end. But let me say to you: In this Bible, there are those things that are worth more to humankind than all things written in other books the world over. The Bible is worth more to our civilization, to the progress and to the happiness of the human family than all other books that have ever been written upon this earth. We could better afford, as someone has said, to cast aside every volume in the libraries of the land, and be robbed of the whole human collection, than to have the Bible blotted from the face of the earth.

There are three verses, the first, twenty-fourth, and twenty-sixth, in the first chapter of Genesis that mean more and answer more satisfactorily the inquiries of mankind than all other books and chapters the world has ever produced or seen. And in addition to those, we have the rest of the Bible from which we glean great thoughts as well. Now I mention them for your careful study and analysis. The world tonight is wonderfully interested in the origin of things with which we come in contact and observe. There are different theories on every hand—the Christian has one idea, one faith, and one basis for it. All others have different ideas as varied almost as there are individuals. You turn to a Christian tonight and ask him what he thinks regarding the origin of things, and without hesitation he turns to Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God . . ." That is as far back as anyone can go. Back of that no one has dared to make a suggestion. So we launch out into the fathomless depths of the eternal and urge "In the beginning, God!" There we have a character, all-wise, allpowerful, all-loving, and all-Divine. Accepting him, the Christian can explain anything, however miraculously it may follow in the stream of affairs. But someone says, "That is an assumption." I grant that I assume one thing—that is, the existence of a God, the like of whom I have just mentioned. With that as an idea for beginning let me say that it is the only sensible one, so far as we know, that has ever been penned, the only statement that any boy or girl can believe, or upon which he can rely. I assume the fact that God is, and was, and will ever be; and in the beginning he was responsible for things created as they are. Now you take the opposite of that, the atheist, the one who denies the existence of God Almighty, and begin to make inquiries of him.

Generally, he accepts what is called "the nebular theory," and assumes at the very beginning two things: first, the existence of matter, and second, the existence of force. Then he will assume a third thing without asking your permission, and that is this: that force acted upon matter, and the result was "all things as we behold them tonight." Now, I want to ask: Why can I not assume the existence of one thing, namely, the God of the universe, with as much intelligence, with as much degree of scholarship, as any pretended scientist or what not can assume the existence of two things neither of which he can possibly explain? With my idea of the matter, nothing is mysterious. As Paul says in Hebrews 11:3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God."

Boys ask me, "Brother Hardeman, do you understand how the world was wrought into existence?" Why, certainly, son. "Well, how was it?" Through faith I understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God! That is the kind of character with whom I take my stand. Hence, I repeat that this is the most sensible statement ever penned to mortal man regarding the existence of the worlds. That is the only one that moves on down the line unvaried, unmodified, and for which no man has to make apology.

Well, you take the second verse referred to in that first chapter of Genesis, which is Genesis 1:24. There is the truth regarding the continuity of things created; the perpetuity of all things wrought in the handiwork of God. What is it? It is a simple statement. God said that everything shall bring forth after its kind, hence the existence of life upon the earth and the perpetuity of the same. Now, let us pass down through the ages of the distant past and let them be twenty-four millions of years or three hundred and fifty millions—and my reason for mentioning those figures is this: Scientists in their calculations are nearly together on how long in the distant past these things were. One of them says twenty-four millions of years, and the other says three hundred and fifty. But what does three hundred and twenty-six million years amount to with a scientist! Now a man can walk squarely up and accept that with three hundred and twenty-six million years of variance, and yet if in the Bible it is one time spelled B-o-a-z, Boaz, and the next time B-o-o-z, Booz, he rises up in holy horror: "The Bible contradicts itself and I have found things incongruous in the pages of the same." Nothing under heaven but a willful effort to be dishonest and to fail to give justice to the evidence would prompt an attitude of that kind. But you go back into the eternal past, trace down the stream of human generations, as well as all things else, and—mark it!—the world has never yet found a single violation of the God-given principle that everything shall bring forth after its kind! Man with all his ingenuity has never been able to persuade that intangible something-or-other to violate that law of continuity upon this earth. Scientists in their best efforts have told us about the multiplied millions of species. I have read several of them, and I am certain that they do not know much more about it than I—and that is saying quite a little bit regarding it; but suppose there are millions of species, many of them living, others traceable in their fossilized state back in the rocks, and various places of the earth. Mark it! There has never yet been found a single solitary thing in process of transition from one state to another. If, for instance, you dig in the rocks and find a skeleton that you might designate as a fish and analyze him. He is just like one caught down here in the Cumberland River. If you go back and find some bones, fossilized in the long distant past, then what? It is exactly after the kind that has been borne on down the line. Hence, there is absolutely no possibility of man’s finding where anything has ever violated the law of perpetuity of life.

Well the third verse that means so much to the thoughtful student is that one accounting for the existence of man. The Bible simply says that "God made man out of the dust of the earth"; that he breathed into him the breath of life, and there he was a living soul. With all the theories and guesses and the speculations, there has never been an idea one-thousandth part as sensible as the acceptance of the Divine record. I am sure you have read extracts along the line, and have heard others speak possibly more intelligently than I can regarding the matter; but I have read their many theories, and it is amusing—if it were not so serious—to think how some men's minds run along with ideas of this type. A prominent theory is that one single cell came into existence someway, somehow. But you ask the sponsor of that idea: "How came it to exist?" Well, he is up in the air, and either will tell you that it was a spontaneous matter bursting forth, or it came to this earth from some other planet. Well, we wonder then why that thing does not continue. They go so far as to tell us that that one cell had two children—that one was a vegetable, and the other was an animal. And I have just thought about what a family that must have been. A bunch of dog fennel and a little puppy dog are brothers and sisters, all in the same home, starting down life's way together—which, of course, is absurd, ridiculous, preposterous, nonsensical, and an insult to an intelligent | being. But that is the theory as given by some. One time, | it is said, a little animal made its way out of the water | upon the coast. There it lay, in the bright, brilliant, golden I sunlight, and upon its head there was a little pigment, or I freckle. The sun played upon that more directly than it I did anywhere else. As a result, that little freckle became I irritated, more than any other part of the body, and as a I result of that irritation, there burst forth an eye, and the little animal had one eye and began to see. Now that is the explanation. When, in the course of time, another freckle occurred—just happened to be in the right place, on the top side instead of the bottom—and the sun likewise played on that, and in response to the call of the sun and just as a mere accident, that eye came out; so it had two eyes! I suppose, now, that the sun went into eclipse and has been that way ever since, or we would still have eyes coming out! It is certainly strange that the process stopped with just two operations!

They tell us further that in the course of time that little animal wanted to move and it found that it had a wart on its belly (and it is very fortunate that it was not on its back—the whole thing would have been upside down). By the use of that wart, it found that it could have locomotion and move position more easily. By exercising the wart, a leg came out. That was beneficial, but it was all lopsided. Then there chanced to develop another wart, and after a while, by wiggling and using it, that also developed into a leg. So, as time went on, there happened to be four of them. Now that provokes a smile on the part of anybody. But, they say, that little animal developed into a higher one with other features, more and more cultured and developed, finally getting up into the monkey stage and on to the higher classes of the monkey family. Ultimately, the monkeys lost their tails—and here we are! That is the theory. Just look at it and trace our ancestors.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, you ask in all candor: "Who teaches that kind of stuff?" Hear it! Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, a Baptist preacher, in a Presbyterian meeting house, in a little book called "Faith," page 128, endorses that idea. And yet he is the speaker, sponsored by the Federation of the Churches of Christ of America, over whom the world goes wild and listens to every Sunday afternoon. A theory, a guess, that is unworthy of consideration, is galvanized into prominence, into respectability, by men of that type occupying the pulpit and claiming recognition of the Bible. It is an insult to divinity and a mockery to God's word. Friends, let me tell you: the thing that is in

opposition to the Bible tonight is not crime, though this world is cursed with it, because the more crime we have, the greater need we have of condemnation from the Bible respecting the same. Sin is not the great opponent of the Bible, for the more sin there is, the more we need the Divine standard of condemnation. The greatest enemy of the book of God is a class of men claiming to be superior in their intellect, trying to apologize and find a scientific excuse for rejecting the Bible as the word of God. There is our trouble tonight. May I now suggest to you, my friends, another line of thought? It would be almost impossible for me to undertake to trace the progress that has been made in all things material, beginning with the very first, and coming down from generation to generation. Time forbids and my ability likewise hinders a recitation of those things with a degree of accuracy that others might be able to picture. But even in our day and in the days of our fathers, we note the progress made in all the physical and material world. Take the simplest things of life, for instance, our method of travel. Long ago, it took months and months to cross the mighty Atlantic—and now in twenty hours we hop from America to Europe. Years ago, months were consumed in passing from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific—now within thirteen hours we eat one meal in New York and the next in San Francisco. Our method of travel round about Nashville would cause those who passed away even in our early days to rise up in amazement and wonder as to what can be done.

Take our manner of living, no longer is it characterized by the drudgery of the days to which our grandmothers belonged. Why some of you can perhaps remember when the wool from the backs of sheep was cut by hand clippers; that it was then combed and burred and trimmed, then carded into rolls, taken thence to the old spinning wheel. And then by physical foot power on the old loom woven into fabrics for the household. Then with a brass lamp and a yellow light, not bigger than your finger, with the eye of the needle in the wrong end, our grandmothers there sat and sewed and eked out a miserable existence for their families. All of that has not been so long past. But what about it now? Those days are gone forever, due to the progress of our modern civilization. That is but a sample of every phase and feature of things material with which you might have to do.

But, friends, I want to ask of you: What progress has there been made in those more sacred and solemn and important relationships of man? What more do we know tonight about heaven, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the angelic host around the throne of God, than we did twenty centuries ago? Absolutely nothing! What do you know about God that you did not read from the Bible? What do you know about Christ other than the story penned by inspiration? What conception of heaven have you other than that gained from the Bible? What has all our education, our theories, our philosophies brought to us regarding the things that transcend the realms of time ? Nothing! What do you know about man that was not known and written in that book called the Bible? What attribute or characteristic, passion, lust, appetite, desire, does he have and what do you know about it—that is new to the Bible? Hear it! You know nothing! What do you know about sin that you did not learn from the book of God? What do you know about salvation outside of God’s book? Not a thing! What progress has the human family made in analyzing our own selves and figuring out a destiny that will bring to us the sweetest joys that earth can possibly have? Absolutely nothing. What commandment has ever been given since Christ and the apostles quit the walks of men? None. What promise is there after life’s fitful fever is over that is not found in this blessed book? Not a single one. When you begin to study, therefore, the progress in the material world, from any

point of consideration, it is marvelous to make comparison and the ratio is not a hundred nor a thousand, but thousandsfold of progress along every possible line of human thought and endeavor; but when you turn to those matters that outlive our existence here, and talk about the by and by, we have moved forward not one solitary hair's breadth. This suggests to us that the Bible comprehended and surveyed the whole field of human endeavor and our relationships one with another, and to our God, and pictured to us the golden glories of the eternal home beyond. There has been nothing added to what is found in the Bible. But another thing: There are statements made in this Bible as matters of prophecy that have come to pass and are verified by profane history that could not have been made with that degree of accuracy other than by the fact of inspiration. There are things revealed upon the pages of holy writ concerning which there was the densest ignorance and the greatest skepticism imaginable. I shall just mention two or three simple ones. Job lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ. In his writing he said some things that are marvelous, one of which we find in Job 26:7. When Job was enlarging upon his conception of Jehovah and picturing his grandeur and glory, and transcending superiority, in a voice and sentiment of ecstasy, he said: "He stretcheth out the North over empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Well, that is a very simple statement. Job just said that God stretched out the North over that vacant place and that he hung the earth on nothing. World scientists, so called, have made fun of Job for three thousand years and talked about that ignoramus discussing matters of that kind. But do you know what has come to pass? With modern science and invention, especially with the invention of the great telescope, astronomers have turned that mighty telescope upon the various parts of the heavens, and always there are stars and worlds and systems that have been brought to view—but when they have turned it directly, as Job said, to the North, to their utter surprise and chagrin, there is absolutely nothing but an otherwise inexplicable vacancy. They have been "up in the air" trying to explain all of that. How does it happen that if you turn it East or West or South, millions of stars are beheld which are not visible to the naked eye, but when you turn that mighty lens on the North, the precise point, the biggest telescope fails to reveal one solitary thing.

Now as a verification of this fact, just last spring, I wrote to the Scientific Research Bureau of Los Angeles, California, stated the case, from Job 26:7, and raised the question: Is that statement scientifically correct? I had an answer in reasonable time that it Is correct and has been one of the problems baffling the skill of the scientist with his great telescopic invention. Now then, Job was not an astronomer. He did not even have a high school diploma, and was not president of any college; but Job said that God Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, stretched out the North over the empty space—there it is, acknowledged by modern science. They have come down from their lofty pinnacle, and now say: "Job must have known something about this matter." No, he did not know it—God told him! God caused him to write it.

Well, the other part of the verse is so simple that you marvel at it. "He hangeth the earth on nothing." Think a minute. Until the days of Columbus, Sir John Mandeville and the Italian geographer, Toscanelli, everybody thought this earth was flat—that it had four literal corners, that it sat upon four posts, and those posts rested on the back of a big turtle. Hence, even old Mrs. Columbus—I take it a good woman—lived and died believing the earth was flat, possibly ridiculing and rebuking her boy for having such wild dreams as to think this earth was globular and spherical in nature. Well, what happened? By sailing on the deep Columbus demonstrated that the earth

absolutely is round and that it is suspended on nothing! Why that is as simple to us as anything—but when did we catch on ? About four hundred years ago! Who found it out before we did? Why Job could say, "You ignoramuses, I said that fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. I was not a geographer; I did not claim to be a scientist; but I know that God said he hangeth the earth on nothing."

Here it is, out in space tonight, rotating on its axis, at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, turning in its annual revolution around the sun at the rate of about eighteen miles a second, and ever since I can remember, it has never been behind time, never had a wreck, a puncture, or a blowout, in all these years. What is the philosophy of it? God put it that way! It did not happen by chance, and the very universe declares the glory of its creator.

Friends, I want you to think about it: Here is a watch, upon which I look and tell the hours, the minutes, and the seconds of the day. I know good and well that this watch did not just happen to be. Suppose I would tell you this: One time a man gathered up a whole lot of scrap iron, a little gold, and other metals and piled them up together. Then some fellow got drunk, lost control of his automobile, and came down the street and hit that junk pile in just such a way that when it was all picked up, there was found a watch as the result. Now you know that is not so. That thing could not possibly happen. There is the watch that counts the hours, minutes, and seconds. Somebody designed it. It declares the glory of a creator. That thing did not occur just as an accident or by chance—some power, some intelligence, was behind it! Who was it? Well, you cannot tell to save your life who made that watch. You know someone did it, but who? There was an intelligence back of it. Is it revealed? The watch itself does not tell. But after all the works are put in, with everything in shape, the designer and maker placed the name thereon—Hamilton! Now what do you have? There is the thing that declares there was a designer. The writing identifies it! It was not Mr. Smith or Mr. Johnson, but Hamilton! Now watch the application: When you look out on this old world in which we live and on the sister planets you become convinced of what David said: "The heavens declare the glory of God!" The existence of some wonderful power is certain. Who was it? Oh, you can look out on the sun, moon, and stars, and you cannot identify him. But when you take the physical exhibitions of his handiwork and the physical universe declaring the glory—these supplemented by the Bible, which reveals his identity—what do you have? That in the beginning God was responsible for all of this. He stretched out the North over the empty place, suspends this old earth on nothing, except on the invisible and the immutable laws of gravity.

Friends, that is but a sample. Time tonight forbids illustrations further along that line. I want to commend to you who shall have an interest in this meeting an absolute, undaunted, unquestioned faith in God’s book. I want you to be so thoroughly set upon the correctness of it that you are willing to put your hand, one on Genesis and the other on Revelation, and say, "Lord, I believe it all." Further, "I have no apology to make for any statement found upon the pages of sacred truth." I love to talk about the Bible, I love to study about it. I love to teach young men and women things about the Bible. But far beyond that, I love to teach them the Bible itself! I am not so much interested in your learning all about the Bible I want you to learn what it says, to know what is in it. I would love to have those who favor me with their presence to recognize that this is God’s book, by inspiration given; that it is a lamp to our feet, a light unto our path, beside which there is none other book or person to whom we can go. I would love for you to accept it wholeheartedly, without apology, without reservation. Let us take our stand upon the statements found therein, be

circumscribed by its authority, and resolve, deep down in our hearts, that we will accept nothing, we will believe nothing, we will do nothing other than that which is clearly revealed on the pages of God's truth. Further, let each one determine: "I will demand a 'thus saith the Lord' direct, or an approved example, or a necessary inference from the gospel. I will not be among that number who conjecture what it might imply. I will not be with that company which philosophizes as to what it might mean. I will take its plain statements, believing confidently that revealed things belong to man and unrevealed things belong to God. For their fulfillment, I will wait until God sees fit to make known clearly that in which I have an interest tonight."

Friends, this Bible teaches all men everywhere the plan of salvation. The very tenor of this book is to get you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. May I just add this: I am not especially interested in Jesus Christ as a great teacher; nor Jesus as the man of Galilee; nor Jesus as the philosopher. I think all statements of that kind are intended by infidels to draw away men from the issue. Hear it! I am wonderfully interested in the fact that Jesus is God's Son. Though the greatest teacher that ever lived, if he be not God's Son, my interest is wonderfully lessened. Though the matchless Philosopher of all ages, if he be not the Son of God, I have no hope whatsoever centered in him. Therefore, that blood-bought, heaven-born, and world-wide institution, the church of the Bible, is founded upon the fact that Jesus Christ is God's Son. I bid you believe it with all your heart; accept its teachings by turning from every sin away; render that obedience enjoined in this Bible; and then stand upon the promises of our Lord.

Friends, that is our hope tonight. That is the purpose of our assembly and I rejoice over the interest you manifest thus far. Now together we are standing for the invitation hymn.

Chapter 85

4.03 - THE RECEPTION OF ANY TRUTH DEPENDS UPON OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD IT

THE RECEPTION OF ANY TRUTH DEPENDS UPON OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD IT

There was handed to me tonight, just before I approached the stage, a query, with a special request that it be answered tonight. Nothing pleases me more than to enter into a meeting where all things are favorable for the answering of almost any type of sensible query. The program of this meeting, however, is such as to preclude that procedure. It is possible that I might discuss, during the remaining nights, the very thing about which someone would like to ask. I will read this with a word of comment.

"Does a man see the Holy Spirit when he is born again?" The word "see" is used in two different senses. Not knowing just which the person had in mind when he asked, it would be impossible for me to anticipate the thought about it. If you mean it in the sense of enjoy, I would say yes. Then the latter part: "Have you seen it yet ?" I enjoy his comforting influence and exceeding great and precious promises. In Matthew 13:1-58, we have an account of the Savior’s speaking a series of parables by the Sea of Galilee. He got into a boat, and went out, and there sat while the multitudes stood on the shore. And he spake to them first the parable of the sower, which is so simple that all of us can easily grasp it. And when he had finished the disciples came to him and said this: Master, "why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Now that was unusual—he had not been doing it that way, and they were a little bit surprised and troubled over the method of his procedure. Why speak to them in parables ? "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hash, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hash. Therefore, speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith: By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at anytime they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." That is the reading from Matthew 13:10-15.

Now based upon that reading—and I think easily drawn from it—is a proposition that I want to state, and have you study for the time allotted. Our reception of any proposition or truth depends upon the attitude that we assume toward that thing presented. Now if you will get that statement, you have the foundation of the talk tonight. Our reception of any matter, from whatsoever source, depends wholly upon the attitude that we have toward the character who presents it. I hope to make clear to you the development of that principle.

I know that in our social relationships, and the ever-changing characteristics of the same, many of us are unprepared to meet the rapid changes and to endorse the radical things that members have

seen come to pass regarding these very things. Our methods of entertainment in social relationships are not always appreciated, not always endorsed—well, why not ? Our attitude and conception of such matters forbid a hearty reception of that which is presented for our consideration. I know good and well that in our political relationships, my prejudices and my partisan Spirit, formulated in years gone by, prevent me from giving full faith and credence to a statement made by any representative of a party with which I am not affiliated. For instance, I am somewhat against dictators. I have not any too much use for Hitler, Mussolini, or any other of that would-be autocratic type. Hence, I am not in very good position to accept anything with full credence that might emanate from such a source. I think anything that Hitler might say, regarding governmental problems, should be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt. Why? Because my attitude toward his method is not good. And there is a prejudice, I grant, which must be removed if I am to walk out wholeheartedly and accept any declaration that he might announce.

I think you could take an old-time, standpat Republican, and it would be very difficult for any representative of the New Deal to put across to that man anything, however true it might be, with full confidence of genuine acceptance. Always there is suspicion that you are trying to put something over; that you have sinister motives back of it; I am afraid of you—I fear that you are not sincere. Now that principle is true regarding individuals. You may have prejudices against some man, or against some place, or some relationship, and however truthful a sentence might be spoken with reference to it, you take it with some degree of caution. For instance, when Philip actually found the Savior, a real fact, and was so elated over that discovery, and ran to tell Nathaniel, "I have found him who is called the Christ"—that did not register. Nathaniel was not prepared to receive that. And his reply was: Surely not. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" You must be mistaken about it. Now what is the matter with him? "I am just not ready for the reception of a truth of that sort." He had opinions to the contrary. "Why I have been educated—things have been put into my mind—that forbid a hearty acceptance of your statement." May I suggest to you, friends, that a principle like this prevails in matters religious as it does in all things else? Many cannot accept the truth. Why? It is against their former teaching. "I have never heard it after that fashion." They have not been thinking thus of it. Hence, however true and plausible and reasonable it might on the surface appear, "I just know there is something the matter with it somewhere. I cannot receive it." The Savior talked about this same principle when he said (John 7:17), "If any man will to do his will, he shall know the doctrine." It depends a great deal on how you read that. Not if any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine; that would make the doing of his will in advance of knowledge. But the other is the preparation of heart. Do I have a desire tonight to do God’s will? Am I really hungering and thirsting after heaven’s truth? Am I free from prejudices and a partisan Spirit to that extent that I can say: Lord, speak, and I will hear; command, and I will obey? Let the matter be round or flat, wet or dry, hot or cold—I care nothing about how it may be I simply want God’s word, and to that I attach my hope for eternity. I have got to reach that l point of honesty with myself—perfect candor toward the truth and an attitude favorable to the reception of God’s word, no matter whether it is in harmony with what I have previously understood, or in harmony with my party, or any other interest. If I ever get to heaven, I must first of all reach the point where I have no theory, no ax to grind, no interest in anything except the very truth of God Almighty. Hence, if any man will to do God’s will!

Now I think there are many who would not mind becoming Christians if God would let them dictate the terms on which that should be brought about. I think numbers of people would be perfectly willing to live what they call the Christian life if God would allow them to set up the standard. Plenty of people are willing to worship God if God will let them do as they please and have whatsoever may strike their fancy. There is deception and delusion in all that. It is my firm belief that no man can possibly reach heaven until he gets to the point where he can say, "Lord, here I am, what is my duty? What does the Bible teach? Show me the way—I want God's truth!" Jesus said if a man gets in that attitude, that position, with reference to truth, that man "shall know the doctrine." I verily believe there are angelic Spirit? to minister unto all such as shall be heirs of salvation. The Ethiopian officer, the secretary of the treasury of Queen Candace's government, was exactly of that type. He was studying the Bible, wanting to know what the will of the Lord was. And when it was unfolded, then and there, he was ready to obey it. I think Cornelius, at the head of the Italian band, was another. He wanted the truth, and was seeking for it, hungering and thirsting for it, and doing what he could to learn it. God saw to it that he learned the truth and understood the will of the Lord. Christ therefore said, "If any man will to do his will"— what about it?—that man "shall know it"—not may, nor might, nor perhaps, but in the providence of God, the light of truth shall shine round about him and the path of duty will open up clearly before him.

Now let us get back and see if that has any connection with the reading. Jesus had spoken the parable of the sower, and the disciples came and said, "Master, why do you speak to them in parables?" Why not come out and tell it with all directness? Here is the answer: Because "unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," but unto them it "is not given." Now shall I conclude that there is partiality on the part of God and that some represent the very elect who from before the foundation of the world were designated unto eternal life? And of those to whom it is not given to know, we must say they were "non-elect," and regardless of all things, it is impossible for them to receive the truth? That would be foreign to the teaching of the Bible, and a conclusion hastily drawn, and wholly unwarranted. Why was it given unto some to know and not given unto the others? Well, the same thing is true tonight, and that scripture is just as applicable this very hour as it was when spoken on the shore of Galilee.

Study the matter just a minute. To whom was it given to know ? To the disciples. Well, why ? Some months before that, they had bidden good-by to things of this earth and to the material concerns of the world. They had left their respective occupations and had followed after the Savior, sitting at his feet, learning the wonderful lessons, watching the performance of miracles, with mouths, ears, and eyes open, anxious, ready, willing, wanting every word that came from his precious lips. They were studiously seeking the truth. What about them, Lord? Unto them it is given to know! To that very kind it is given tonight.

Well, why is it not given unto the others? You heard me read exactly why. "This people's heart is waxed"—or become—"gross." "Their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Well, what about them? It is not given to that class to know the will of the Lord. They shut their eyes and stopped their ears and barred the door of their hearts— hear it!—a man of that kind cannot learn—it is impossible for that man ever to learn the truth. Why? He does not want the truth. He will not have teaching. He will not sit and hear and weigh honestly what might be said. He is opposed to the proposition. He closes his eyes and ears

and heart for fear he might learn something which he does not want to know. Therefore, unto that man, Christ says, it is not given to know.

Now, then, that puts the responsibility, friends, upon every individual present. Do I tonight, solemnly and seriously, personally and individually, want to go to heaven when I die? No one on earth can answer that but me. Do I want to know what the will of the Lord is? Or am I such a partisan that I want my party to prevail, to triumph regardless? Do I gloat? "I expect to win out! I will down the other fellow!" Now a man of that sentiment is certain to go to hell. Do I want God's will to prevail, even though it might go contrary to my opinion? I must reach that point where God's will is supreme if heaven is ever mine in prospect to share, and I pray God tonight that each one may be able to say, "Lord, I am ready to give up all preconceptions; I am ready to forget any prejudices or former ideas; I want to come with open, honest frankness and say, 'Lord, speak; let me hear thy truth; command, I will obey,' and I will not stop to figure out why nor wherefore nor raise the point, 'Will not something else do, and cannot I get by with this?' "

Now then, with that as a setting, I just want to ask you some things tonight, for personal investigation. Friends, what is your attitude toward this book? First, with reference to its inspiration. Do you believe that this book is inspired of God ? Do you believe this Bible was by inspiration given? Are you sold on the idea that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit? I trust that I am speaking to a company who have not a doubt respecting this. Do we not believe that the Bible was breathed into men of old—that this book is not the product of man, but God's word, directed, inspired, and prompted by the Holy Spirit?

Assuming now that the audience is a unit on that, there is another point right in connection with this. There are two schools of thought at this place: The position of one is that it is ideally inspired. What is meant by that ? That God gave the writers the idea and allowed them to frame it in their own language and to present it according to their conception and relationship toward the same. Then there is another school. Here is its view: That the Bible is inspired, word by word, verbal inspiration of God's book. Much depends upon your attitude toward these matters as to what you will be, what you will do, and what you will practice out in life. Well, the strongest argument against verbal inspiration is this: That verbal inspiration would destroy the individuality and the style of the different writers. Clearness of thought and accurate selection of words are essential to the expression of truth; but peculiarities of style have nothing to do with such. If that objection be valid, it would follow that God would be unable to tell Peter the very words that he desired told and that it must be left to Peter to arrange them after the general manner and make-up of Peter's decision along those lines. What is style? Well, it has to do with the arrangement of sentences and phrases; the use of connectives and the selection of synonyms. You might as well say that God could not make two styles for different blades of grass or leaves of the trees or two people, absolutely different, as to say that God was unable thus to fit his words, one by one, suited to the method by which Paul, Peter, James, or John might express themselves.

We have many illustrations of that kind that reduce the professed argument to nothingness. I heard someone tell this story that seemed to me to illustrate the very point. A gentleman from the country once walked up to the postmaster and inquired about a letter. He was handed one. He went off and stayed for ten or fifteen minutes trying to read it, but could not. Finally he brought it back to the postmaster and said, "I am unable to read this letter. I think it is written in some foreign

language. And I would love to get you to help me decipher it." The postmaster said, "The only language I know is American. I do not know anything about foreign languages such as French, or German, or English, but I will do the best I can with it." So he took the letter and, with the aid of a dictionary, carefully studying it for a while, called the patron and said, "I think I have this thing worked out. I do not want you to take it too seriously, because it might not be this way; but I think your letter says this, 'Your Uncle James, being advanced in years and being debilitated, physically and intellectually, by reason of the frailties that attach to the encroachment of senility, and having suffered severe financial reverses, in a moment of temporary dementia, precipitated his own demise.' I think that is it, but in American language here is what it means, 'Your Uncle Jim got old, lost his wad, went nerts, and bumped himself off.'" Here are two ways of telling the same thing, as you can see. Now you get the two styles. The very same thing is told, but the idea is clothed in quite different styles. The point is made just the same, and while one fellow went way around by the Joneses and finally got to the point, the other one cut right through—his style was to rob it of all superfluity and go straight to the point.

Without further discussion tonight, I believe without a shadow of doubt, God spoke every word, one by one, unto those to whom he had assigned the task of penning his will toward man. I am told that the expression "Thus saith the Lord" is in the Bible some two thousand times. Let me just quote to you one or two passages. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, "Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which things also we speak"— now watch it—"we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Now, Paul, what have you said? We have received the Spirit of God, and we teach those things, not in the words of man's wisdom, but in words which the Holy Spirit bath spoken. But again, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Not the idea—but the word! Brethren, that is not merely it—that is it! Why argue or have misgivings or doubts about a thing concerning which the Bible is so clear?

Well, again, my friends, what is the attitude that you have tonight toward the Bible with reference to this point: its completeness, all-sufficiency, fullness? Is the book of God complete? Is there something to be added? Do you accept this as a complete revelation of God's will to man and man's duty to God? Do you subscribe to the statement of Jude when he urged that men ought to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints? Is that your attitude and disposition? Doubtless you say "yes." Don't you then see that you could not accept the Mormon idea that a revelation was made to Joe Smith? Jude said it "was once for all delivered to the saints." That settles it—there hasn't been anything since. Do you not see that you cannot subscribe to the idea of the Christian Scientist that God told Mrs. Eddy something and told her to repeat it. Contrast that with Paul's statement—"I was caught up unto the third heaven, I heard things that were unlawful for men to utter." But this woman says "God told me to tell it—he would not let Paul utter it, but he gave it to me." And that is a long time after Jude said, "Once for all delivered to the saints." Friends, the acceptance of the Bible teaching precludes the addition of revelation since the pen of inspiration was dropped from fingers weary on the lonely Isle of Patmos, almost twenty centuries gone by. That settles it.

Well, again: If you subscribe to the idea and have that attitude toward the Bible, that here is a full revelation of God's will to man, and in it there is programmed our duty to ourselves, to our fellow men, and to the God of our being, subscribing to that and believing that God has given unto us all things pertaining to life and Godliness, and that "the scriptures are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, completely furnished unto every good work," you cannot endorse any other attitude. If you cherish those statements, which I have read with little comment, then what? Do you not see that you cannot subscribe to any sort of human booklet in the form of a creed, discipline, confession of faith, or church manual? Do you not understand that you already preclude the possibility of such? When a man comes along with any kind of human document, supplementary to the Bible, and declares allegiance, and subscribes to that, what does it spell? The Bible is not as complete as it should be. It is lacking in some matters; therefore we have adopted this human booklet by which to be governed. Now I bid you think on that just a moment, and see whether or not you really believe the Bible to be complete. But all manner of excuses are offered. Why I have heard them say, "Brother Hardeman, now I know that I have done that, but don't you think that we ought to have our articles of faith written down?" I surely do. "Well, then, here is our booklet." Do you mean to say by that that you have articles of faith which are not in the Bible? If so, you had better look out for your articles of faith—something wrong somewhere. I would be ashamed of myself tonight if there was a single article of faith to which I subscribe that I could not turn to in God's book and read. And if I can have it in the Bible, why do I have to have some "big men" get off in the corner and write it down again ? "But, Brother Hardeman, we must have some rules and regulations governing our church." Now lust wait a minute what does that spell? First, we have got a church that God knew nothing about, and in his Bible there are no rules or regulations governing our church—I know that is the truth, there is none "governing our church." Do you mean to say, though, that in the Bible there are no rules or regulations governing the church bought with his blood? If there are, then what is the excuse for having a human book, be it called this, that, or the other? Friends, that is the wrong attitude toward God's book. What you need is faith implicit, undoubted, absolute in the all-sufficiency of the word of God.

Well, let us see again. What is your attitude toward the Bible with reference to prophetic matters? I know there are prophecies galore in God's book and what conception do you have of them? Just what approach do you have respecting the same? Well, what is a prophecy? First, it is the unveiling of events in the distant future that would preclude the possibility of accident, or merely coming to pass as a guess. Second, a prophecy must be sufficiently far in the future to preclude the prophet's living long enough to have any part in the fulfillment of the same. Third, there must be such a sufficiency of events and characteristics of it as to preclude the idea of chance. And fourth, prophecies are not to be accepted until they are fulfilled.

Friends, there are four statements regarding prophecies that are absolutely true. First, what it is. Second, how far distant must it be, beyond the realm of the life of the man making it, to prevent his serving as an agency in bringing it to pass. Third, not simply one point, but a sufficient number of points to prevent its being an accident. And, fourth, prophecies are not to be given full credence until after they are transformed into historic certainty. Now then, what is your attitude toward the Bible? Do you believe the statement made by Moses (Deuteronomy 29:29) when he said: "Revealed things belong to man, unrevealed belong to God." Now where is my fear and what is

my disposition toward matters of that kind? Well, I believe the Bible. God said in effect, "Hardeman, if you believe the Bible, you speak those things that are revealed." That is what belongs to man. And don't you seek to be wise above that which is written, and whenever a prophecy comes to pass, then what? Believe it and recognize the fact that it is no longer prophecy, but is now a matter of history. Friends, that is the right attitude to assume toward all that, and my reception of any statement whatsoever, by any man made, depends upon that attitude! Now if I am disposed to search my own wisdom, draw my own conclusions, play upon my imagination, and paint pictures by my own ingenuity, then what? I transcend my authority and likewise the realm of Holy Writ and get out into the farthest depths of those things concerning which man absolutely knows nothing. But, when that thing has come to pass and sufficient evidence of its fulfillment is produced, then what? I preach that as an historic fact. Well, that is my attitude toward it.

Now again, what is the attitude that anybody ought to have toward error, be it whatsoever kind it may? I just regret that on all of these points there are divisions in our land—first, division regarding the inspiration of God's book; that is lamentable. Second, regarding the completeness of it, therefore the excuse of supplementary books in the form of church manuals and directories, etc. And again, with reference to prophetic declaration and on to the last regarding error. I think, brethren, that there is growing up among us a sentiment that my duty as a preacher is this: preach what you believe, what you conceive to be true, but let all things else alone. Now if preachers and those who advocate such were consistent about it, I would have more respect for them. But that very same fellow who may offer such counsel to me, and urge such procedure to be my duty, does not hesitate to criticize and condemn evil in general. He considers it error to have marble machines in Nashville. He opens his mouth about the liquor issue, and fights all kinds of evil. To be consistent with his principle, he should just go ahead and be sober himself and say nothing about the other fellows drinking liquor. And if some man wants to put up a saloon next door to him, he should not open his mouth. His theory is: preach your own doctrine and let the other fellow alone. And if someone wants to put a race track in Tennessee and license gambling, say nothing about it. Did you ever notice that very kind that are so wonderfully particular and object to any preaching against religious error are out on the public platform condemning all the errors in the social, in the political, and in the general realm of human affairs? Why not be consistent? There is a growing disposition to apologize for truth when preached and error when condemned. Friends, that is the most dangerous idea and the most pernicious attitude threatens the peace and the unity of the church of God tonight. In the very same charge that Paul gives Timothy to preach the word he also said: "Reprove, rebuke, and exhort." Now Paul did not say, "Son, preach the word, preach the truth, let everything else alone." That disposition, friends, would never have planted the cause of truth upon the face of God's earth. When Paul, when Christ, when all of them were in the midst of the Jewish controversies of their day, they kept not silent respecting error. "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear." That is the teaching of God's word. It is the duty of the church to expose error and to declare the truth. Any preacher who will not do both is unworthy of the name. Every member of the church must do likewise. That is what Paul said to Timothy. It is as much my duty to point out the error of young men, of young women, as it is to teach them the truth of God's word. I want to sound it out now. Boys and girls who come to FreedHardeman College, with which I have a connection, are not only taught the truth—they are taught the pitfalls, and the doctrines, and the errors that are along the pathways, so that they can stand out like a stonewall, immovable, absolutely firm and solid against every wave of doctrine contrary to the teaching which

we have received. Now that is my attitude. I, of course, believe it the right one. But again, friends, what is your attitude tonight toward the Bible with reference to its being a book of Absolute Authority,/? Is the Bible just a book of general directions, outlining the general policy, with all details to be worked out by sanctified common sense, or is the Bible specific in those things that would lead a man out of darkness into the kingdom of God ? Is it specific and does it go into detail with reference to how the child of God ought to worship the Father? What do you think about it? Is it just a general broad-gauged book of principles with the details and specifications left to every man's own idea, or does God Almighty outline the path of duty from the time we leave the world of sin until by and by we sweep through the gates into his everlasting and eternal presence on the ~ other shore? Think on these things.

I want those in this audience who are not to become Christians by obedience to the will of God. If you desire to do his will, if there is a disposition of heart and mind to accept it tonight, the invitation is gladly tendered.

4.04 - TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD

TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD

Far beyond my power to express it, do I appreciate the fine audience assembled tonight, and I most earnestly hope that every service may be, within itself, the strongest possible invitation for your return. As Brother Acuff so well said there is nothing characteristic of this meeting intended to appeal to the gallery other than simple gospel singing of spiritual songs, the reading of the scriptures, and all earnest presentation of matters that ought to challenge the concern of every person who wants to go to heaven when he dies.

I am reading to you from the last part of Matthew 28:1-20 --one of the most familiar paragraphs that I could select—"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." My friends, there was never a more sacred, solemn charge clothed in human language delivered to mortal man than that which I have read in your midst. It is the language of their king, who was soon to be crowned at God’s right hand. It is a charge to the disciples which meant either salvation or damnation to all accountable, responsible beings. Jesus Christ was ready to introduce and to inaugurate a new religion unlike that of the Patriarchal period or that of the Jewish age. It was new in all phases and the foundation of it was the obligation to teach the word of the Lord. May I just say to you that the very basic principle of Christianity is that of teaching, learning, grasping. Therein it differs from all other kinds of religion, and, be it said that the church of God makes progress proportionate to the intelligence of the people and to the light revealed to them from God’s word. It is a principle true everywhere that if you are conscious of the fact that you have the truth regarding any matter you seek the light and want all the evidence turned on because as a result it shines out with greater brilliancy. If here is error any where about our system we seek to not be that in darkness and to conceal H. Christ knew that be bad a message to mankind, and be solemnly said to these disciples: "Go, therefore, and teach all the nations-every creature in all the world.

I am talking, therefore, to night, about that commission, not as ordinary preachers do. Teaching is the theme for discussion. The Bible abounds with statements embodying at principle. The prophet said prior to the times of Christ "they shall be all taught of God." Jesus quoting said, "Therefore every man that heareth of the Father, learneth of him, cometh unto me.” Becoming a Christian is not an accident. It is not a step of blindness, nor of ignorance of mere passion, but it is a matter of true, calm deliberation upon the facts of the gospel. Hence, the very foundation of all work committed to the apostles and disciples was: they were to teach all men everywhere. Jesus himself went about teaching and preaching and confirming what be taught by the performance of miracles. A severe rebuke is administered in Hebrews 5:12 when the writer said: "The time is that

you ought to be teachers of others, but instead of that, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." If, my Fiends and brethren, the church of the Lord is not making the progress that we would desire, if you think there is trend toward drifting and variation, I think the little end of the taproot of it is a lack of study and of teaching just what the will of the Lord is on the part of those who assume the responsibility for the same. Paul said to Timothy, "Now, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses." The same thing, not something different, not something nearly like it not something that sounds almost the same, but the same thing, "Commit those same things unto faithful men able to teach others also." Therefore you have the two qualifications of a gospel preacher. Here they are: First, faithful, loyal, true to God's word. Second, with an acquired or a native ability to put it across. Therefore Timothy handed it on down the line, sire to son, generation to generation, to faithful men, able to teach others also. Then he said again, Son, "continue thou in the things that thou hast learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Men learn their religion. They are what they are because that is the way they have learned it. I have gone into Catholic cathedrals and have observed their peculiar manner and method of worship. I sat in old At. Peter's Cathedral for more than two hours and watched the secretary to the pope direct the service, going through all of their performances. I sat there and meditated—"that is not the way we do it back at Nashville, Tennessee, in the churches of our Lord, and hence, why do they perform after this fashion?" Now here is the answer: That is the way they learned it. Well, I have gone into Mohammedan places of worship and have watched their exceedingly peculiar form of worship. I have heard them read from the book called the Koran and go through their respective items and their peculiar postures of prayer. I then raise the point: What makes you do it that way? And the answer is: That is the way they learned it.

Now just apply that all over the land. Why do people in Nashville vary in worship and carry on differently? That is the way they learned it. Now if you were to ask me tonight: "Hardeman, why do you occupy the place you do and worship God according to the form characteristic of you?" Here is the answer: Friends, I learned it this way. So Paul said: "Timothy, continue thou in the things that thou hast learned and been assured of." Now watch it: "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Now mark this: It is not sufficient for me to simply say that I learned a certain system of worship, but right after that, I should raise the all-important point, where did I learn it, ans what is the source of that information? From whom was I taught it? Did I receive it from the word of God? If so, I can check up on every item that I claim to follow and find it in God's book; but if perchance I start out and fail to find even that very organization of which I am a member, and in which I delight, and to which I lend my encouragement and my time, and influence, and money, then what do I know? I surely know that I learned this from the wrong source—I did not get it out of God's book because there is not a hint, nor a word, nor a syllable that even mentions my church. I know then that my teaching has been wrong, and I am not to continue in a thing other than that which I learned from the right source. So the whole thing is a matter of teaching.

Now, then, brethren, I want to raise this question: Upon whom, tonight, does the responsibility rest for executing the commission of our Lord? On whom does it depend? Who must carry out what the Savior said when he declared, "Go, teach all the nations ?" Do you suppose that President Roosevelt and the cabinet assembled about him are conscious of this responsibility? Does the President say: "Gentlemen, we have got to carry out the commission of our Lord and teach all

nations the gospel of Christ" ? You know that commission was not given to the Democratic party, old dealers or new dealers. And, by the way, none of you Republicans ought to think that it was given you because God had no such things in mind. Hence, this is not the obligation of some political party. Well, I just wonder if the Odd Fellows ever felt keenly that it is their duty to carry out the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ? To mention such a thing carries the negative answer.

Who, then, is responsible for the execution of the commission of our Lord ? Is some modern, human, organization designated as a church? Did God give it unto them? Was he talking to some modern denomination when he said go teach all nations? Why, they were never heard of then and for hundreds of years afterward no such things existed on the face of the earth. Hence, they are eliminated on the answer: Friends, I learned it this way. So Paul said: ground that they did not exist when the Savior gave that solemn charge. Then it comes back to us: Upon whom does it rest? I think you will agree that these disciples were to be charter members of that institution called the church of our Lord. And on all such as are members of it that obligation is in force tonight. But let us get this clearly fixed in mind, brethren: The church of the Bible is not some artificial, corporate body, from which we are distinct. I sometimes think we look upon it as such and stand back and criticize what the church is doing and what it is not doing. Wait a minute and raise the point: What is the church? It is that spiritual realm over which Christ is head and in which the Holy Spirit dwells. And every man or woman, boy or girl, who has been born again, born of water and of the Spirit, is a member of it. The very fact that I claim membership makes me and forces me to assume the obligation upon my part to execute the commission of our Lord. The problem is: What am I doing along that line? Not what is the church doing—what am I doing? Because I claim to be a member of it, and the combined effort of individual Christians is the result or cause of all that the church may do. If, therefore, every individual becomes aware and keenly conscious of the fact that "I am a part of the church of the Lord, and the obligation rests upon me," I think that carelessness and indifference, that lack of familiarity of God’s word, would cause us to shudder and get down to studying that we might show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing, or handling aright, the word of truth. Hence, the obligation is upon the church. I am not expecting the Masonic fraternity to carry out the commission —I think they were never charged with teaching God’s word. I think no human society was ever bidden to preach the gospel, but the church of the Lord, the only institution known in the Bible, was. It is that through which the wisdom of God was to be manifest unto all the nations of the earth—God’s wisdom is to be made known by the Hence, God’s promise of salvation, God’s scheme of redemption, God’s teaching to the human family, is revealed To us and it is to be executed and maintained and continued borough God’s heaven-born and blood-bought institution, gamely, the church. And that was not simply an accident, be it remembered. Let me call attention to this. There is theory prevalent among our premillennial friends that the church was never intended by the Lord Almighty to exist upon this earth and was purely an accident; that Jesus Christ came to establish a kingdom, and the Jews having rejected him, he turned aside and established the church in its stead. Therefore, we are in the "church age" as a "spiritual contingent"—a thing not intended on the part of Jehovah.

Now will you just listen how plainly the Bible contradicts that? It says openly that such is untrue. I am reading to you from Ephesians 3:1-21, Ephesians 3:10, but I begin at Ephesians 3:8 for the

connection: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." To the intent—now watch it—"to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Why, friends, from the foundation of the world God purposed the church as a missionary agency through which the wisdom of God, the teaching of heaven's will, was to be made known to the sons and daughters of men. Paul, therefore, said that the church is God's medium and it was so intended from the very foundation of the earth. It was in the beginning! Away, then, with the idea that the church is a "contingent." The church is God's institution and according to his eternal purpose it existed that it might teach the world the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Well, ought brethren and Christians to contribute of their means to the support of the gospel? Surely! Does the Bible teach it? Yes! How? 1 Corinthians 16:1, "My brethren, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." "Upon the first day of the week," that is the time, "let every one of you," that is the who, "lay by in store," that is getting ready, now mark it, "according to ability," or to prosperity. Does the Bible teach that? Certainly it does.

What about lying? "He not one to another, speak the truth in your heart, do not bear false witness." God says it. Now that is what I mean by the Bible teaching a thing by direct statement.

Well, now let us get some other things. Brethren, does the Bible teach Christians to observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week? You answer, "Yes." Now, have-you stopped to think just how that is done, and how the l Bible teaches it? Christ told the disciples, and so did Paul, "Take and eat" and thus we are commanded by direct statement to eat of the bread and to drink of the fruit of the vine. But I just want to ask some of you "old-timers" where did Christ ever say, "Eat of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week ?" Had you ever stopped, brethren, to meditate upon a thing like that? Where is the commend to partake of it on the first day of the week? I can find you a command to eat of it, and to drink of the fruit of the vine, but where is the direct statement to do that on the first day of the week ? And do you know that the fellow that knows where that is is not present tonight and has not been here and is not going to come? Now why? Because there is no such statement in the Bible, and I trust none of you, brethren, will get shaky over Brother Hardeman's announcement of that fact. Yet, the Bible teaches—mark it— the Bible teaches the observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. But how does it teach it? Now here is the way: By giving us all approved example of the brethren at Troas meeting on the first day of the week to break bread. Therefore, that example of their doing it under the direction of the Holy Spirit comes with all authority. Now, if I would meet with God's approval, as did they, I will do likewise, and on the first day of the week partake of the supper of the Lord. What is my authority ? A heaven-inspired example! Now let me carry along with that this idea. I do not know whether you have had to meet it or not, but I have. After teaching that way, and preaching after this fashion, I have had men to ask me, "Well, Hardeman, why don't you folks then wash one another's feet if you are going to follow an example ? Don't you know that Christ instituted the supper and the washing of feet about the same time?" Yes! "With the same persons?" Yes! "And

did he not tell them that he left them an example that they should follow in his steps ?" Yes ! "Then why is it that you hold on to one example, namely, the observance of the supper, and reject the other example of washing feet?" I think that is a legitimate question, and I can appreciate any man's asking a thing of that kind. Now, watch it—why is it that the church of Christ accepts the example of eating the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, but does not wash feet as a church ordinance? Well, I will tell you why! Here it is: Both of those examples were given before the church of the Lord was organized. During the personal ministry of Christ, the supper was instituted and the washing of feet was inaugurated. Now then, after the church was organized I find where brethren met together on the first day of the week to break bread. Whenever somebody in Nashville can find where the brethren, after the church was established, met to wash their feet, I will agree to do it or admit that I am wonderfully inconsistent. But that man does not live in Nashville; he has never heard of Nashville. Therefore, I am on positively safe, legitimate grounds, consistent grounds, when I accept the example of eating of the supper and reject the perpetuity of the washing of feet. So much for that.

Now, there are some things that I think the Bible teaches and yet, if you were to ask me to read it in so many words, I could not do it. If you were to ask me to give a direct example for it, I could not do it, and yet I would say it teaches it. Well, how? By a necessary deduction or inference. Now, I grant you that you have to be careful in studying matters of this kind. Inferences are of two kinds, may I say, logical or reasonable, and second, necessary. Let me illustrate: My home is at Henderson, Tennessee, 140 miles west of here. Well, here I am at Nashville. That is a fact. Now with that fact you may begin to infer how I got here. Someone said, "He came on the train." Well, I did not tell you I did, but how did you decide that? "Oh, I just inferred that you came on the train." That is a reasonable inference. That is not silly. And someone else said, "I just have drawn the conclusion that you rode the bus." Well, people do ride the buses and that is a reasonable inference, and I might have come that way. And another infers and decides, "He came in a private car." Now all of those are sensible, but I want to ask you, "Which one of them is necessary?" Not a single one! Why? Because I could have walked and not have come either way, or I could have ridden a mule as I have done. Now can you see the difference between a reasonable inference and a necessary one? And right there, I believe is the ground of much of the confusion in the religious world tonight. Inferences, if hastily drawn, and not carefully thought out, will lead you into error of the most dangerous type whatsoever. Now, I can illustrate what I mean by a necessary inference. In the twelfth chapter of Genesis we have an account of a famine in the land of Palestine, so much so that Abraham and Sarah, his wife, went down into the land of Egypt, and because of her beauty, there was trouble with the Pharaohs. After all that is over the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of Genesis says this, "And Abraham went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot went with him, into the south." Now what is the statement, "Lot went with him up out of Egypt?" Now question, did Lot go down into Egypt? The Bible is as silent as the twinkling stars. There is not a word ever said about it. Someone said, what do you think about it, Hardeman? I think he did. Well, what makes you think it? Because of the statement the Bible says, "Lot came up out of Egypt," and I am forced to the conclusion, therefore, that he must have gone down into the land else the statement of the Bible that he came up out of it could not be true. I infer, therefore, with all the right of Bible authority, Lot went down into Egypt. But I can give you brethren one that you know more about than you do that. In the third chapter of Matthew it is said, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Did you know, brethren,

that the Bible never did say that Christ went down into the water? And yet, you will argue that he did, and, I think, argue correctly. But if you were called upon to read "where did Christ ever go down into the water" you could not do it. That is not in the Bible. Well, someone said, "Another fellow did, and that is the example." No, the example of someone else would not prove that he did. "Well, I know he did." How do you know it? Because the Bible said he came up out of it, and physically, it is impossible for a man to have come up out of Egypt or out of the water unless previous to that he had gone down into it. Therefore, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ went down into the water and was baptized and came up out of it. Let us see another source of error on the part of many people that do not think logically and correctly. In Acts 16 the Bible says that "Lydia and her house were baptized." That is the statement made after Paul had preached to her and God opened her heart so that she attended unto the things that were spoken. All right, "Lydia and her house were baptized." Now note one system of reasoning. Lydia was a married woman. How do I know? I assume it. What made me assume it? Why, it said "she and her house," and I infer that if she had a house, she must have been married. And Lydia had children. Why ? The Bible says "she and her house were baptized," and I infer that if she had a house, she must have had children, and some of those children were babies. Well, how do I know? Well, I just infer that she had a house, and had children, and some of them were babies. Now the Bible says "she and her house were baptized," therefore I reach the conclusion that there is a case of baby baptism. How did I get that? By inferring it! Well, was inference silly? No, not at all. Every one of those things sometimes happens. But raise the point: Is it necessary for the statement of God’s word to be true that Lydia must have been married? Can a woman have a household and not be married? Well, I know they can and I can name you some. Again, can a woman have a household and not have children? Surely, and there are plenty of them in Nashville. Furthermore, in a household where there are children, is it necessary that some of them are infants? How about it at your house? Any infants at your house? Friends, did you know this? You can canvass the City of Nashville, up one street and down two and then across over to three, and you will not find an infant in every fifth home. Therefore, the conclusion that because the Bible says "Lydia and her house were baptized" there must have been babies is a dangerous conclusion and not necessarily so. Why? The facts of the Bible can exist without that, and yet, as a good Pedobaptist preacher friend of mine once said to me, Hardeman, that is the strongest argument I know of in the Bible for baby baptism. Then he added, I will admit that it is an inference wholly unnecessary. That is what all ought to think.

Now then, let us make application of some of these things in the time that is left tonight, and get some matters further before us. Brethren everywhere teach that the church, or the kingdom of God, was set up, inaugurated, established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. I will affirm that any day with a respectable opponent and feel certain of my ground. Well, some one said, Does the Bible say it was set up on Pentecost? No, it does not say it. Well, is there an example of something else having been set up on Pentecost? That would not prove that the church was. How do you reach that conclusion then? By a necessary inference. Some one said, "Let us see you go about it." Well, that is not the theme tonight, but just a word. "There be some of you standing here which shall not taste of death until the kingdom of God shall come with power." (Mark 9:1) Christ said in effect, "Some of you folks are not going to die until God’s kingdom will come, and it is going to come with power," and then he said, "Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Now note: The kingdom is to come with power, the power

came with the Spirit, and the Bible says, "the Spirit came on Pentecost." Therefore, I am forced to the conclusion that if God's Spirit came on Pentecost, the power came with it and God said the kingdom would come with the power. Therefore, the kingdom of God was established upon this earth on the first Pentecost I after the resurrection of Christ, and away with the man I who declares no such thing is yet in existence.

Well, does the Bible teach that baptism to a penitent I believer is for the remission of sins? It does and I will I affirm that with any respectable opponent. Well, how does I it teach it? There is not any inference about that at all. God just comes right out and says it. Unto those who had I heard the gospel, who had been cut to their hearts and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said, prompted by the Holy Spirit, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." No inference about that; no example about it; there is the straight statement itself. I believe that. Why? That is what the Bible says.

Well, let us try again. At the time to which I referred as being in old At. Peter's, I saw our Catholic friends count their beads, one by one, and say a little sentence prayer with each bead pulled down the string. Now, without any prejudice against it or anything unkind to say about the practice, I ask: Does the Bible teach that? It will have to I teach it in one of three ways: First, is there any command in God's word bidding folks to count their beads as a religious rite? And I turn to the Bible, unbiased and unprejudiced, and try to find that. No, no such statement. All right. Does the Bible teach it by direct statement? No. Is there any example approved under heaven where they were counting beads and God smiled graciously upon it? Absolutely none. Well, again, is there any statement in all the Bible from which I must conclude, therefore, they surely did count beads? Now there is not a sign of a statement like that in the Bible. Therefore, what? I say the Bible does not teach it. Why? I have checked up on the three methods of teaching and each one is like old Belshazzar "weighed in the balances and found wanting."

Brethren, try any kind of a theory. With those who use mechanical devices to worship God, I raise the point: Is there a direct statement in the New Testament where God orders men to play upon human devices? Well, search the Bible. What is the answer? None.

Again, is there any example where an apostolic church or inspired church had mechanical devices wherewithal to worship God ? Search again. What is the answer ? None. Well, you are not done yet. Is there any statement in the New Testament from which I am forced to the conclusion they must have had mechanical devices? Not one. Therefore, with an intelligence that carries conviction, openness and frankness, hear it—the Bible does not teach it. That man does not live that can find it. Now that is the way to get at things all along the line. Try any kind of a newfangled theory, any kind of a speculation, any kind of a guess—check up on it and you will find it is the easiest matter in this world to determine whether or not the Bible teaches it. But that is enough for tonight.

Now the Bible does teach, my friends, that all people everywhere should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that they should repent of their sins, confess his name, acknowledge him as leader or Master, and be buried with him, from which burial they arise to walk in newness of life. That is in the Bible clearly taught and if there is one or more tonight present, desirous of doing that very thing, the invitation is gladly tendered while together we sing the song.

Chapter 87

4.05 - IS THE GOSPEL, AS GOD GAVE IT, ADAPTED TO MAN, AS GOD MADE HIM ?

IS THE GOSPEL, AS GOD GAVE IT, ADAPTED TO MAN, AS GOD MADE HIM ?

I am quite certain, my friends, that possibly those of us most directly interested in this meeting, have not yet realized the wonderful importance of it and the results that are to follow. Brethren all over the United States are looking to this meeting. They are anxious regarding it. In view of their interest, I want to appeal to all friends to make whatever effort is necessary to lend your presence at every service you possibly can. We all understand the setting and the crisis through which, apparently at least, the church of the Lord is passing. Hence, with the keen responsibility and a consciousness of it, we ought to move step by step in the light of that eternal judgment toward which we are so rapidly passing. I am delighted with the company here tonight, and I think, though the rain should come, we ought not let that interfere.

I am trying to speak along lines that will not only be interesting and, perhaps, profitable to you, but which will be read by thousands whose influence will extend far beyond that period in which I live. In the light of all that, with God as my witness, I want to speak forth the words of truth and soberness and declare only God’s will and word to mortal man.

I have two statements to read tonight from the Bible. Here is the first one: Genesis 1:27, "God created man in his own image, in the likeness of God created he him; male and female created he them." I think nobody here doubts that. I believe that there is not a soul who subscribes to the idea that man’s existence is accounted for on any other grounds than that God created him out of the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he stood forth a living soul. Now the next passage that I have for you is Romans 1:16-18. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith." I have read those two passages to get a matter before you for study, in the form of a question. Here it is—Is the gospel, as God gave it, adapted to man as God made him? Will you think on that for just a moment and get it well fixed in mind ? Away back yonder, in the far distant past, God made man. After forty centuries there was presented a plan of salvation. Now question: Is the plan adapted to the man? Is it suited and commensurate with his needs? I think implied in this is the very foundation of difference between the church of Christ and most religious denominations of our land. Brethren everywhere, who have subscribed 100 per cent to the Bible, answer that theory in the affirmative. The world about us would answer, No, that the gospel is not adequate, and therein is the first difference between, what I believe to be truth, and error. Now, you ask, Upon what grounds I make that statement? Well, here it is: The denominational world teaches that in conviction and conversion there must be a power in addition to and distinct from the word of God to bring about the conversion of the alien sinner, that you may know I am not mistaken about it, I give you this concrete evidence. I held a four-days’ debate last April in the city of Little Rock with Dr. Ben M. Bogard of the Missionary Baptist Church. That

debate is published, and I notice today, it will be ready for mailing next Monday. The first proposition in that was affirmed by Bogard, and here it is: "The Bible teaches that in conviction and conversion there must be a power brought to bear upon the heart of the sinner in addition to and distinct from the word of God." What does that imply? That the plan of salvation, as revealed in God's word, is not sufficient—that it is lacking somewhere, and before a sinner can be converted, God must move and bring about supernatural and additional power to the gospel as revealed in the Bible, to accomplish the salvation of the man. Hence, the question implies a fundamental matter, and I repeat it. When God made man, and after forty centuries developed the plan, I ask: Was that plan, and is that plan fitted, suited, and adequate to the needs of the man whose soul he was seeking to save? Now if it be not commensurate and adapted, I want to raise this point with you: Why is it not? God made man; God made the plan, Why didn't he fix the plan suited to the man for whom it was intended? If you say that God could not thus arrange a plan, you reflect upon His ability, and limit His power. If you say that He would not draw up the plan suited to the man, you reflect upon his goodness and you take the responsibility from man and transfer it wholly to God. If, therefore, anybody is damned, God will be responsible for it. If, for instance, here is a man unable to render obedience to the gospel of the Lord until high heaven moves in some supernatural way, then if God ever moves upon him and brings about his conversion, He is under obligation to convert also this other man by a supernatural power; and if He converts two men beyond and above what is written for their consideration, then the obligation extends to two hundred, to two thousand, to two million, and to the entire human family, on the ground that God is no respecter of persons. If, therefore, at the judgment bar of Jehovah, I should be denounced, and hear Him say: "Depart into everlasting fire," I could truly answer, "Lord, I am not to blame. There I was waiting, longing, and begging for you to send that miraculous power by which I might be enabled to render obedience to the gospel of Christ." So, all of that, I think, is implied in this question, and it's striking at the very foundation of whether or not human organizations are in error or whether or not the church of the Lord has been mistaken in such proclamations.

Now, you ask, "How can we study a thing of this kind?" And, so far as I know, there is only one way. Here it is: I have to learn something about that man which makes him a subject of gospel address. I must analyze him and find that which must be converted. Then, I need to analyze and to understand what the gospel is. After all analysis of each of them, it looks to me as if I then ought to be the more able to determine whether or not the plan fits the man, as also he has been analyzed. So with that setting before us, I am calling your attention now, to the man. What have you to say regarding that? I think we all agree that it is not his physical make-up or being that needs changing. This body of mine is not a subject of gospel address. It is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can it be. Hence, that eliminates the physical part of it. What, therefore, must be converted? And without being tedious about it, I think we all agree, it's that thing in man called the Heart. Note its condition. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Therefore, before man can be saved, that heart that goes to make up the part addressed and that is taken into consideration by high heaven, must be converted. But that brings up the point now as to what the heart is? And I am not going to reflect upon your intelligence by talking about this muscular organ, this engine in my physique that pumps the blood to the extremities of my body. Let's eliminate that on the ground that nobody wants that thing tampered with or changed in the least bit. I don't even want any organs of mine changed. They have been functioning pretty well for forty-two years and then some, and I have no desire to have any change, whatsoever, wrought in

my physical organism. So what is the heart, the thing to be converted? Well, the Bible is not like a dictionary. You can't just take up the alphabet and run down to the H's in the book of God and find a direct, straight-forward definition of the heart. But we learn what a thing is by learning what it does. If, tomorrow on the streets of Nashville, I were to meet a man with a hammer, saw, plane, and other tools, I would say that fellow is a carpenter. I would think he's a carpenter. Another person comes along with a little grip in his hand and there's an array of medicine cases and surgical equipment in it, I would draw the conclusion that that man is a surgeon, or a physician. And if I were to see some man up before the judge of the court, pleading the cause before the gentlemen, or even the women, of the jury, I would sit there and say, "I know what that fellow is." Well, who told you? Nobody. Then, what is he? I answer, a lawyer. How do you know? Because I have seen what he does. Now that's very simple and yet there is a great principle involved in it. What is the heart? I propose, tonight, a survey of the Bible, that we may learn about it. Now commencing in Genesis 6:5, very early in the record, we have this statement; mark it—"God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon this earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil and that continually." Now what have you learned from it? God said that the thoughts of the heart, not the thought of some other part of the man, but the thought originates in the heart. Now there isn't any use for comment. A man who believes the Bible won't deny that. The heart is that part, therefore, about me that does the thinking. Who said so? God did, and that's the end of it. "The thought of the heart"—What are you exercising right now ? Why, the heart, in that you are thinking with me along this outline which I am trying to present.

Well, in addition to that, get this statement. In Mark 2:1-28, just after the Saviour had said to the man sick of palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, arise and walk," the scribes sat there, "reasoning in their hearts." Christ said to them; "Why reason ye these things in your hearts." What do you learn now ? Just from the Bible direct, without any comment upon it, you have learned that the heart is that part about man that thinks, and is that thing about him that reasons.

Well, again, Matthew 13:15. "This people's heart is waxed gross, their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears," now watch it—"and should understand with their heart, and thus be converted, and I should heal them." What does the heart do? It thinks, it reasons, it understands. Well, "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" That's a Bible question. Here's the answer. "If thou believes" with all thine heart, thou mayest." Therefore, with the heart, man believeth, as with the mouth he makes the confession. Now look at it! What is the heart?

It's that part about us that thinks, that reasons, that understands, that believes.

Now in man's analysis of his fellows, he says that is his Intellect, the part about him that thinks, reasons, believes, understands. That's the intellect of man, thus functioning, and thus exercising itself. Well, all right. Now hold that in mind, will you? Is that all that the Bible says about the heart ? Absolutely not. Hebrews 4:12, "The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and Spirit, and of the joints and marrow," now watch it—"and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Where was the origin and whence the seat of all that? With what were you thinking and intending ? God says, with the heart. Did you ever have any plans and purposes? If so, hear 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Every man according as he purposeth," where? "in his heart, so let him give." Now what have you

learned? The heart is that thing that intends. It is that which purposeth. Watch again, "you have obeyed from the heart." Romans 6:17. What is that? Obedience has back of it the heart of man, doing the act. So what have you learned? The heart is that part about us that intends, that purposes, that executes. Now what does man call that ? He says, that's the willpower. The part that thinks, and reasons, and understands, and believes, he calls the Intellect. That part which intends, purposes, executes, he calls the Will. Now is that all? No!

Romans 10:1, Paul said, "Brethren, my heart's desire," your what's desire? "My heart's desire," the desire of my heart. Now where are desires in the origin? In the heart. Who said so? Paul did. Who dare say to the contrary? Not I!

Again, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, and all thy might" said Christ to the young lawyer. Where is the seat of love? In the heart. I love you with all my heart. But that's not all. Proverbs 3:5, Solomon said; "Son, trust in the Lord with all thine heart." Now look at it. What does the heart do? It desires, yearns, longs for a thing. What else about it? It loves, and it is the seat of affection. Well, what further? It trusts, confides, reposes. What do men call that? Our Emotional nature. Friends, look at it. God says the heart is that part that thinks, that reasons, that understands, that believes. Man says Intellect. God says the heart intends, purposes, executes. Man says the Will. God says the heart is that part that desires, that loves, that trusts. Man says the Emotion. Friends, into how many departments is man divided according to our psychologists? Into three. What are they? Intellect, the power to know; Will, the power to do; Emotion, the power to feel. Now there's the man, as God made him. That's the thing that God wants converted. He wants my thinking turned in the right direction; my reasoning after God's pattern; my understanding changed to the right, my faith centered in Jesus Christ our Lord. He wants my intentions to be to do His will, and my purpose to walk in His footsteps, and my determination to be to execute that which I have decided to be the will of God. And after that, then what? There is that desire for better things, based upon a splendid promise. There is a love that grows brighter day by day, and ultimately casts out all fear, and there is that thought that wheresoever He lead me, I will gladly follow. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me. Friends, that's Man. Well, all right. God made him—now hold that in mind—his Intellect, his Will, his Emotion.

Now, let's study the gospel. First, what is the gospel? The gospel is something that God wants preached to every creature in all the world. Now, I know that much about it. Second, "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, yea necessity is laid upon me, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." 1 Corinthians 9:16. I know that much about it. Well again. Galatians 1:8-9. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which you have received, let him be accursed." "And as we said before, so say I again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which you have received, let him be accursed. And I marvel that you are so soon removed from the gospel." I know that about it. Now, what else?

Here's another—2 Thessalonians 1:6-8. "God will recompense tribulation unto them that trouble you, and unto you who are troubled, God will recompense rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," now watch it—"taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of His Son, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of His power." Now I know

that much about it. It’s something that must be obeyed.

Well, again, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, wherein ye stand, and by which also ye are saved." Now look at it—just those things you have learned thus far: The gospel is something God wants preached to all men; woe is unto the man who does not preach; it must not be perverted, and cannot be with impunity; it is that which man must obey, or else be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of His power; it is that wherein Christians stand, by which they are saved, if they keep in memory what has been preached, unless they have believed in vain. Now, I know that much about it. But that is not all. Hear Paul further: (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain." Now mark it: "For I delivered unto you first all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Christ died—that is fact number one; he was buried, fact number two; he rose again, fact number three. Now what do you have? Three fundamental facts of the gospel of God’s Son, by which all men are to be saved, and of which Paul said "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is God’s power unto salvation" unto everyone that believes. And therein—not thereout, but therein—in the gospel is the righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith.

Friends, that’s not nearly it—that’s it! And that’s God word for it.

So, then, the gospel tonight, friends, is composed of three facts—what are they? That Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; that he was buried; and that he burst the bars and came forth triumphant on the morning of the third day according to the scriptures. Those are the three piers on which the bridge that connects the shores of time with the shores of eternity must forever rest. Upon what do you propose to make the transition? Upon that great bridge, may I say, that rests upon three solid pillars, deeply founded and correctly set. Here they are. The fact that Christ tasted death for every man; that he was buried in a borrowed tomb; that he burst the bars and came forth triumphant over the powers of the Hadean world—all of which constitute the fundamental facts of gospel truth. But is that all? No, the gospel is not only made up of facts, but it is made up also of commandments that challenge the attention of mankind. What are they? As the facts are three in number, likewise are the commands. Faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord; a genuine repentance of every sin; and a burial into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, upon a confession of that faith. Those are the commandments of the gospel. Well, is that all? No. There is something else yet. As there are three fundamental facts—death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; as there are three commands—faith, repentance, and baptism upon all acknowledgment of that faith; likewise there are three great and exceeding precious promises. You ask, what are they? First, forgiveness of every sin. Secondly, the gift of God’s Spirit to comfort and console us, as on down life’s way we journey; then when we come to the end of the road, he promises eternal life. Now then, mark it— the gospel is made up of Facts, Commands, and Promises. Well, what’s Man made up of ? An Intellect, a Will, and an Emotional nature. Now then, what part of the gospel is adapted to the intelligence of man, to his thinking, reasoning, understanding, believing? I submit to you, friends, the wonderful harmony, the absolute fitness in all things Divine—the facts of the gospel challenge the intellect of can! What can I do with the facts? Someone said, "Obey teem."

No! I never obeyed a fact in my life. Well, someone said, "Enjoy those facts." Not that. To what part of my nature do the facts of the gospel appeal? They challenge me to think on the tragic story of the cross, to reason whether or not it be out of line for God to raise the dead. Do you think it incredible that God should do it? And further, that Jesus came forth triumphant by the power of God Almighty, which was wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord? Friends, what can I do with those facts? I can think about them, reason about them, try to understand just how the facts came to pass, even if I do not understand the method by which they were wrought, and finally, thank God, I can believe those facts without any hesitancy whatsoever. Therefore, my intellect is satisfied by the facts of the gospel. I think about the facts, I reason regarding them, I try to understand them, I believe them, hence, that part of my nature is complemented by the gospel of God's Son.

Well, the next part: What may I do with the commands of the gospel of Christ? To what part of my nature do they appeal and apply? May I ask: what's a command for? It's a challenge, always, to our will power. No father, mother, teacher, or anybody else, ever gave an order in the form of a command, but it meant to call on someone's will-power. And to that part of his nature it appeals. It isn't a question of whether you believe it or not; it is not a matter to reason about; but rather, do you intend to do it; do you l purpose in your heart to carry it out; will you walk in obedience, and execute the same? Hence, the commands of the gospel challenge man's will-power. I can form intentions and purposes regarding them. I can make plans and purposes respecting them. Finally, I can walk out and obey I the same, and that's exactly the adaptability of the one to the other. Well all right, my intellect is satisfied by the facts of the gospel challenge; my will-power is complemented by the commands of the gospel. Now then, what? There is my emotional nature whereby I delight to revel in fancy's vision of the glories I anticipate on the other shore. What part of the gospel now is fitted to that? Thank God, I can look back and say, though my hands were stained in sin, and my heart was blurred and blackened by it, there is a fountain filled with blood that can cleanse the soul of every stain. I have forgiveness of sins in that I have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine, and have been delivered from sin and become a servant of Christ Jesus our Lord. And I revel in the splendid promises contained in his word. Friends, I want to ask you, what's lacking? Wherein is there need for supernatural power? Why not all brethren stand as did those of the Restoration, and preach as did the apostles, the adequacy, the allsufficiency of the gospel of Christ, God's power unto salvation? Why not blend together, with an opinion in the background, and all matters disturbing the peace, tranquillity, and harmony of the Church of the Lord, laid aside? Then recognizing the tremendous fight of Satan and his mighty forces, why not marshal all of our strength against him and as a solid phalanx, march together underneath the banner of Him who has never yet lost a conflict?

It makes the heart of a real Christian bleed tonight to think of the divided condition among those who profess to believe just what I have preached. Under other conditions they would endorse it 100 per cent, and yet, because of some matters which even they recognize as non-essential, they would mar the happiness and the unity of all efforts earnestly put forth. I pray God that the time may come when such will not be, when all will rally around the truth of God and will stand four-square for the gospel as "God's power unto salvation," against all who teach the necessity of supernatural, "separate and apart and distinct" action in the conversion of men.

If there is present tonight a soul who recognizes the need of salvation, I want you to enter into the service of God, I want you to say deep down in your heart, "I believe the facts of the gospel; I will

obey its commands and trust God for the promises. Come while you can.

4.06 - UNITY AMONG BRETHREN

UNITY AMONG BRETHREN

I want to join Bro. Boles and others in expressing appreciation of the presence of such a splendid audience on this Thursday night.

I am reading to you from the first part of the fourth chapter of Ephesians, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." The word forbearing means over-reaching, as if to cover and take under protection, like the eaves of a house extending over the walls to protect the same. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." I read that to introduce to you the topic for discussion tonight, namely, "Unity Among Brethren." The Ephesian church had it. Paul urged them to preserve it. Unfortunately, we do not have it, but are striving to bring it about. In connection with that, I am reading Psalms 133:1-3, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

I am wonderfully conscious of the responsibility that I assume tonight in discussing a matter of this kind, but I am also wonderfully impressed with the superlative importance of our studying matters of this sort. There’s no one here that doubts the truth of the text. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" There have been more heartaches, more tears, and broken Spirit?, over division in religious bodies, than almost anything else. I think I know the value of this text in the home. How good and pleasant for members of the family to dwell together in unity. I have been connected with a school practically all of my days. How good and how pleas’ ant it is for all parties connected with it to dwell together in unity. Our state, our nation, the nations of the earth are, tonight, torn asunder and driven into various parties, with war clouds rumbling, and the lightning of the same flashing across the vaulted sky, threatening to disturb the peace and the tranquillity that men enjoy. It’s good to dwell together in unity. But if that be true in the home, in the schoolroom, in our civil relationships of life, how far transcendent is the importance of it in the church of the living God. But due to the weaknesses, and to the frailties, and imperfections of humanity, there is scarcely a religious body upon earth tonight, but is suffering from the evil of division. There is no outside power that can harm the church of the living God. There are not enough demons in hell, nor representatives on earth, to mar the progress of the cause that Christ died to establish upon this earth. The danger is from within, and when that is brought about, a pall of darkness spreads over the land, and blights many a hope, discourages

many an honest character, causes him to linger by the wayside, and ultimately, to die and land in hell, because of religious division.

There are lots of mottoes that I think quite applicable: "United we stand, divided we fall." The old father, pictured in one of McGuffey's readers, demonstrated to his seven sons a lesson that has been impressed upon me since I passed the fourth grade. He handed each of them a stick and asked him to break it. They did it with all ease and rather disdainfully. Then he bound seven sticks, just like those, together with a strong cord and handed it to the eldest, and on down the line, saying, "Boys, try your hand on that." With all the power of their being, they struggled and bore down upon it, but their effort resulted in failure. Why? Because of the united relation that one stick bore to the other. That's a wonderful lesson. There are enough Christian people in Nashville, Tennessee, to make it as it has been called in days gone by, The Jerusalem of America. Your strength has been heralded abroad, most especially, since you found out how great it was back in 1922, when we had our first meeting in this auditorium. History has been making, all through the years, and continues tonight. With eager eyes and anxious ears, they are listening form the four quarters of the earth. This audience knows full well that Jesus Christ, in the very shadow of the cross, lifted his voice to the Father and prayed that all those who believe on Him through the words of the apostles might be one. That's the way our faith comes. I believe, tonight, on Jesus Christ through the words that have come from the apostles. Hence, incorporated are we in that prayer, that we all might be one- not two hundred, not fifty, not torn asunder—but that we might be one in this sense, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. May they be one in us," now watch the purport, "that the world might believe that thou hast sent me." Christ recognized that division was the most fruitful field of infidelity that this world could ever know, hence, the closing of his career was characterized by that wonderful prayer for the unity of all who believe on him, based upon the testimony of the apostles. But there are those, possibly, among us that are now thinking, "It's impossible for us to be united." Well, Paul didn't think so, for he said in 1 Corinthians 1:1-31 : to, "Brethren, I beseech you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment." Was that an idle exhortation? Did not Paul know that such was impossible? No, he thought it was possible and, my friends, indeed, it is. If I be responsible for the failure of that verse to prevail among brethren, "woe is unto me." You can see how simple that is. If I speak wholly those things that are in this Book; if I speak as the oracles of God direct, and every other believer on this earth does likewise, there can be no difference among us. But when I give expressions of my opinions and foster my theories or any kind of fancied philosophies, then what? I destroy the unity that ought to prevail in the body of Christ. There are hundreds, yea, thousands of souls that will land in hell as the result of religious division.

I have gone into homes, as an invited guest of the husband, who believes the things that I do, but he is careful to tell me, "Bro. Hardeman, my wife is not a member of the church of the Bible." Well, I know what he means, "Don't you, Bro. Hardeman, dare discuss religious matters at our house. We can't stand for that." Well, all right, I've caught on. And then maybe the wife and mother wants to be kindly disposed, and says: "Bro. Hardeman, I would like to have you over for dinner with us." Well, I am glad to go, and she very diplomatically but with embarrassment says: "Bro. Hardeman, my husband is not in sympathy with the belief to which I subscribe." What does that spell? "Don't you open your mouth about religion at our house." Now, why not? Because of a divided condition,

Christ is driven out of that home; the Bible cannot be discussed; and religious matters are never mentioned. Well, look again. There's a son in that home, who is growing up to manhood; he's mama's boy—mama's darling, and one day she says: "Son, I wish you would go with me to mama's church, I'd love to have you with me." Well, that's a very strong appeal, and he thinks about it, but he says to himself, "Now, if I do that, Dad won't like it. He'll feel that I am against him, and I'm not. So I just can't afford to do that." And then one day he and his father are off as pals together, and the father says: "Son, I wish you could see it to become a member of the church with me, and let us be together." And he possibly says, "WELL, Dad, I would like to, but, you know, that would offend Mother, and what would she think about it." Now, here's the result of that— the boy may be religiously inclined; he perhaps would like to evidence some interest along that line, but he reasons, "If I go with Father, Mother will feel slighted, and that I am not as favorable toward her as I should be. I can't do that. If I go with her, the reverse is true." Now what's the only sensible thing for that boy to do with reference to his parents? Here it is—remain neutral! What does that mean? "I'll become a member of neither one." Hence, he goes out in life, is hardened by the affairs of the world, grows cold and indifferent to things sacred and religious, and ultimately dies and goes to hell! Why ? Because father and mother, who loved him so dearly, were divided. They sent him to hell. Now, if you think that's not so, I'm from Missouri! I believe I can find you boys and girls that will tell you, precisely and exactly, this same story.

You talk about the Spirit of the Master prevailing when conditions of that kind are abroad in the land! Let me say to you, friends, this world is not divided over what's in the Bible. Had you ever stopped to think of it? Where are the things concerning which we are divided? Without being tedious tonight, and specific along that line, I think maybe, a hint will suffice. Let us see about some things. Are we divided over the fact that Christ wants all men to become Christians? No! You couldn't get division about that. But someone said, "I think they ought to be Mormons." Look out! That will bring division. Does God say anything about that? No, that's outside the Bible. I think all men ought to become a member of the church that you read about in the Bible. Nobody will disagree on that. "But I think some church that God never heard of will do just as well." No, that'll bring division. Can you see that? And thus it goes, on and on, endless in multiplicities of theories, guesses, fancies, varied philosophies all over the land. How good and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity and to be at rest with kindred heart and congenial Spirit?!

Now, when I come to study David's statement rather carefully, I know that there are lots of things that are good, but they are not pleasant. I never have had to take very much medicine; it rarely dawns on me that such a thing is necessary, but I never saw any of the stuff in my life that I thought was good. I can remember that as a boy I had chills, and I know old Groves put out what he called Tasteless Chill Tonic, but I can still taste it. I think it is good for malaria but he surely misrepresented it when he said it was tasteless. Well, if I had something physically the matter, of course I'd go to a surgeon, and if necessary, submit to an operation, on the ground, it's good for me. But it isn't pleasant until after it's all over and you get well, and then at a social gathering you get to tell your experience. Then on the other hand, there are some things that are pleasant that are not good. It's a pleasure to turn loose and yield to the lusts of the flesh, and to gratify our desires, but no man of good sense thinks that's good for us. I can revel in sin, abuse myself, and bring my body to a premature debility, but it wouldn't be good for me. But here is a thing that is both good and pleasant, viz: "For brethren to dwell together in unity." There's the combination of

goodness and pleasantness. Now to be specific about this text, I would say this further, as David did, "It is like precious ointment," what is? For brethren to dwell together in unity, "That runs down from the head, even upon the beard of Aaron, and down to the skirts of his garments." In Palestine, from April until November, there's no rain; the sun beats down exceeding hot in the daytime, and if you are unprotected, you'll find that your nose, ears, cheeks, and neck will be blistered. How do you prevent that? In David's day they had precious ointment; they put that all over their faces, as some do cold cream, or maybe Vaseline, and it kept back the evil effects of the burning rays of the sun. For brethren to dwell together in unity, is a protection against the bitterness, the sadness, and the unpleasantness that otherwise follows. It's like the dew of Hermon, or the dews of the mountains of Zion. In that sacred land drought prevails, but round about Zion there is heavy dew, and in the morning vegetation is, for a time, revived. Division among brethren brings drought and distress. Just think what a good shower does when the land is parched and the vegetation is drying. All things revive. David said, in effect, "For brethren to get together in unity is like a splendid shower, breaking a long drought which gives Spirit, encouragement, vigor, and life." Friends, fancy how that would be to the brotherhood of the church of Christ, not only in Nashville, but in almost every other part of our land. There are sufferings; there are heartaches; there's the lack of doing things; there's a drought on, and things are not as they otherwise would be. Suppose that all our bickering, and back-biting, and differences, were wiped out and tomorrow morning we should see things spring up with new determination and with a united brotherhood. There would be a scene worthy of heaven's benedictions! I stop to meditate upon these things and wonder what it's all about.

I came to you folks of Nashville and brethren in March, 1922, as a stranger very largely, but with a solid backing, so far as I knew, or know now, of all the congregations of this city and surrounding the corporate limits. I preached . to you, the very best I could, what I thought to be God's word and will. It met with a hearty approval, and to the principles enunciated, brethren subscribed. After 16 years, I have come back to you. I believe, brethren, the same thing tonight that I did then. I stand for the very same thing now that I did then. I preach the very same thing now as then. Question: Why are there differences and the bitternesses through which we are so unfortunately passing? I stop to examine myself ! Am I preaching another gospel? No! Am I preaching it in another way? No! Have I adopted something contrary to what I then proclaimed? No! Why not then the same 100 per cent of backing and of endorsement? Well, there are things that have come to pass that disturb the peace and the harmony of various congregations. It's no special surprise. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus by saying, "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not paring the flock." That's bad, for somebody on the outside to enter in and break the harmony, and disturb the peace. But he said something worse than that. "Also of your own selves shall men arise to draw away disciples after them. Watch, therefore, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears." Human nature has run in about the same channel since the days of Adam. Back in Paul's day, there were the same things through which we are passing, in principle. He makes mention of two young preachers who were doubtless fine young men. I know they had splendid influence, at least, they were influential, and had a following. Of them Paul had somewhat to say. May I call your attention to 2 Timothy 2:1-26, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as cloth a canker" (and he said, "I'll give

you a concrete example"), "of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus." Now there were young preachers in Paul's day, in the church of the Lord, and Paul said, "their words were eating as cloth a gangrene." And here they are, Hymeneus and Philetus, who, concerning the truth, have erred. Well, in what was their error? "Saying the resurrection is already past." Now mark it—They did not deny that there was such a thing as a resurrection; to that they subscribed, but they said, "It's already past; it's a thing of days gone by." Now that is their error. They subscribed to the doctrine of the resurrection; they did not deny that; they said there was such a thing, but it's all over, and a thing of the past. Now watch the result—"And they overthrew the faith of some." These were not outsiders, but insiders—preachers, influential and with a following. They had a theory respecting the resurrection as to time. Well, what was it? It's already past; it's all historic background. Their influence was such that brethren's faith was overthrown. Well, do you know what Paul said about them further? "I have delivered," said he, "Hymeneus and Alexander," another of that bunch, "unto Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme." Well, wait a minute what had they done? They had subscribed to a theory regarding the resurrection. "It's already past." Paul called that blaspheming. You can't get any other analysis of that text. Therefore, said equally as pious as Hymeneus and Philetus. They are disturbers of the brotherhood. They have overthrown the faith of some; they've had a theory, and in that theory they were wrong, therefore, their influence has been to mar the peace of the congregation and to disturb the tranquillity that previously had prevailed. May I suggest to you, cautiously, but candidly, that there is a theory extant tonight, known as pre-millennialism, that has disturbed, not only the church of the Lord, but various denominations of this land. There are advocates of it among preachers who are equally as pious as Hymeneus and Philetus. They are teaching a theory regarding the kingdom. Oh, they say, "There is such a thing. We are not denying the kingdom. To that idea we subscribe, but it hasn't yet come." Thereby, the faith, as has come down from the pioneer days, of some has been overthrown, and of it, there has been made shipwreck regarding the establishment of the kingdom of God on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. I know the influence of that; I know the evil that has followed. The faith of brethren who one time stood behind gospel preachers in public discussion as they earnestly contended for the establishment of the church or the kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost, has been overthrown. Such men say: "There is a kingdom." Well, Hymeneus and Philetus said, "There is a resurrection." But what about that resurrection? It's already past. What about the kingdom? "There is one, but it hasn't yet come." It just seems to me that about the only difference in this whole matter is that one was past and the other is future. And I know that there is disturbance tonight over that very philosophy and theory which is new in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I need to stop and take my bearing. In Colossians 1:13, Paul said this, and I want you to see the harmony, "God has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated, what does that mean? Trans—"across," and lated means "to bear." He has "delivered us from the power of darkness," and has borne us across, out of the one into the kingdom of God's dear son. Paul, where are we, the Colossians ? In the kingdom of God, but the same Hymanaeus says, that thing is in existence only by right—not in fact. What's the result? The faith of good brethren has been disturbed. My heart bleeds tonight over the condition that is prevalent in our land because of such teaching. It destroys the principles of the restoration. It is contrary, I verily believe, to God's word; it is fraught with danger; it brings into the family of God a divided sentiment and a general Spirit of unrest, which nobody delights to see, except the devil and his representatives upon this earth. It

has been a principle, brethren (and to you I am appealing most especially), fundamental, absolutely basic, that in all matters of faith, we speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together—that in matters of opinion, there be liberty, and in all things there be charity. To that very principle, I most heartily subscribe. I pass, therefore, out of this place into different parts of the land, meet with brethren of various conceptions, and I raise the point: Is it essential to salvation to believe the premillennial theory? Now what's the answer? No! Alright, it's not essential. Can I worship God acceptably, and not subscribe to that theory ? "Yes, you can." Then brethren, in heaven's name, why encourage a thought of that kind and continue it to the disturbance of the body of Christ?

Now let me go back and say some other things. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, or thereabout, the great Restoration of primitive affairs was proclaimed throughout our land. It shook this old earth from center to circumference. When those principles were announced clearly, unmistakably, and without modification or apology, the world sat and trembled at the very thought that it had been in error so long regarding God's word. Men from human denominations rushed to accept a gospel restored. Together a happy brotherhood marched on down the line. It was a solid body. It had one common objective, and every heart beat in perfect unison with the others. But, what happened? That peace and tranquillity was not for long. In 1849, in the city of Cincinnati, there was organized a human society for the making known of the wisdom of God to the world. What was that? A contravening of God's statement that by the church, God's wisdom was to be made known and that according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. What do you find? That peace among the brotherhood was now disturbed by the organization of a human society. That's it. Then in 1859, up here at Midway, Kentucky, they brought in a little melodeon, wherewith to worship and praise God. And again, division was made to appear. And then further, in 1869, in Olive Street church house in At. Louis, an organ was brought in, and what was the result? An open rupture and a division in the body of Christ. Now, I want to ask, who's responsible for that? And I answer in concert with you all, the man that organizes a thing untaught to the Bible; the man who brought into the worship that which the Bible does not authorize. Years went by and division appeared in Nashville. It came into this city, at Vine Street, Woodland Street, and other places, and it went throughout the region of Tennessee, and other states, until within the lifetime of some of us, we have seen the body of Christ torn asunder with open rupture, and each one going his separate way. When I oppose these divisive innovations, their proponents say: "Hardeman, don't say anything against it. You'll cause a fuss." Now isn't that ridiculous! You'll cause the fuss, "and you'll divide the body, if you don't keep quiet." Well, I didn't keep quiet about such things. I contended earnestly for that faith once for all delivered unto the saints, and I declare again tonight that the responsibility for the division that followed rests heavily upon those brethren who introduced into the church these unscriptural things. I am neither afraid nor ashamed to declare such in the presence of any living man. After this unfortunate experience, brethren sought to cleanse the temple of God and once more worship Him as it is written. The church then had rest for several years. But alas! Within the last ten or fifteen years, pre-millennialism has sprung up, and again, we are going through the same experience as we did with mechanical devices, and human organizations. The proponents of societies were not out open and above board declaring it, but in a secret, sinister, clever manner, they went from house to house seeking whom they might devour. Finally, they got possession of the elders and then, with the legal background, they said, "If you don't like it, get out." Now you know that's the story,

and I am one preacher who will tell you about it and not go behind the door to do it. I know those are facts. They can be attested by brethren all over this land. This pre-millennial theory is a duplicate, in principle, to the music and society disturbance. Its apologists admit it neither essential to salvation nor to Christian living, and yet there is that continued agitation and eternal talk about these things. This is not so much in public but rather from house to house. Pre-millennialists say: The Church of God was "a spiritual contingent"—a mere accident; the kingdom of heaven has not yet been established upon this earth; we are not citizens of it; Jesus Christ is not reigning on David's throne tonight; and he will not be, in fact, until he comes back and all Jews are physically gathered to Jerusalem and the old Davidic temple rebuilt. Friends, let me say that sympathy for this theory is expressed by finding fault, by circulating slanderous reports and by sending anonymous letters over the land. Those responsible for such nefarious doings never come out in the open, but in a cowardly manner and with a pious air, they, too, seek whom they may devour. They cry: "Don't oppose you'll hurt the church." Brethren, those are digressive tactics to a fare-you-well but I, for one, am not easily intimidated along lines of that kind. I am amenable only to God. I don't have to answer to any synod, conference, association or convention. I propose to announce these matters with all earnest, fervent prayer that we may cease the promulgating of those things that are causing unrest, dissatisfaction, faultfinding, and criticism among brethren over matters admittedly nonessential. Now, I am perfectly willing to say this: if there is a man in the brotherhood who has, in all sincerity, believed the gospel of God's Son, genuinely and truly repented of his sir s, publicly confessed the Christ, and has been buried into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he is a Christian. If that man has an opinion as to what Christ will do when he comes again and how we shall be, and will hold that opinion to himself, I'll fellowship him. That's the principle. I know that John said, "Beloved, it does not yet appear how we shall be." I haven't heard from heaven since John wrote, but there are brethren who speak as if they have heard later messages. They think they know how it is going to be. John said, "We do not know, but one thing is certain, we know that we will be like him." Friends, that ought to be sufficient. Now, if any brother will keep his opinion to himself and advise all others so to do, all criticisms will cease. But if you continue to advocate and push that which is but a theory, you ought not to expect men who believe God's word to be silent and cease not to warn brethren night and day, even with tears, regarding the baneful results that follow. Friends, there's the ground of unity. In all matters, let us speak as God's Book speaks, believe what is clearly stated therein, practice only that as a matter of faith, hold all things else that are not wrong in themselves, as matters of private opinion, and let love prevail among us. The result will be that unity, that wonderful harmony, and that strength of which every child of God might be justly proud. How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

There has been much said regarding the purpose of this meeting. I wrote a letter last July to every church in Nashville stating that I had been invited to hold a meeting among them at the Ryman Auditorium and that I had accepted the invitation. I said that my purpose in coming was not to discuss personal matters, but to the best of my ability, I would preach the "old-time" gospel of Christ, with the hope of bettering conditions and bringing together upon a common platform, all interests of brethren in Nashville. Against no living man do I have an unkind feeling. I regret that there are people who cannot differ with you about a matter without making it personal. I thank God for some experiences. I have had a number of religious discussions, some of which have waxed exceedingly warm, but I have never yet allowed such discussions to become personal. I have

some brethren, however, whose teaching I cannot criticize without their exclaiming: "Oh, Bro. Hardeman has got it in for me, personally." God forbid, that I should ever become so little as to have a conception of that kind. I just want to say it once and for all. There is no man anywhere against whom I have a personal feeling. I want to so live and carry on, that when I come to the end of the way, no one can truly say, "I have lost an enemy." You'll not lose an enemy when N. B. Hardeman crosses to the other world. I am sincere, earnest, candid. I want to go to heaven when I die. When life's dream is over and its fitful fever is passed, I want to plume my pinions for eternal habitation on the other shore. I realize that "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." Is there one in this audience not a member of the body of Christ? Do you understand what the will of the Lord is? And would you like to have fellowship in the greatest organization known to men? If so, put your trust in Him and from every sin turn away; render obedience to His will; walk in His counsel the remnant of your days and Heaven will be yours at the close. Shall we stand together for the invitation.

Chapter 89

4.07 - COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

I am reading tonight from the latter part of Luke 9:1-62. I bid you watch closely the reading, because the talk will be based upon this paragraph. "It came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face; and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we call down fire from heaven, and consume them, as Elias did? And he turned, and rebuked them, and said unto them, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. And it came to pass as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at my home and at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." My friends, that's an account of the last journey that Jesus ever made to Jerusalem. It was fraught with sadness on his part, and, of course, to all the disciples, who understood what it meant. From the beginning there were those who sought to obstruct his path; to divert his steps, and to turn him from his purpose. In the study of the life of Christ, that very element of hindrance was prominent from first to last. While standing on the banks of the river Jordan, yet dripping from the baptismal act, ready to launch his campaign of publicity, there was the devil seeking to destroy his purpose and to turn him aside. His own brethren, misunderstanding his mission, sought to upset his plans and to carry their will into effect. You know that all the Jews expected Christ to come to this earth and establish an earthly kingdom. Their hearts were set upon that. Such a thing as a spiritual realm, over which he should reign at God's right hand, had not dawned upon them. Their idea was physical, temporal, earthly in nature. And one time, when he was not carrying out their ideas and making headway toward their purpose, they had in mind to take him by force and set him on a throne; but he escaped from their presence. Isn't it strange, brethren, in the light of the mistake that the Jews made and the idea they had respecting the nature of Christ's kingdom, that there are brethren running loose all around, that have not profited by that, and are following in the same mistaken steps of the Jews? For what are they contending and preaching to the hurt of the body of Christ? That Jesus must have an earthly kingdom. They know the fact that Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world," but such passages amount to nothing. Their theory must prevail. That very hindrance to the purpose of Christ in carrying out that for which he came to this earth, has ever been characteristic of those who have marred the progress and obstructed the onward march of the cause of our Lord upon the earth. Here near the close of his earthly career he started, and stedfastly set his face to go to

Jerusalem. And he sent messages on before him to make ready, and those messengers entered into a village of the Samaritans, but the Samaritans rejected them. That brings up another sad story. The woman at the well, John the fourth chapter, very truly said, "the Jews and the Samaritans have no dealings one with the other." Trace back for just a moment in your knowledge of the Bible, and review the origin of the Samaritans. You'll find that the ten tribes which went off into error after Jeroboam got so broad-gauged and liberal that the Assyrians took them in. They then repopulated Jerusalem with foreigners, who mixed and mingled with the remnant left behind, and from that mingling, there came forth a posterity embittered toward the Jews, and the hatred was quite mutual. That's the foundation of the Samaritans. The Jews who were faithful to God had no use for them, and why? Once, all marched together under Saul, David, and Solomon, then the ten tribes began to worship like the nations around them. They copied from the denominations and the varied religions of the land, until so corrupted, that they were absorbed and absolutely lost in identity. With such the Jews had no contact, no relation whatsoever. Hence, the Samaritans rejected the coming of the Christ through their territory. And be it remembered, that in going from Galilee to Judea, or Jerusalem, one must needs pass through Samaria. Now I think you can appreciate the feelings that Christ, or rather the disciples, James and John, must have had, if you can imagine an experience of that kind. In traveling south from Nashville, to Columbia, for instance, you'd have to pass ordinarily through Williamson County. Suppose some were to meet you at the border and forbid your passing. You'd, doubtless, argue the question with them. You might say: "I am not seeking to harm your country, nor to do any damage; I just want to pass through." But their forbidding you to do it would bring forth all the animosity within your soul. When refused, James and John rose up and they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them.'' I can just imagine how James and John felt about it. The idea of you people forbidding our passing, quietly and harmlessly, through your lands, shows hatred of the bitterest sort. Now they felt like just mopping up with them, but then Christ reproved them severely, and said, "James and John, you know not what manner of Spirit you are of." "Is it possible that you've been students of mine for these months and years, and yet have not caught the right Spirit, and the proper relation toward your fellows? And now disciples, get it: the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives; that's not my purpose, and away with your idea. Although they have insulted you, they are human, endued with all the frailties and imperfections and weaknesses that characterize mankind. Let's not destroy them; that's not my mission. I have come to save them, rather than destroy them." Now, you brethren and friends present have no more of the human about you than I have. Sometimes when people seek to do us injury of any kind, our first impulse is not to turn the other cheek. Well, that's not the Spirit that ought to prevail, and it is much more an act of cowardice than of real courage. Christ said, "James and John, we'll not call down fire from heaven; we'll not destroy the Samaritans; let's save them." Now that's the Spirit of Christianity. "Pray for them that curse you and despitefully use you, and be longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." That's the spirit. And as we grow older, and imbibe more and more of the teaching of the Lord, the less disposed we'll come to be to want to take it out and say, "Lord, I know you said that vengeance is yours, but I am just scared you won't do a good job. Step down off the throne and let me 'tend to this fellow. I just want to clean up with him." Jesus said, "I am not come to destroy men's lives, but come to save them." That's the first part of this paragraph, and then the next. "And it came to pass as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." I am sorry I do not know who that man was. When the

Bible says "a certain man," I have found that the most uncertain person in all of my study. Who was he? A certain man. Was he a Democrat? I do not know. But that's the statement of the Bible. "A certain man said unto him, Lord, I'll follow thee whithersoever thou guest." Well, of course, he covered lots of territory, and possibly much more than he was conscious of. Many times, friends, we get worked up from different causes and make statements that, at the time, we think we mean, but when boiled down, that's not exactly the thought of it. I often wonder if humanity has ever yet learned itself. I remember how the Lord said to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, the scribes, and be killed. Peter was surprised and shocked at such a statement, and he said, "Lord, be it far from thee." Later Jesus said: "All ye shall be offended because of me. And Peter said, "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Now can you just see that cock-sureness, and that self-confidence? Peter was perfectly honest and absolutely sincere; he had left his fishing tackle by the sea of Galilee; had left his home, and even his mother-in-law, and had gone to follow the Christ, so he said, "Others may forsake you, Lord, but I never will even if I should die with thee." Well, I am not here to rebuke Peter; I think he was just as honest then as ever after. Christ said, "Peter, this very night the cock will not crow twice, but thou shalt deny me three times." Well, Peter thought Christ had just missed it as far as it was possible for a statement to be. He felt so sure of himself, but when he got up against that which he had never experienced before and the Idol of his heart was in the custody of the enemy, he was following afar off. When the trial was on, a damsel came to Peter and said: "You were with Jesus." Peter practically said: "I don't even known whom you are talking about." Well, that passed, and another maid said: "This fellow was with Jesus." Finally, others said: "Thou art one of them: for thy speech betrayeth thee." Then Peter began to curse and to swear, "I don't even know the man." Now, friends, from that I have learned this: I ought to be exceeding careful about making such general, broad-gauged, statements as to what I'll do. In our chapter we have a man who said, "Lord, I'll follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Peter was mistaken in himself. He didn't understand what he'd do when he got up against a new experience in life. And when somebody makes a mistake, I know how easy it is for us to land on him with both feet and to condemn him most severely and say: "I wouldn't do that." How do you know you wouldn't? Maybe you'd do ten times worse. Now I think we ought to learn something as along life's path we journey. And I have learned it this way. Instead of rising up in holy horror and in a self-righteous manner, I have tried to say, "I don't think I'd do that, even though under similar circumstances, but I might." I know others equally strong and equally as honest, who thought they would not, but they did. Peter is a concrete example of the same. This man said: "Lord, I'll follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Well, you know that's a worthy statement and a worthy ambition on the part of any man, to want to follow in the steps of the Lord. Just why he had that motive and that desire, I do not know; but I do know this, there are different motives that prompt men to follow the Saviour. In John 6:1-71, Christ said there were those who followed him because of the miracles which he wrought. Well, I can understand a thing of that kind. I have never seen anybody perform miracles, but I have seen magicians, sleight-of-hand performers, and, they are to me, I must confess, most interesting. I've seen Mr. Richardson, and Mr. Harold Thurston, and Mr. Blackstone, who possibly is in the city of Nashville now. I know they can't do some things, but I love to see them do: them anyhow. I love to see a fellow pull up his sleeves and show me, that he hasn't a thing in the world up his sleeves or in his pockets, and then take some other fellow's hat and begin to pull out eggs, one, two, three, and a dozen, and two dozen, and three dozen, when

there is not an old hen anywhere to be seen. Folks love to follow to see such tricks. I'm not surprised when Jesus said that there were some that followed him not because of trickery or magical power, but because of the real miracles that he wrought. Then there's another reason.

Christ said "there were those that were following for the loaves and the fishes." And I know that's so. Back down in my country, in the summer time, you just announce, "dinner all day and preaching on the ground," and you'll get a tremendous crowd. When all the good things of the country are cooked up and a big crowd gathers, the preacher gets up and thinks, "My! How they have come to hear me from all parts of the land." But they haven't done anything of the kind. They are there because of the "filling station" that has been announced. I know that's so. Then again, had you ever thought about it, friends? When a man is riding upon the very crest of popularity with everything going his way, it's an easy matter to get the people to follow. And let it be said that at the time of this story Christ was at the very height of his earthly career. His enemies had been put out of business; he had overcome the Pharisees; had set at naught the Sadducees, and multitudes were following all 'round about. It's such an easy matter for someone to come up and say, "Lord, I'm one of your sort." Now, I do not know about this man, but I do know that on this last journey, he came voluntarily to those along the way and said: "Lord, I'll follow you wheresoever you go." Friends, let me suggest to you: if prompted by the right Spirit, that's the finest statement that any man on God's earth can make. A desire actuated by the right impulse to follow in the steps of our Lord is commendable. But I am calling especial attention now to answer that Christ made to him. See the picture. Here is a man voluntarily presenting himself, saying, "Lord, I'll follow you wherever you go." And the Lord said: "Foxes have holes." I want to know what on God's earth that's got to do with this man's following Christ. He never said anything about going fox hunting. He doubtless said: "I'm talking about following Christ." Alright, "foxes have holes." Now, brethren, what's that got to do with the man's request and statement? "I'll follow you." Note the answer: "Foxes have holes." Suppose some of you preaching brethren get out on Sunday or any day and began to speak forth, and some man comes and says, "I want to follow the Lord." Then you say, "Very well, sir, foxes have holes." He'd think you were not all at home, and that the attic wasn't thoroughly furnished. Now what's that got to do with what the man wanted? "Foxes have holes" was the answer to the statement, "I'll follow wherever he leads." Well, what's the next? Not only do the foxes of the field have their holes, but "birds have their nests." Yes, I know that, but the man wasn't talking about birds. He was talking about following Christ. Friends, I think there is, in this, one of the finest lessons that I have ever had to challenge my attention. What's the point regarding it? "I'll follow thee whithersoever thou guest." Answer, "foxes have holes, birds of air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." What do you mean, Lord ? "My dear sir, I fear that you might be prompted by the wrong incentive. I want you to understand what all this means. Don't follow me with the idea of any material gain, of any earthly reward. I want to tell you that the foxes have a place into which they go after preying upon other animals; the birds may wing their way all through the day and warble their sweetest melodies, but when twilight steals across the meadows, and the shadows lengthen, they can make their flight back to their nests, put their heads under their wings and pass into dreamland. All of that is true, but here's the Son of man; I have not where to pillow my head. Be certain that you follow me for the right purpose and not for any material, worldly, or earthly consideration." I believe, friends, that's the lesson. And I think, tonight, it ought to be impressed. A criticism is sometimes made of me, and I think it just, and that's this: "Bro. Hardeman doesn't spend so much time in exhorting people to become Christians." I am

conscious of that weakness as well as are you, but there is another thing. I have seen so many preachers that measure the success of their labors by the number of names they can get, and the number of baptisms, that it has had, possibly, the reverse effect. I think there are lots of people in the church like young watermelons, namely, they were pulled too green, and they never have yet considered what it all spells—what it's all about. I would not, ladies and gentlemen, enter into any kind of an organization nor any kind of a business unless first some fellow sat with me and explained every crook and turn and every detail. "What does this mean, and that, and the other?" and then, when I am sold on it, I want to stay sold, and not wake up afterward and regret that I have ever done it. I've never yet, therefore, tried to get anybody into the church of the Lord Jesus Christ under the spell of excitement. I do not want the great enthusiasm that might cause some boy or girl to lose his head and come to confess the Lord just because some one else did. I want converts who, first of all, understand what the will of the Lord is. I want them taught God's will and His word prior to becoming Christians. In addition to that, I want them to understand how God expects them to live, and to worship, and to practice the principles of "pure and undefiled religion." I think that's sound, correct and fundamentally true in all of its phases. Therefore, I'd rather have ten men, genuinely and truly converted, to the gospel of Christ and to the church of the Lord, than a thousand men who are nominally in. Many seem to say: "Because I've got a chum, or a pal, or some good friend who is a member, or because they have the nicest meeting-house, and the toniest folks in town, I believe I'll go and join in with them." Or again, somebody makes the plea to Jim, "Now don't you think you ought to be a member of the church with your wife? She's a member. Come on, and be with her, and go along with her." I want to tell you, friends, I never asked a man in my life to become a member of the church of the Lord just because his wife was. I think if that's the motive, that he will die and land in hell at last, and he might as well go from where he is. And I have never yet made any kind of appeal to some woman, by saying: "I want you to become a Christian because Jim is." That's not the motive. That's cheapening to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's bringing the church down from the high pinnacle and placing it upon a plane where it does not belong. Hear it—Men ought to become children of God because they are deeply convinced of the correctness of their step and fully aware of their dependence. Each one ought to say: "I recognize that Jesus Christ is God's Son, the Bible is His word, heaven is the home of the faithful, and when life's dream is over, I want to be among that number when the saints go marching in regardless of who the company is. I am in it because of my own conviction." If I know myself tonight, I am not a member of the church of God because you brethren are. I appreciate you in all that I should, but I am not a member of the body of Christ because anybody else is. I am a member of it because I believe that Book; I believe in Jesus Christ as the spotless Son of God, and the immaculate son of Mary; I am not following him for any earthly reward; not for prestige, or glory; not for social advantage, or financial gain, or political achievement. I am following him, I trust, actuated and prompted by a motive as pure as the driven snow. I want to dedicate all the powers of my being to his service while here I live and then lean upon his everlasting arms and be wafted home to glory when life's dream is all over. I think these sentiments are embodied in this very text. "Sir, don't you follow me because you think that, like a fox, I'll find a home for you. Don't follow me because you think I have some nests unoccupied."

Well, after that the Saviour turned to another and said to that man, "Follow me." And the man said I will—but! Now did you ever see a fellow decide to do a thing and then close out with a "but" to it? The chances are, about ten times out of nine, he won't do it. You can make a deal with a fellow,

verbally, and come to terms and a thorough understanding. He will say: "Yes, but I want to see about it." Fare you well—you'd just well count that deal not made. And so this man said: "Lord I will, but!" Well "but" what? "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." I do not know that the man's father was dead. I am not right certain as to what he meant. Maybe he had this in mind: My father needs my attention, my care; when, perhaps, he is stricken and has died, and I am freed from that responsibility, then I will." Well, I want to tell you, if I should want a position, and were to go to some company and the head of it should say: "Hardeman, I'll give you a job." "Alright, sir. I want it—but let me go and bury my father!" If he were to say, "No, no," I would feel like turning and saying "Why you old hard-boiled rascal, I don't want to work for you anyhow. If you are that kind—won't even let me go and bury my father, I don't want to have anything to do with you." Yet that's exactly what Christ demands.

What do you want to do, sir? "I want to follow the Lord!" When? "Oh, after I finish another matter." What is it? "I want to go bury my father." Christ said "Follow me!" What is he trying to indicate? Here it is: There is absolutely no earthly excuse or alibi for a man to postpone following in the footsteps of our Lord. Neither life nor death, nor anything shall come between me and the performance of duty as it pertains to the will of the Lord. "Let the dead bury their dead!" You understand this, of course. There must be a play on the word "dead." One dead man cannot bury another, if they are both dead in the same sense. But there is a figure of speech, technically called, "paronomasia," which means this: The use of the same word close together but with different meaning. Let the dead—those who are not alive to me, uninterested in the cause, out in the world, disconnected w with my work—let them bury the literally dead! Follow me! Now that's the story.

I happen to know one or two concrete demonstrations. We have a woman in school at Freed-Hardeman College, a widow, from Texas, of an exceeding fine family, a member of the church of the Lord. Her husband died on a Saturday. His body was prepared and brought to the home, where it lay in state, preparatory to the burial on Sunday afternoon. Friends gathered in with all their sympathy and kindness, as neighbors will do. Sunday morning, this woman began to arrange her attire as if she were going somewhere. Her friends asked: "What are you going to do?" She said, "I am going to church." "And your husband lying there, dead?" "Yes. There are plenty of you who would not go to church if he were not dead. Very kindly have you come, and I appreciate your sympathy and your presence. I won't be gone long, but my duty is at the house of the Lord!" She went. What would you do about it? Did she do right, or not? I've been to the town in which she grew up as a girl, married, and lived. Get it! I think she never did anything in her life to make a finer impression of her loyalty and devotion to the cause of Christ than the one act. And that was not for show, but in harmony with her practice from a girl, undisturbed until now. But there were critics on every hand. That's exactly what the Saviour said—"Let the dead bury their dead, follow me!" And yet I know of some who sit up on the front seat every Sunday morning and sing "I am bound for the promised land" when they ought to be singing "When the roll is called up yonder," (speaker pointed upward) "I'll be there" (pointing downward), in exactly an opposite direction. They are wonderfully devout at certain times, but a catch in the back or a crick in the neck, or some visitor come, and they'll just stay at home. Friends, that's the trouble with the church of the Lord. Jesus Christ stedfastly set his face upon the performance of duty. I have set my face toward the word of the Lord. Now, then, what am I going to let hinder? "Let the dead bury the

dead"—even that is not an excuse.

Well, he said to another, "Follow me." And that second one said: "I will—but!" And he had the same idea. "There is something that I lack as yet"—what was it? "Let me first go and bid goodbye to them that are at my home and my house." Don't you think that is a reasonable request? It appears so. The man wanted to follow Christ. Jesus said: "Sir, No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

I think there are wonderful lessons in these statements. Have you tonight set your hands to the gospel plow? If so, in what direction are you looking? I used to plow some. I came up back in the country on the farm. I don't want to enlarge on it as I heard Gov. Bob Taylor do once. When he said he was reared in the cornfield, brought up between two rows of corn, some old fellow called out: "I'll bet you're a pumpkin." Years ago, if a man rose early in the morning and broke up one acre of ground a day, he had done all average day's work. Well, I've tried to do that, and about three o'clock in the afternoon when the sun is coming down in a fury, it's fine to stop and rest for a while, sitting on a two-inch beam of the plow. As you sit there and look back over what you have done, the first thing you know, you'll think: "Well, I believe that is about an acre. I certainly have been stepping today. Already I've done quite a good day's work." And you can become so satisfied with what you have done, that the first thing you know you will be dropping the traces and tying up the lines ready to quit.

Just look out yonder before you! There are twenty acres to be broken, but that doesn't impress you just now. We get comfort out of what we have already done and drop the whole thing. That's the danger that lies along life's way.

Many a man and his wife, while living out in the country, helped to build the meeting-house. For thirty-five years they swept it every Sunday morning, made the fires in the winter, and, added to that, they always kept the preacher. They gave the most of the money to carry on, and after the thirty-five years of such work they move to the city or town, and he says to her: "Don't you think we've done our part?" She says "Yes, we've had a hard struggle." They agree, "Suppose we just take it easy and rest from now on." There's the danger. What is it? Looking back! Finding comfort and perfect satisfaction in what they have done. God says you cannot do that. There is no such thing as looking back! There is more territory yet to be covered. There's more ground to be broken.

Why, brethren, as young as I am, I could say to Mrs. Hardeman, "Haven't we been struggling along for thirty five years with our noses to the grindstone?" Yes. "Have there not been many dark days with great burdens?" Yes. "Have there not been problems that it seemed could not be solved?" All true. "Now don't you think we ought to let up and take the thing easy?" Perhaps she would agree, and out of the comfort of what we have done, we might drop the handles, die, and land in hell at last. Friends, I can't do that. I know that God said the man who takes hold of the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God. Old age is likely to be deceived, in looking back, by the consolation of what it has done. Middle life is too content with the present! Youth looks out upon the future bright with hope and prospect and wants to go on. That is exactly the motive that ought to characterize everyone. Though our hairs be frosted in the service of the Lord, and our cheeks furrowed by the finger of Time, and our forms bonded low, we cannot take our hands from the gospel plow and look back, for Christ says that then we are unfit for the kingdom of God.

Friends, it’s no child’s play to become a Christian. It’s no light thing to live the Christian life. But it’s a serious, solemn, sacred challenge that comes to the intelligence of every man, "Do I believe the gospel story? Do I stand like a stone wall for the eternal truth of God? Am I moved by every wind of doctrine, and swayed by every theory and new-fangled philosophy ? Do I take to every speculation, to every guess, and to every new idea? Having put my hand to God’s eternal plow, with His word as my guide, let me say, "Lord I never intend to give the journey o’er." That is the Spirit that must prevail. That is the Spirit that will conquer, that will be victorious in the end.

You ask one of the purposes of all our meetings? It is to try to arouse brethren, and stimulate them to persistency, and to continuity. I know, brethren, the pitfalls along the way, and the discouragements that confront us. I know the problems that are round about in life’s affairs. I’ve climbed many of the hills and labored up the mountains to have great disappointments one after another, but thank God I expect to keep on, until by and by when the last rung has been climbed and the summit has been reached, in the very sunlight of His eternal presence, I can look across to the glittering crown that awaits the faithful. That is the incentive that ought to inspire and motivate every soul to become a Christian. Is there one in this company who has never decided to follow the Christ? Don’t you think it is time that you made that decision? Are there brethren who once took hold of the plow handles, but because of the enticements and allurements of the world, plus the discouragement of the divided state and bickerings in the church, have become discouraged, and have decided to quit? You can’t do that. Won’t you come tonight, acknowledge any delinquency, any wrong, and rededicate yourself to the cause of Christ? Brethren, roll up your sleeves and determine to fight under the leadership of him who has never yet lost a conflict. Then when it is all over, we will stand with him on the glad plains of Eternity. If there is one of that type and disposition tonight, the invitation is gladly tendered, while once again we stand together and sing.

Chapter 90

4.08 - ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

I read to you two verses from the book of Acts 3:22-23. Just after Peter had delivered that second sermon on Solomon's porch to a great throng of people assembled, having announced to them that Christ, whom they crucified, had been raised from the dead, he then quotes from Moses: "Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."

Friends, that's a most solemn statement. It is fraught with so much meaning. The consequences connected with it are terrible. Hear it again: Moses said to the fathers 1500 years before the Christ, "A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall command you. And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." No wonder the Bible says: "It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Based upon this reading tonight, I want to talk about a rather unique thing, namely; Essentials and Non-essentials, in connection with man's duty toward God. Those words are quite common among many professed Christians. Some things are Essentials, some things Non-essentials. The fact is, I came up under expressions of that kind. The implication was that God had commanded lots of things, some of them were important and obligatory upon man; others, while in the Bible, and plainly taught, were just commands. The idea was that we can be saved as well without them as with them. Hence, they are Non-essentials. I think that is the idea of the world in general now. Of course, say they, there are things mentioned in the Bible, but you don't have to respect all of them. Therefore, there are Essentials and Non-essentials. Now when I am talking about it tonight, I have no such idea in mind as that.

I believe the Bible, and what Moses said: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me," now watch it—"and him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he saith unto you." Now if there were nothing else at all, I'd get the idea that whatever God has said is fraught with such significance that if I will not hear it, I'll be destroyed from among the people. I hope this statement may register in our minds. There are no idle expressions nor vain commands in the book of God. There's not a syllable in the Bible applicable to man, but there is meaning attached to it, and upon our acceptance or rejection, depends our eternal destiny. So, I want to present some matters for study along those lines, and if there be any beauty in it at all, it will be in its absolute simplicity.

I am commencing, friends, with the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, the last statement ever delivered by him to the disciples, wherein he says: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Teaching them to

observe all things whatsoever I have commanded, and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Now, are there any Non-essentials about those statements? Well, think of it after this fashion: God said first, "Go." That must be done. Why? Because Moses said that "Him shall you hear in all things commanded,' and that's one of them. Now it isn't optional with me as t whether I go or stay. If I have the Spirit of the Master and the Spirit of obedience, I must "Go." This means transition, moving about, change of status, locomotion that's the idea in it. Now any church or any Christian that does not have that idea of "Go" ought to take an introspective view and examine himself, "whether or not he b in the faith." To go is the very spirit of the gospel Christ. That must be done; that's positive.

Note another thing about it: there are two ways by which I can execute that command. I can either walk or ride, and in either way, I have fulfilled the word of the Lord. Now get this: Is it Essential to the carrying out of the will of God that I "walk" into the different parts of the earth? No sir! That's not Essential, but what is Essential? That I "go." Well, why isn't to walk then Essential? Because I can do what God said by riding, and thus the alternative and the choice is left with me. Now think on those things: two methods by which I may carry out God's commands in the first word "go." I can either walk and preach the gospel, or I can ride. Well, that's subdivided. The reason that my attention was first directed to try to get up a sermon along this line is that a good old brother once said to me, "Hardeman, you are such a contender for the Bible, why don't you ride a donkey like the apostles did when you go to preach?" I got to thinking about it. Perchance they did, and I want to do exactly what the word of the Lord says, so why don't I do that? I must go. That's what God said, but he never told me to ride; he never told me to walk. Then it's optional with me which way I carry out His command. If I ride, on what must it be? May I ride a mule? Yes. Would that be carrying out the Lord's will? Yes. Well, may I ride in the buggy? Yes. May I get in an automobile? Yes. On a train? Yes. On a steamboat? Yes. In a ferry boat of some kind? Yes. What about an aeroplane? Yes. Now I have done nothing more nor nothing less than what God said, when I get from one place to the other, be that method of transition as it may. Friends, I think we need to analyze matters and study things of that kind. Now, may I just add this? Of all people on earth that are anxious and particular about going according to what they think the Book teaches, I believe the church of Christ is in a class by itself. But sometimes we get cranky and become hobbyists and exceeding peculiar, when a little thought on our part would relieve us of all such. So then, I can carry out God's will either by walking or by riding, but watch this: there are the two co-ordinate ways of travel. I can't make one of those ways subordinate or an aid to the other. I can't use walking as an aid to riding. Why ? They are co-ordinate. I can't use riding as an aid to walking. Why? They stand equally related and one of them is not sub-ordinate to the other. Therefore, I have to do it either one way or the other, and if God had said walk into all the world and preach the gospel, it would have been a willful violation of His word for me to ride. Why? That's not what he said. But since he used the generic term "Go," I can carry it out by either walking or riding; I'm at liberty to do either and still be within the realm of God's authority.

Think again, "Go ye therefore, and teach." Now what must be done? I must hear that prophet in all things, one of which was "Teach." Now that must be done. What does that mean? To instruct, to clarify, to let the light on, to banish darkness, and to impart intelligence; that has to be done. The gospel is a thing to be taught unto man. That's all Essential. Is it essential for me to carry that out before a public audience and speak orally? No sir! If I were a "slinger of ink and a maker of

phrases," I could write God's word and be carrying out exactly what he said, when he declared "teach" all nations. I could also stand before my fellows, and orally do just what the Lord required. Therefore, in either case, I would be doing God's will. That's what I'm trying to get before you. The essential thing is, teach God's word. Someone said, "I object to a blackboard." Well, why? "God never said anything about a blackboard." I know he didn't, but what did he say? He said "Teach." If that and only that is done by use of a blackboard or a chart, you have done just what God said. The sole idea is to transmit intelligence and impart instruction.

There are brethren before whom I can go and discuss a topic to their delight. They will gladly accept what I have to say about it, but if I write out a discussion of the matter they raise an objection and candidly think such is unscriptural. Soon after I had returned from Palestine I went to Texas for a meeting. I reached the town on Saturday night and one of the brethren came to see me with a request that, since I had been to that sacred land, I might help him prepare to teach his class on Sunday morning. After telling me what the subject was, he said: "Now we don't use literature, we just use the Bible." Of course, I had heard of his kind. I tried to give the setting for his chapter, the time, place, persons etc. Then I commented on the different items mentioned. When I had finished he said: "That's fine, I'll be better prepared tomorrow to appear before my class." Then I said: "You say you're opposed to the literature?" "Oh, yes, I think it unscriptural." And I said, "Suppose I just write out what I have told you, word for word, and give each fellow in the class the same comments. Why not let them have the advantage of what I have said? If it is good for you, it might help them. He left me still opposed to written help but perfectly willing to receive oral assistance. Friends, such a disposition makes cranks, and hobbyists all over the land. They try to make a difference where there is no distinction. God said, "preach." If I can do that by oral demonstration, all right. If I can write it, still all right. If I can diagram it or picture it, or illustrate it, what have I done? Exactly what God said, no more, no less. Now we ought to think on these things.

Look at the next item. Go, teach, baptize. Who said that? The Lord did. What's the text? "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he commands." What did he command? He commanded the going; he commanded the teaching; he commanded the baptizing, and he said, "It shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear, shall be cut off from the people." God said "baptize"; that's the thing that must be done. Well, what does that mean? Without going away around and coming up from some foreign angle, let me get right to the point. God said that "baptize" means to bury, and bury means to cover up. If there is anybody in this country that hasn't yet learned what "bury" means, that fellow isn't ready to be baptized. He needs to learn a lot of things, preparatory to that act. Certainly so. Now God said "go baptize." What do you mean by it ? I mean buried with the Lord in baptism. All right, that's settled. Now, let's talk about some other affairs. Water is the element. The Bible says that. Had you ever thought about just what temperature the water has to be to make it scriptural? What do you think about that? Is it essential that it be 98 degrees or would it do at 106? Or suppose it's down to 50 degrees— don't you see it is not Essential for the water to be at a certain temperature? That is a Non-essential in connection with the doing of God's word. Of course, I never thought of that until we got to putting furnaces in our meeting houses and running pipes through the baptistry. We used to take it straight. So, baptize in water. That's what God said. The temperature doesn't have anything to do with it. I have baptized when we broke the ice, and I

have baptized when we needed ice.

Now then, I want to talk about another matter. When we baptize a man, do we have to stand him up erect and say, "now fold your arms," and baptize him backward? Does it have to be that way to make it valid? What about the posture of the character in being baptized? Someone said, "I never did see anybody baptized any way except backward." How would it do to baptize the fellow face foremost ? How would it do to baptize him sidewise ? I was baptizing a man in Forked Deer River once, an old gentleman, rather lottery, and just as I raised my hand to say that ceremony, he said, "Brother Hardeman, suppose I just squat." I said, "Oh no, stand up, it'll be all right," but I got to thinking about it afterward. Suppose he had squatted until he was buried? What have you brethren got to say about it? I have baptized people sitting in a chair. Was that scriptural? The Bible does not declare in what position the person to be baptized shall be, and if you baptize him face foremost, or backward, or sidewise—hear it—if you bury the man who has faith in God and who has repented of his sins, and do it in the right name, that's doing what the Bible says.

Well, now let's see again. If I baptize people in the Atlantic Ocean, what should I do ? Well, here's exactly it. We would go down into the water and there I would bury him, and after that we would come up out of the water and go on our way. That's what the Bible says; I would neither add to God's word nor take from it nor substitute for it. That's it. Well, I have baptized people in the Mississippi river. Someone asks: "What'd you do there ?" We went down into the water and there I buried them and then we came up out of the water. And then I have baptized people in old mill ponds. Do you know what we did ? We went down into the water, there I buried them, and after that, we came up out of the water. Any objections ? No. Suppose you dam up a branch and dig out a place of sufficient size and baptize a man in it. What have you done? Only that which the Bible demands. Exactly what one would do in the Atlantic Ocean or in any river. Well then, I have some kind of an artificial work to contain a sufficient amount of water that I may go down into it, bury a man and raise him up, what about it? Someone says: "I object; that's a baptistry." Friends and brethren, a failure to see that, just so long as we do only what God says, all is well, is responsible for many cranks and hobbyists among us. Let us do exactly what God said and with that be content. Now, to my way of thinking there just isn't any sense in anything other than that. Whenever I fail to carry out God's will and only that, I am subject to criticisms, but otherwise, they ought to be withheld.

Let us take some other item, for instance, the Lord's supper; there are things about that worthy of study in the light of our subject: "Essentials and Non-essentials." First, God commands the eating and by approved example, I learn the time, the first day of the week, that I must eat of the bread and drink of the fruit of the vine. I must not take cheese and substitute for the loaf; I must not add Log Cabin Syrup to the loaf. I must do just what God said, and when. That's Essential. Now let's talk about the Non-essential. Shall we pass it among the brethren and sisters or let them come up around the table and break of it there? Now do you know that the Bible doesn't say. There is one scripture governing all that, and here it is: "Let all things be done decently and in order." Now whatever good sense may suggest will fulfill that text and meet with heaven's approval. I have to observe the supper of the Lord on the first day of the week. Now, I want to raise another point. At what hour on the first day of the week? Someone says: "Ten minutes past twelve, or else it's not scriptural." Now brethren, you know that won't do. How about observing it at seven o'clock in the morning of the first day of the week? Perfectly all right. How about 10:30? Absolutely, it would

meet God’s requirements. What about 3:30 in the afternoon? It would do just as well. I know of one place where they wouldn’t have the Lord’s supper except at night. One old brother was responsible for it. And upon investigation, I found they had it at night because he said, "supper didn’t mean dinner." Back where I used to live we had breakfast, dinner, and supper, and we still have it that way at our house, but I can say it the other way just as well. We become slaves to custom and find it hard to break away and admit something else. I heard of a lady who was going to have a formal 6 o’clock dinner and having invited her guests, she began coaching the black mammy who Divas preparing the good things to eat. She said: "Now, here’s what I want you to do. After the ladies are all in the living-room and dinner is prepared, you come to the door, open it and gracefully say, ’dinner is served."’ The cook knew it was nearly night and such talk didn’t sound right, but she wanted to do as told. So she fixed everything in order and opened the door. With a happy smile she said to the ladies, "Dinner is served; all of you come out to supper." She was just determined to have supper in it no matter what about the dinner business. When John Sharpe Williams retired from the United States Senate he said he was glad to get back down in Mississippi where he could have dinner at 12 o’clock. So this old brother, said, "It is the Lord’s supper; it isn’t the Lord’s dinner." He had been told time and again by men who knew, that the word for supper did not of necessity imply the time it was eaten. But he had a theory and intended to have things go according to it, regardless of how ridiculous it made him appear. Such is our trouble by brethren who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

I have been asked about holding the supper until the night service, so that those absent in the morning might be served. Let’s see about that. When I go to church at the usual time, I have five items in mind, viz: To teach or have part in it; To pray with and for the brethren; To eat the Lord’s Supper; To contribute of my means, and to sing His praise. I return for the night with only three items before me as regards the worship. Those who were absent in the morning have the same purpose at night as I had in the forenoon. Why object to their worship then ?

Some say they should not miss the morning service. This may be so, but the argument, in that case, would turn to another matter. Men will also argue over when the first day of the week should begin and end. With our change of calendars and our methods of counting time, it is next to impossible to be sure of the day counted the first in New Testament time. If one insists that the first day begins at 6:00 P.M. Saturday and goes to 6 :00 P.M. Sunday, he would find that while we are eating the Lord’s Supper in Nashville at 12:15 P.M. it has passed into Monday in Jerusalem. The sensible thing is to recognize the first day as determined in the country where you chance to be.

Again, when it comes to the contributing of our means, God said, on the first day of the week for every one of you to give according to ability. There you have God’s word. That must be done. Now shall we put it in a hat, or in a basket, or walk around and lay it on the table? Do you know that the Bible doesn’t say a word on earth about that? Now that’s the Non-essential part, but the thing that God commands must be done. I trust a little outline of this kind, on this Saturday night, will provoke you to study that you may analyze and distinguish between things Essential and things Non-essential with reference to obedience to the word of God. What about obeying God? That must be done. Well, must it be done tonight? This is the best time on the face of God’s earth, and may be the only time, but possibly tomorrow would do; maybe next week might do, but of that you know there is no certainty. The essential thing is to obey the Lord. If a man, therefore, will hear the word of the Lord; believe in Jesus Christ as God’s son and his Saviour; genuinely and truly repent

of every sin; publically confess faith in Christ; walk down into the water and there, in the name of the Sacred Three, be buried, and rise to walk a new life, he will become a Christian. If he will then live as be ought to live and remain faithful unto death, God will give him a blissful crown in that land of unclouded day. My friends, don't let the opportunity pass but come while you can. Let us stand, while we sing.

4.09 - "THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST"

"THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST" In looking over this great audience assembled, I am reminded of days gone by. There is genuine appreciation in the heart of every one who loves the truth, because of the wonderful opportunities that are to us granted. I want to join Bro. Cullom in expressing appreciation of the presence of so many delegations from the various parts of our land. I want to thank, especially, our colored brethren for coming in a body this afternoon. To all of these services, you are most cordially invited. Unto God be all the praise and to us the encouragement. I think you ought to know that any man, appearing before an audience of this kind, is deeply impressed with the great responsibility resting upon him. I know that impressions are going to be made. God forbid that anything shall be said or done other than that which is in harmony with His will. I beg of you to study carefully and to consider thoughtfully all that may be said at this service. The text of the afternoon is found in Romans 8:9. Hear it—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Let’s all say that to ourselves. Let it register upon our minds. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is a universal statement; there are no classes of men excepted. Our respective stations in life enter not into consideration of this broad, sweeping statement, which is not only universal, but is quite positive in its declaration. No matter, friends, what other things might be true of me, or of you—if neither of us has the Spirit of Christ, all things else amount to nothing. In the light of such a sweeping statement with such consequences announced as are incorporated in it, don’t you think it worth our while to study, first of all, what we mean by the Spirit of Christ, and then to check up as to whether or not we possess it? There is so much said about it that I am impressed with the need of a thorough study of the matter. By the Spirit of Christ, I am constrained to believe that Paul not only meant the Holy Spirit which dwells in every Christian, but likewise the mind of Christ, the attitude of our Lord, and the disposition of God’s Son in his relationship to the various affairs that confront humanity. In all of my contact with the world, I must have and manifest the Spirit of Christ or else it’s already proclaimed, I’m none of His. But what does it mean? We frequently talk, with reference to men, and say they are public-spirited. Just what do we mean by that? Well, we mean their attitude toward matters of public nature. You hear it said, "There’s a man with a Spirit of vengeance." What do you mean by that? That he harbors retaliation in his heart, and seeks revenge upon some of his fellows. Then we tank about a sweet-spirited man, and in all of this, we have the same idea as when we speak of the Spirit, I. e., the mind, disposition, attitude, of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know that’s the truth, for Paul said in Php 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now, I want to make application. Friends, what was the Spirit that Jesus Christ manifested toward his Heavenly Father? I think you know, without a long recitation. I am just quoting one or two passages, bearing on that very idea. In Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Again, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus our Lord, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even

the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Now what was the attitude of our Lord toward his Heavenly Father ? That of humiliation, that of perfect submission, that of rendering absolute obedience, even though death was the result. Friends, I must have that Spirit toward my Heavenly Father, or else I am none of His. Let me close that phase of it by the quotation respecting the attitude of Christ in the last trial and tribulation through which he passed. In the lonely garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed and said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup (the suffering, and the sighing) pass from me, nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." I must needs have that kind of a Spirit, and that kind of an attitude toward my Heavenly Father or else, Paul said, "Hardeman, you are none of His."

Well, passing from that phase of it, I want to ask this audience: What was the attitude, or the Spirit, or the mind of Christ toward his earthly parents? When he was 12, his father and mother let him go along with them to Jerusalem to attend the annual feast. After that was over, they left him and parted from him a day’s journey. In the evening his mother began looking for her boy, only to find he was not in her company. She thought possibly, that "since he’s not in our camp, he’s over there with our kinfolks," but, upon investigation, she found he wasn’t there. Then she had some very fine acquaintances—the very best people of the earth—and she, perchance, thought he might be with them, but she found he wasn’t there, and had never been in their company. Finally, she turned back to Jerusalem, and there she found him. Well, after her reproof and his reply, he left Jerusalem and went with his parents down to Nazareth and was subject unto them. There isn’t a boy or a girl on earth, but may gather a wonderful lesson by observing the Spirit of Christ, that of subjection, respect, and obedience to earthly parents.

Now, may I ask: What was the mind or the Spirit of Christ toward governmental affairs ? "Let every soul," said Paul, "be subject to the powers that be." When Peter was discussing matters regarding the paying of taxes, Jesus anticipating him, said, "Of whom do kings of the earth take customs? Of their children or of strangers?" Peter answered correctly, "Of strangers." Christ said, "Lest they be offended, Peter, you go fishing, and when you cast the hook, the first fish that cometh up, look in his mouth and there you’ll find a piece of money; take that, and pay your taxes and mine." Friends, what is the Spirit of Christ toward our Heavenly Father? That of absolute and implicit obedience. Toward earthly parents? He was subject unto his, and thus left us an example. What Spirit was his regarding the world about him? That of respecting the government of which he was a part, and to which men look for protection.

Well, I want to pass to the next thought, and that’s this: "What attitude did Christ have toward his personal enemies, those who mistreated him, slandered him, told untrue things about him? Well, here is the answer: "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself unto him who judgeth righteously." Do you get that idea? If your enemy smite you on one cheek, turn the other; if he take your coat, give him also your cloak; if he force you to go a mile, double it, and go your way. All of this, my friends, suggests the Christ represented as the Lamb of God. I want you to think about the characteristics of a lamb. It’s the humblest, and the meekest, and the most submissive of all animals on the earth. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth; In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." That’s Christ with reference to matters personal held against him. You can’t find in all the Bible where Jesus ever retaliated with reference to personal injury, personal insult,

slanderous reports, or anything of the kind. "If a man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But friends, I think the tragedy of today in the church of the Lord is this, namely: brethren have never learned that there are two sides to the Son of God. They think that only the characteristics of a lamb ought to be evidenced in order to have the Spirit of the Master, and that he is some little negative kind of fellow, rather sissy, without backbone, with no courage, and that he doesn't have any combative Spirit about him. Now that's the common idea that the world has. Brethren, you are making a fatal mistake, and that mistake is, possibly, more responsible for the sad condition and the lack of harmony in the church of our Lord, than any other thing upon which you could put your finger at this hour. Lots of men in business affairs adopt a principle which, with their imperfect organizations, may be satisfactory and may prove worth considering, and it is this, namely: "Knockers don't win, winners don't knock." In material affairs, earthly business relationships, and imperfect human organizations that may be a good slogan, but I want to say to you, friends, that such a sentiment transferred into religion and applied to the church of the Lord, is more responsible for the sad plight in which we are found in Nashville, and other cities, than any other principle of which I can think. Brethren, I bid you go back to the days of the Restoration and recount the battles that had to be fought in every city and throughout the country. Imagine the Stones, Campbells, Johnsons and Smiths adopting the slogan and saying one to another: "Now brethren, be careful. Remember that 'winners don't knock.' " Had such been their idea, there never would have been a church of our Lord in this land. I think that brethren of the present are wholly unmindful of this one fact, namely: the denominational world has never opened wide a door for a gospel message. Never! Every inch of ground that we occupy, every position that has been made prominent, has been the result of a battle and of a combat on the part of those who believe the old Book. But for that Spirit characterizing earlier days, there would have been no congregations like these to assemble. Someone thinks, "That's not the Spirit of Christ." Now mark it—instead of Jesus Christ's being some little negative nothing who was afraid of his shadow, I want you to understand full well that the same Bible which says that he's the Lamb of God, also says, "He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Now I would have you stop a minute and study the nature of a lion. John said that Christ is a lion. Well, what is a lion? He is the king of all beasts. He walks out into a company of animals, wags his tail, shakes his shaggy mane, and gives a roar that might be heard from Dan to Beer-sheba. How, do you brethren account for the idea that Christ is a lion? Well, let me give it to you. With reference to personal defense he is a lamb. But whenever the doctrine that he proclaimed was attacked and opposed, and men acted the hypocrite and violated the principles of righteousness in their lives Jesus Christ never offered one element of compromise; he showed no disposition to yield one inch, but he stood like the lion against every foe. Jesus Christ is a Lamb, and a Lion of the tribe of Judah. Well, with reference to what? A lamb with regard to personal matters, a lion with regard to error both in doctrine and practice, and to things contrary to his teaching. Now if I don't demonstrate that, I'll admit publicly, and in the presence of this company, that I know nothing about the Book of God from beginning to end. I read you some things along that line. I am calling your attention first to the story of Stephen, in Acts 6:1-15. Stephen was one of the seven selected to look after the affairs to which the apostles' attention had been brought. The Bible says this: that he was a man of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. Now let's see our man. Stephen, who are you ? "I am a man of good report; I am a man that has wisdom; I am filled with the Holy Spirit." There's the man that I introduce to you. In the course of time, Stephen brought accusation against the error of his day, and afterward the enemy

suborned men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." That was a He. They never heard Stephen say anything of the kind, but in order to down his influence, and to obstruct his onward march, they falsified by their slanderous report; "and they stirred up the people and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him and brought him unto the council and set up false witnesses who said: This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law." There's God's man, full of wisdom, full of the Holy Ghost, and of good report. Stephen turned on them and said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." I have some weak-kneed brethren who would have stood there and said: "Stephen, wait a minute, knockers don't win." Now I just want to ask you: Did Stephen have the Spirit of Christ when he said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears . . . you are betrayers and murderers"? Someone says, "I don't think he ought to have said that; that's not nice, and he might offend them. That's not the Spirit of Christ." The man who makes that statement wouldn't know the Spirit of Christ if he were to meet it down on Broadway. He would be an absolute stranger to His Spirit. Should Stephen have said: ' Now gentlemen, I don't think you ought to do that, but I-ll recognize you, and one of you brethren will please come around and lead us in prayer"? Stephen had the Spirit of Christ and evidenced it to these betrayers and murderers.

Well, again, I turn to Acts 13:1-52, where we have a record of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. They left Antioch in Syria, went down to Seleucia, on the seacoast, took a boat to the island of Cyprus, went to Salamis and on through the island until they came to Paphos, and there they found a Jew by the name of Bar-Jesus, and he was with the deputy of the country named Sergius Paulus whom the Bible says, was "a prudent man." Well, what does that mean, Luke? That means this: Sergius Paulus was a man of good sense but Bar-Jesus was wicked. Then this prudent man called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. He was an honest, sincere man. He saw that these men were preaching something of great importance and he wanted to hear them. "But Elymas, the sorcerer, withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." Well, I'm sorry that all of that kind are not dead yet. There are plenty of characters like Elymas that would like to turn men away from hearing the gospel of God's Son, and they would pull off any kind of an entertainment to lure them away. Now note: Paul has somewhat to say but may I ask: Does Paul have the Spirit of Christ or not? Well, let's see the Spirit of Christ in action. Let's see a lion turned loose. Paul said to him, "O thou full of all subtlety and of all evil, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord"? Paul, don't you knock; that won't get anywhere; you be soft and sweet-spirited. Paul said: "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness," why don't you quit perverting God's word? Friends, I stand in the presence of God Almighty, certain of the fact that to condemn, rebuke and refute error is either the Spirit of Christ, or that Paul, the peerless apostle, was wholly out of line with the Spirit of his Master. Now what do you say about it? Did Paul have the Spirit of Christ when he said to Elymas, "You're a child of the devil; you're full of all subtlety and of all evil; why don't you stop your opposition to God's word"? Brethren, what do you say about it? Someone replies that Paul was denouncing a sinner, but "I don't think you ought to do that way toward brethren." Well, fortunately, the Bible is a complete Book. I am reading now from the second chapter of Galatians. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because

he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Here Paul comes face to face with Peter and blames him. He accuses Peter of being a hypocrite and a coward. This he does before them all. I now want to ask: Did Paul have the Spirit of Christ? What do you brethren say about it? Now then, when I tell some brethren they are wrong and are not standing four-square, what's the retort ? "Brother Hardeman doesn't have the Spirit of Christ. He's a scrapper." Thank God I am, when it comes to the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I allow no man to preach error and get away with it if I have the opportunity to stand and uphold the banner of the Lord, and proclaim the truth. Because of that, I want to say to you humbly, that I command the respect of even my opponents. It is the Spirit of Christ to stand for God's word.

I now turn to Jesus Christ himself. I want to see what Spirit he had toward all kinds and degrees of error that confronted him. In Matthew 21:12, hear it!—"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves." Imagine his saying to them, "Gentlemen, I hate to say anything about it, but I wish you wouldn't do that." Now, that sounds like some modern preacher trying to hold his job. Let's hear the Christ; he said to them: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." Let me ask: Is that the Spirit of Christ? Brethren, that's Christ himself. Jesus said: "My house shall be called the house of prayer—but you thieves have taken possession of it. Get out." Some weakling might say: "I wouldn't treat anybody that way." Maybe that kind wouldn't, but Jesus Christ did. Brethren, who has the Spirit of Christ? Is it some of these over pious fellows who haven't a backbone, who will let the truth of God suffer because of personal ties? My friends, we need to study the Bible again. That weak, negative, apologetic type of preaching is responsible today for a state that exists among us. Whenever the people of God get the Spirit of the apostles; whenever they imbibe the Spirit of the Master; whenever they recognize the Spirit that characterized the Restoration; whenever they decide to endorse only a positive gospel sermon and stand by those who will expose error; then and not till then will the cause prosper as in the days of the Apostles and Restorers. But again, I read in the last speech that the Son of God ever made where Jesus spake to the disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, they love the uppermost room at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Now note, "And call no man your father upon the earth." Brethren, don't let your regard for man cause you to violate this statement. The man who does shows that he loves the praise of men more than he does the praise of God.

Again, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Who is this talking, anyhow? That's Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Who are the Pharisees? They were the leading denomination of Christ's day. They represented the very best element in society, in business, in politics. They had their organization to the very highest point, and they loved to cater to the ways of the world, and to be prominent. Lord, what are you saying about them? Jesus Christ said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Did he have the Spirit of Christ? "Now, Lord, don't you knock. You should know that knockers don't win. Just go on and preach the truth and let them alone. Say nothing about them." It's a pity that the Lord didn't have some sweet-spirited "pastor" to tell him how to preach. Christ said: "You're hypocrites." Well, why? "Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore you shall receive the greater damnation." Whom is he talking about? Nobody. He's talking to the leading denomination of his day. What did he say to them? Lord, what else about them? "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Now Lord, what are they? Children of hell. Well, what about their converts? They are twofold more so. I leave the matter with you, friends. Is that the Spirit of Christ or not? What do you say about it? Does that look like a lion? Doesn't that demonstrate that "every plant which my heavenly Father bath not planted shall be rooted up" ? I want to ask you, in what kind of business was Christ engaged other than in rooting up error and in teaching the truth? But hear him further, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within, full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Friends, that's the language of Jesus Christ in the last address that he ever made on the face of God's earth.

What's the next thought? "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?" Friends, those are but extracts and samples found in the Book of God by those who were filled with God's Spirit. Now mark it—with reference to personal attack, personal insult, personal slander, and varied ugly reports, what about him? He was a Lamb. When reviled, he reviled not again; when suffering, he threatened not.

Now what's the last part? "He's the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Well, how? With reference to all error, with reference to all opposition to the truth. He stood, therefore, like a stone wall against the forces of opposition. Friends, let me tell you one thing. I have heard my own brethren, I think, sometimes preach what I doubt to be correct, and that's this: that because Jesus Christ preached the truth, "he was led as a sheep to the slaughter." Now, that's not so. If Jesus Christ had but preached the truth, he would have been living till this very hour, all other things being equal. Let me tell you the fact: because Jesus Christ condemned error and exposed the wrong, those very I chief priests, scribes and Pharisees whom he had denounced went to old Caiaphas and said: "That man must be killed." Jesus Christ suffered on the tree of the cross, not for preaching the truth, but for exposing and condemning error.

I want that idea to register. The opposition of the religious world is not aroused by some one's preaching the truth. But when you expose their doctrine, they first seek to ignore you. Next, they'll want to debate the issues, and finally they'll want to put you to death. Be it remembered, the peerless apostle to the Gentiles was not executed simply because he preached the truth; but because he exposed the error of his day, they beheaded him in the city of Rome. Let me read

about that just a little bit. In 2 Timothy 4:1-22 : we have this statement. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works; of whom be thou ware also; for he bath greatly withstood our words." Did you ever see somebody trying to withstand the preaching of the gospel, and be in direct opposition to it like old Elymas, who tried to keep men from hearing it ? Paul could say: "Brethren, I had that kind." Who's one of them? "Alexander the coppersmith." Paul, what did you do with him? In 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul said, "Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." That's what Paul said about him. Now I ask: did Paul have the right Spirit? Well, that's up to you now to decide whether he did or not. Friends, I leave this thought with you: I believe confidently that the failure to demonstrate the Spirit of Christ is more responsible for the weak and the compromising air in the church than any other one thing. I am appealing to my brethren everywhere. I believe we have the truth; there's not a plank in our foundation but absolutely rings clear. I stand ready to defend every single, solitary plank in the platform upon which I have launched my campaign for eternity. In view of that, it's little enough that I should unfold the banner of our Lord and let it wave in the breezes of high heaven while I unshield the sword of the Spirit, and fight the good fight until time's knell is sounded and the ransomed of earth are gathered home. That's the Spirit that I believe must prevail. With all of this, so far as personal relationship toward my fellows is concerned, I am not conscious of being any enemy to any man that lives on God's earth. There is no man against whom I would do anything destructive to his fair name or to retard his influence. I pray God that I may not be filled with envy and with jealousy that will make me see things other than the truth demands. With the Spirit of Christ paramount, I stand against error, from whatsoever source it may spring. With due deference to the feelings of my fellows, I cannot yield one-tenth of an inch. There is no compromise in the church of the Lord. There's not a single doctrine taught by Christ or the apostles that I have a right to modify or to minimize in the least. I believe that Jesus Christ said "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I look upon the man who fulfills that as a Christian. I am ready to fellowship and to recognize him; but however much I may think of any of you, brethren or friends, personally, if you have not obeyed the gospel of Christ, as I believe it is, I am not recognizing you, nor playing "buddy" with you; nor am I calling upon you to invoke God's blessings upon what you don't believe. I cannot invite you to pray for me when you don't believe what I teach. Friends, that's getting down to brass tacks, but that's right where we live. Now the unfortunate thing is this: There are brethren who, if I file a criticism against their teaching, fly up in the air and say: "Hardeman's got it in for me personally." God knows I'd hate to be that little. I'd just hate to be so small that I could not distinguish between personal attacks and attacks where principle is involved. I contend for the truth, as I see it, against the claims of all persons who oppose it, but for any man, personally, I have but the kindest of feelings.

Now, from a talk of this kind, possibly no one could learn what to do to become a Christian; I realized that before I started, but if from other talks or from other information, there be those in this audience who understand what the will of the Lord is, and are disposed in heart and mind to accept it, the invitation is tendered as we stand together and sing the song.

Chapter 92

4.10 - THE BLOOD-BOUGHT INSTITUTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT INSTITUTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It occurs to me, friends, that the fellowship and the social relationship that characterize such a splendid assembly a" mighty well worth the time here spent. I join Brother Acuff in expressing appreciation of these gospel songs. They are inspiring and encouraging. I am sure that you know that we are making no effort to entertain you, other than to appeal to your good judgment by trying, most earnestly, to proclaim His word. I want no better opportunity than is afforded by the gospel of Christ to reach men and to attract their attention. This meeting is somewhat unique in various ways. It was not intended, on my part, to be primarily an effort to have a large number of additions. Brother Tant would doubtless say we have too many now, of a certain kind. I have understood full well the sentiment prevalent among brethren, because I go from place to place and the very same conditions are found in various parts of our country. The church of the Lord is passing through a crisis, and I am hoping and praying most earnestly, that we may stay in the old paths come through the present excitement solidly bound, and that we may be able to sing: "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." My friends, I decided, when invited to hold this meeting, that if the preaching of the gospel of Christ failed to pacify varied interests and to crystallize a sentiment of old-time unity, that I would and could have no other remedy in mind, no other panacea for any of our troubles. I believe that all appreciate the gospel. We have been viewing it from different angles. We have our respective ideas of how it ought to be preached. Herein lies the chief difference among us. Let us hope that ere long we may all speak the same thing, and be of the same mind, and of the same judgment, and that there be no division among us. In matters of faith there should be absolute unity; in matters of opinion, liberty, and in all things, charity. That’s the platform that will bring to us that peace for which every child of God most earnestly sighs.

I am talking to you tonight about that heaven-born, blood bought, and Spirit-filled institution revealed in the Bible. There are some things about it, that on the surface are a little bit confusing, and yet when clarified, they present a beauty and an appreciation that otherwise would not result. Sometimes that institution is referred to in God’s book as the "kingdom of God," or the "kingdom of heaven," or the "kingdom of Christ." Then the same thing is referred to as the "body" of our Lord, with Christ the head, the Spirit the life, and Christians the members. Well, that same thing is referred to as the "church of the living God," the "church of the Lord," the "house of God," the pillar and ground of Truth." Now then, I raise the point: Why does the same thing have different names; Kingdom, Body, Church? Instead of there being confusion, anything other than that is true of it, when correctly understood. Well, do the words "kingdom" and "body" mean the same thing ? No, not necessarily. How then can two different names apply to the same thing? Do these terms and the church mean exactly the same thing always? No, they do not. Now that I may get that before you, just as simply as possible, suppose that I make this kind of an illustration: There sits a man before me. You ask "Who is that man, and what is he?" I’d say, "There is a white man." Well, I

think nobody would misunderstand it. And then in a moment somebody asks "Who is that?" I'd say, "There's a Democrat." Well, do the words "Democrat" and "white man" mean the same? South of Mason and Dixon line there are some who think so, but I guess they are wrong about that. Can a person be a white man and not a Democrat? Yes. Well, can he be a Democrat and not a white man? Yes. Then how can I refer correctly to the same man as first, a white man, and second, a Democrat? Well, I can; I did; but a third man raises a point and asks me, "What is he?" And I say, "There's a merchant." Well, does the man have to be white to be a merchant? No. Does he have to be a Democrat in order to be a merchant? No. Do these terms mean the same thing? They do not. How then can that man be all three of them, when they are different? Well, he can't, if viewed from the same angle and approached with the same idea in mind. But you don't have any trouble about understanding that. When I said there was a white man, I had one thought paramount; I was thinking about the race to which he belonged, the color of his skin, and the complexion. And from that point of view, with that thought to be emphasized, I said he was a "white man." Well, all right. When you asked again, and I said, "He's a merchant," I had made subordinate the idea of his color, and now emphasized his occupation and his business, and from that angle, what about him? He's a merchant. Well, changing from that, I turn again and view him with reference to his political alignment and his relationship from a party point of view. Now what is he ? The word "merchant" doesn't apply, and the words "white man" wouldn't answer, but the answer now is, "He's a Democrat." Don't you see how he can be all three of them at the same time: a white man, a Democrat, and a merchant, and nobody ever did get bothered about a matter of that kind? But when you take the institution in the Bible and sometimes call it the "church" and sometimes the "body," and sometimes the "kingdom," we get all "balled up" and confused. Friends, why not just quiet down and study things as they are? God, in the New Testament, views that institution from different angles and from different considerations. Now, if you are thinking about that institution with reference to its governmental feature, then what? It's not a democracy. Just put that down. It is not a republican form of government. Don't you see that? It is a kingdom. What does that mean? Simply this, that all the powers of government are vested in one character, who makes the laws, judges them, and executes them. But, let's think about that a minute. There are two kinds of government and they are directly opposite. One is a kingdom, or a monarchy; the other is a democracy. These are quite different in nature. The same functions are embodied in each of them, namely, legislative, judicial, and executive, but the method by which these functions are carried out are contrary to each other. Now in a monarchy, or a kingdom, one man makes the laws, one man passes upon the laws, one man executes the laws, and the subject has nothing whatsoever to do with it, except he can either accept it or reject it. But so far as having a part in the making of the law, or in deciding whether or not that it has been violated, or in the execution of it, he is absolutely left out. Such is the nature of a kingdom.

Well, what is a pure democracy ? Really, there is no such thing on the earth, and there cannot be. It is impractical. If the city of Nashville were a pure democracy, every man, woman and child in it would have to meet every time a law was passed; they would also have to meet to decide upon the laws, and likewise when a law was executed. So what do we have? In this country, we have what we call a representative democracy—a republican form of government. The people are supposed to rule, but they rule through representatives, through committeemen, through delegates. Now that's the way we do it. We elect the very wisest of our land, of course, and send them up here on Capitol Hill, and there they supposedly represent us—the people of Tennessee. It

is presumed that we express our will through these l men. So it is in national affairs; we execute our wishes through representatives. l Now then, I just want to ask you, what is the nature of that institution over which Christ reigns tonight? Here is l a very vital, fundamental, primary difference between the church of the Bible, and practically all denominations which are of human origin. The average member of the various churches thinks the church is a democracy just like Tennessee, and that it must be carried on by councils, synods, associations, conferences, to which the people all over the land send their delegates; and when they get in conference, they make laws and then relay them to the people. So we have it. Now that's the common idea. Therefore, denominationalism is based upon the idea that the church of the Bible is a democracy, a representative form of government. But the Bible is a stranger to any such a conception as that.

There is not a hint, nor any intimation of anything at all in God's book, but is definitely and actually the very opposite of that sentiment. Christ said, it's a kingdom. In that kingdom there is but one man, one authority—Jesus Christ our Lord. There is no human law-making body. There's no body on God's earth clothed with the right to make a creed, or a discipline, or a confession of faith. That's based upon the wrong conception, and it is fundamentally contrary to the very Spirit of the New Testament Church Friends, until you can get men to understand the very nature of the church of the Bible, you can't get anywhere in converting them to New Testament Christianity. You may transfer their names to the Church of Christ record, but unless they are properly taught and get back at the little end of the tap root of what it all means, you do not have a converted and dependable membership. So, I want to insist that in the church of the Bible, Jesus Christ has made all the laws; he has passed upon all the laws; and it will be his to judge at the last great day. Therefore, in the church of the Lord, there is no voting on what shall be the rule, the doctrine, or the polity. Either I can submit to the monarch and to the chief sovereign's decree and rest upon his promise, or I can reject it and subject myself to the consequences. I have no other alternative. What is your idea about the church of the Bible with reference to government? Now I said to you that this was practically the difference between the church that you read about in God's book and all human denominations. Let's see about that for a minute. When some denomination wants to have some point of doctrine incorporated in its creed or some doctrine or practice changed, how does it go about it? First of all, there is a council, or a conference, or a synod called in session to discuss the matter. Very well. Different churches of that faith, all over the country, meet and select their delegates. These delegates meet at Nashville or somewhere, and they are called in session. This assembly is characterized by much gravity and great piety. The chairman calls the meeting to order and somebody suggests a change in the doctrine or the polity—A change in our Discipline, or Confession of Faith, or in whatever booklet is adopted by that denomination. That change is then taken up and discussed back and forth. Heated arguments are many times in evidence. Finally, the question is put before the body and the ballots counted. A majority have voted for the change. Now look what they have done. The delegates have fastened upon that church a doctrine of which the members back home as yet know nothing. After the meeting is all over, they go back to their respective places and announce to the individual congregations what they must believe from now on. And being loyal partisans under the crack of the denominational whip, they say, "Well, I'm a loyal member, and I now believe what the conference decided upon." Who did that? That crowd assembled, in a legislative capacity, by a majority vote. Friends, there is not anything in God's Book that looks like a distant relative of a thing of that kind. Men ought to know that, and I'm your friend to tell you these things. But some one might say: "That's not the way it is?" Yes it is

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Let me tell you, our Catholic friends have a Pope; then they have their cardinals; they have their sessions, which are called councils. Now note: back in 1311 there was a council of the Catholic church called at Ravenna, Italy, for the purpose of discussing the question of baptism. It had been agitating the Western branch of the Catholic Church for quite a while. When that council was called and order had prevailed, the question was put: shall we recognize sprinkling as the equivalent of and upon a parity with immersion ? Well, there were those who fought it while others favored it; they argued back and forth, and finally, by a small majority, it was voted into and upon the Western branch of the Catholic Church. Now there isn't any Catholic in Nashville who will deny that. They had not recognized sprinkling until 1311. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the way that sprinkling was brought into the Catholic Church, and varied denominations have borrowed it, not from the Bible, but from the Roman Catholics. Be it known that the Greek Catholics practice only immersion. The error of the Roman church and of her daughters and granddaughters is a misconception of the nature of the church. Had they caught the idea that the church of God is a kingdom, no such fallacies and doctrines contrary to God's word would be recognized tonight. That's not nearly it. That's it.

Now, in referring to the Catholic body, I have no intention to reflect upon anyone who is a member of that church, not in the least.

Again, the Methodist Church of our country is an honorable body. It is made up of fine people, good citizens, good neighbors, good politicians. The Methodist Church started in 1729. In 1784 it adopted its creed. In that creed is the statement that "all men are conceived and born in sin." Now you can't get back of that. That's putting it down unmistakably. "All men are conceived and born in sin." That was a doctrine of the Methodist Church from 1784 until 1910. In 1910, when the great Methodist Church met in its ecumenical council over at Asheville, North Carolina, a delegate argued that such a statement was untrue and that it should be changed. A heated debate followed, but finally, when the delegates cast their ballots, it was found that a majority did not believe their discipline, and so, another statement wholly different came out in their next edition. Since 1910, according to Methodist doctrine, no baby is born, much less conceived, in sin. Now who did that? Every Discipline since 1910 says exactly the opposite of all those so loyally accepted since 1784. But how was that change in doctrine brought about? On the principle that the Methodist Church is a democracy, just like the State of Tennessee. Delegates were selected by each congregation and when they left home, all believed that every baby was "conceived and born in sin." But when they went to Asheville and legislated on their doctrine they came back and told what they had done and the people changed their faith. Brethren, how did they come to change? Well, because they were loyal partisans, and they proposed to follow the partisan idea. The members at home were not affected by what the Bible had to say, but they were wholly influenced by what the Conference said. Methodists are loyal to their Conference. Friends, that's wrong, absolutely wrong. It's a failure to understand the very foundation of the church of the Lord. Had they the right conception, that the church of the Bible is a kingdom, and not a democracy, there would have been no conference over at Asheville; there would have been no delegates.

Let me tell you one thing. Friends, every departure from apostolic doctrine and practice has been brought about by a council or a conference of men, assuming to themselves legislative powers,

wholly unauthorized by our King. Had there been no conferences, no assemblies, and had the people been content to take God at His word, to believe what He says, to do what He requires, and to live as He directs, there l would be no confusion and no bitterness in our land tonight.

Let's see about that a little bit further. Here is an audience of—oh, I don't know how many, say 5,000 people— and all of us members of the body of Christ, worshipping God as it is written. Very well, somebody comes along and l suggests: "Now brethren, we've been teaching Repentance as a cardinal doctrine of the church for, lo, these many years, and I really believe we have outlived that; folks are no longer paying much attention to it, and we can't enforce it, therefore, I make a motion, if I can get a second, that we go on record as disapproving of that old doctrine." Well, all right, it's discussed. Now then, out of 5,000 of us, suppose 4,999 vote in favor of repealing the doctrine of repentance, and I as chairman announce the vote. It's carried. I want to know if you think that has affected the gospel plan of salvation. What do you think about it? Does God recognize the canceling of the doctrine of repentance? No sir, it's still in His word, "all men everywhere must repent." Our vote, therefore, has had the same effect as if a man should walk down to the Cumberland River, stick his finger in it, then withdraw it and look for the hole.

Suppose some one decides he wants a mechanical device in the worship, that we may be like the denominations about us. Suppose we call a great meeting of delegates from the different congregations and a motion is made to add such a device to our worship. Very well, the question is put and it carries by a big majority. Thus we bring the instrument in. Now question: Have you changed the King's law ? Does God recognize your majority vote? What have you done, except to insult the authority of Jesus Christ and to repudiate the sacredness of his word? That's all. Friends, are you content with Jesus Christ as King? Are you willing to submit to his authority in all matters?

Now, let us view that Institution from another angle. It is spoken of as the "Body of Christ." Well, look at it. With reference to government, what about it? It's a kingdom, All right; as regards its organization, what is it? It's a body, and the Bible takes up this human body as the illustration most suited to convey that idea. There's never been such all organism as is the human body. This thing functions automatically in all of its parts. Much of the Bible is devoted to a presentation of this body of mine, in all of its various parts, from which there is made the spiritual application, "As we have many members in one body and all members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ." Well, now let's learn some things about this one of mine and yours. We have one head, that' all; one body, that's all; one Spirit, that's all. Someone may ask: Does that fit things as they are ? Yes, it fits things as they are in the Bible, but not as they are out in the world. In our own fair land of America there are more than two hundred denominations. Some wonder if they can harmonize such with the Bible statements. No, I don't think you can, but try it. Well, all right, we have just one head, Jesus Christ; all denominations recognize him as the head. Very well, how many bodies have you? Oh, there are about 200. Now look at that freak; one head and under it about 200 bodies. I think Ringling Brothers Shows are coming to Nashville next week. If I had a thing like that, my fortune would be made. I'd go around to the side-show department and say, "I've got a freak, like of which you never dreamed of in your life. I've got a thing with one head, and 200 bodies attached to it." Don't you know that won't do? Had you ever thought about trying it the other way? Suppose one says: We are all one great big body of Christians; we just have our different heads-- John the Baptist, and John Calvin, and John Wesley, and so on. Just look at that

picture a minute; one big body and 200 heads bobbing up. You haven't helped the thing a bit. Friends, truth cannot be trifled with. You can't get any sense whatsoever outside one fact and that's this: "one head, one body, one spirit." Every child of God on earth is a member of that body and be he ever so bumble there is a place wherein be functions. Christ talked about tam. An eye cannot say to the nose, because I cannot smell, I am, therefore, not a part of it, and neither can it say to the foot, I have no need of you. Nay, our most comely parts are exceeding vital. If we all could just learn our places in the body of Christ and be content to fill them, this world would be transformed into a perfect paradise.

Now what is the next, and the most serious matter as affects us? Friends, in this body of mine, there is not one particle of friction. There's no backbiting; there's no effort for this hand to hinder what this one wants to do, and if I were to hit that nail with a hammer, this one wouldn't bob up and say: "I knew you were going to get it; I'm glad of it; it was coming to you." Now, that never happens. If one foot gets hurt, the other just says: "I'm sorry. Put your weight on me, I'll bear it without a murmur, without criticism." There is that great sympathetic system running through this body of mine. Therefore, if any member suffer, all the other members suffer with it. Jesus' prayer to the Heavenly Father was, that his people might be like-minded. But look round about in the cities of Nashville, Louisville, Dallas, and other parts of our land, and think of the condition of the professed body of Christ. Such a condition does not harmonize with Christianity. The Spirit of Christ is lacking. Such things ought not to be and those responsible will receive their reward. Friends, let's think of those things. All of us are rapidly beating marches down to the solemn confines of the tomb. We are not as young as once we were. Since I first came to you many changes have been wrought. Silver hairs bedeck the brow of many who were not thus then. Furrowed cheeks are in evidence on the part of some of you who then had the very glow of youth. Bended forms appear now that were not then. What is our relationship one with the other? Friends, I do not want to be distinguished from any other child of God-on earth. I want to assume no name that would differentiate or din criminate or align me with any kind of a partisan Spirit. I would love to shake hands with every man who has been born of water and of the Spirit and be one with him in the body of Christ. I wish we could all speak as the oracles of God speak and recognize that things revealed belong to man and that things unrevealed belong to God, and with that we should be content. Friends, that ought to be the Spirit. If anywhere in harmony with that I am lacking —this's that much wrong with N. B. Hardeman. The church, therefore, is not only a kingdom with reference to its government, but as to its organization, it's the body of our Lord. But I ask: what is its relationship to the world? Now does the word "kingdom" suggest that? No. Does the word "body" determine its relation? No. Well, what does? The word "church" now applies. What does that mean? The separated, the isolated, the called out. It is no part of the world, but it has been called out of the world. Friends, that's the story; that's what God teaches on all these matters. Why then can not we, as a solid body, without a din sensing voice, give a most hearty amen to such as that? The church of the Bible, with reference to government, is a "kingdom." As to its organization, it is a "body." Jesus Christ is the head, the Holy Spirit is the life that dwells in the body, and every child of God is a member. Then as the church, let it be separate and apart, wholly distinct from the world. Let it not compromise with the world. Let not the line of demarcation be blurred, but be clear, open, and above board. Don't remove the old landmarks, but march under the leadership of Christ Jesus our Lord, who is in deadly conflict with the arch-enemy of mankind. The war is on, the battle is raging, and it will continue until time's knell is sounded. I want to be

among that number who will gladly raise aloft the blood-stained banner, who will unsheathe the sword of the Spirit and fight error, wheresoever it be. Are this those tonight appreciative of that idea? Have you accepted fully the sentiments as thus expressed? If so, I bid you march on and never give the journey over. If not, "Why Not Tonight?"

Chapter 93

4.11 - THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM My friends and brethren, I rejoice on this Monday evening to see such a splendid crowd assembled, and if last week is duplicated, the audiences will grow from night to night.

We are all here, in the presence of God, to hear all things that are commanded of the Lord. I am deeply impressed, not only with the number of people present, but with the quality of the audience assembled. I think we have no light, flippant crowd, but we have men and women, boys and girls, with serious minds, conscious of conditions and responsibilities, who are assembling from night to night to hear what may be said. I trust you will weigh everything in the light of His word.

I am discussing tonight an old theme, namely, "The Establishment of the Kingdom of God, or of the Church of the Lord." I doubt if those who have not given special attention to a study of this matter are appreciative of its importance. If you recall the story of the past, and the struggles through which the church of the Lord has come, you'll find that in most of the discussions, "The Establishment of the Church" was one of the propositions always debated. Well, why? Because so much depends upon it. It we are right in our contention that the church or kingdom was established upon Pentecost, it argues very largely that the teaching based upon that is likewise scriptural. If wrong at the beginning, though lines might be correctly run according to the guide, we would not come out as God intended. If I had to name the cardinal principle and the distinguishing feature of the church of the Lord as contrasted with all human bodies, its beginning would be one of the main points mentioned and emphasized. So I state to you that which has been contended for all down the line, namely, that the church of the New Testament was Established, Inaugurated, Set Up, Firmly Fixed, on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That's the statement to which efforts tonight will be directed. But I am reading to you, from God's book, a prophecy known to all of you brethren. In the year 606 B.C. this was a struggle between the East and the West as to which ruler should be monarch. The world was not big enough for Nebuchadnezzar of the East and Pharaoh-nechoh of the West. This was a battle away up on the Euphrates River at old Carchemish to determine which one of these rulers should have universal dominion. After the smoke of battle had cleared away, Nebuchadnezzar was victorious, and after that he swept down through the Jordan valley, subdued the people of Palestine, put them under tribute, and then, nineteen years later, he literally carried them away across the desert and beyond the Euphrates to serve him for fifty-one years more. While they were over in that land, Nebuchadnezzar had a wonderful dream, that not only bothered him but pestered him. He was greatly disturbed about it, and having made inquiry of his own wise men, only to meet with failure, he flew into a rage and sent forth a decree that all of them should be killed. Then it was that Daniel, one of God's people who was taken from Jerusalem, told him not to be hasty about the matter; that this was a God in heaven who could reveal secrets and make known what would come to pass. Upon being brought into his presence, Daniel unfolded to him just what he had dreamed, and what it meant. I now read from Daniel 2:31-44. Hear it:

"Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet, part of iron and part of clay." Now can you just see a picture of that kind—an image after that make-up? Now hold that in mind, the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay. Now note: "Thou sawest," Nebuchadnezzar, "till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." Now friends, if God had not interpreted that, I'd be the last person, I think, in all the land to speculate and to theorize as to what it all meant, and even if I did, when I got through with my theories and guesses, nobody on earth would have right or reason to put confidence in them with assurance, but Daniel said this is the interpretation of it. Well, get it then:

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven bath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into shine hand, and bath made thee ruler over them all." Now mark it: ' Thou art this head of gold." Now, is it guesswork when I tell you that Babylon represented the head of gold? Absolutely not. God said it. Now note: "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but this shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and party broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Now note: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Now that's a rather lengthy reading from Daniel 2:31-44. Of that, for awhile, I want to speak to you in tones as clear and statements and sentences as simple as I possibly can. I love to preach so that folks will know what I'm talking about, and if I had all the education in the world, I think I'd still have sense enough not to try to delve into things concerning which the audience knows absolutely nothing.

Friends, this is about 600 years before Christ. God comes to Daniel, a Hebrew servant in the land of Babylonia, a captive of old king Nebuchadnezzar, and makes known to him a wonderful dream that the king has had. And after reciting the dream, Daniel tells him the interpretation of it. Now, not to be tedious, but to be clear and positive, I want you to see again. This was the great image that appeared, the form of which is terrible. Now watch the analysis of it. The head of that image was of fine gold, the breast and the arms were of silver, the belly and the thighs were of brass, the

legs were of iron, and the feet were part of iron and part of clay. Now that's the scene; that's the thing that troubled Nebuchadnezzar wonderfully, and which he entirely forgot by the next morning. Daniel said: "Nebuchadnezzar, here's what that means: that dream is with reference to worldly governments and kingdoms. In the analysis of it, therefore, Nebuchadnezzar, God has given thee a kingdom, power, strength, and might. Thou art that head of gold," and so the first part of the image represented the government of Babylonia, of which Nebuchadnezzar was king. All right, now, after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior. The second is not to be as great as was Babylonia. After that, this will be a third kingdom, represented by the belly and the thighs, and this third l shall bear rule over all the earth. And after that, this will be a fourth kingdom, and then in the days of these kings, namely, the fourth kingdom's kings, then what? God l s going to set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

Now that's the image, and precisely and definitely is it told just what God is going to do, and just when he is going to do it. Now, let us pass to profane history and trace the fulfillment of this prophecy. The Babylonian empire lasted until 536 B.C. It came to an end with the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, whose name was Belshazzar. On that memorable night when he was serving tea to his friends, and having a high old time, this came a finger writing on the plaster of the walls, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, U-PHARSIN," which means, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." That night, 536 B.C., Belshazzar was slain, and the Bible says that Darius, the Mede, took the throne, being three score and two years old. But the real power rested in his nephew, Cyrus of Persia. So what do you have? A government of two parts joined together, the Medes and the Persians, who were the arms of the image. "After Nebuchadnezzar, this will arise another kingdom, inferior," represented by the chest and arms of silver. Well, all right. The Medo-Persian government lasted from 536 B.C. down to 330 B.C., at which time Alexander the Great, with his father's famous phalanx, started out to conquer the entire world. Now God said that this third one should bear rule over all the earth. Then the great Macedonian, who really bore rule over all the earth, died and his government was finally divided between two characters, namely, Seleucus of the North and Ptolemy of the South. Time rolled on and finally this sprang up on the banks of the historic Tiber, Rome, the city builded upon the seven hills. In the days of Pompey, 63 B.C., the Roman Empire was extending its influence over all the face of the earth. Now mark it, this's the Babylonian, the head of gold; this's the Medo-Persian, the breast and the arms; this's the Macedonian or Grecian; and then this's the Roman Empire, swaying the scepter over all the nations of the earth. Now what did God say about it? Nebuchadnezzar, in the days of these kings—What kings? Of the Roman kings. Well, what's going to happen? The God of heaven will set up a kingdom and that kingdom shall never be destroyed. Friends, I believe just that. That thing has been taught by the brethren of the church of the Lord for more than a hundred years, and it has remained, until quite modern times, for it ever to be questioned by those who claim membership in the body of Christ. That such is the fact in the case, I think does not admit of a shadow of doubt. Now then, mark it—I said to you that Pompey of Rome began to exercise world-wide dominion about the year 63 B.C. Then, this came the Caesars, a little bit later, who likewise extended their influence, and at the time Christ was born, Herod had been appointed king over Palestine by the Roman Emperor. Therefore, after some years passed, both John and Christ had been born upon the earth. Soon the clarion voice of John the Baptist broke the silence of the wilderness of Judea, saying unto the people: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now

when was that? "In those days came John the Baptist." Now I just stop and raise the point: In what days? Well, in the days of the kings of the time. Who were then rulers? The Caesars were at Rome, the Herods were kings over Palestine, hence, "in those days," in the days of the Caesars, and of the Herods, John came announcing, as Daniel had prophesied, "the kingdom of God is at hand." Now, is that sensible? What did God say about it? This is the Babylonian; after that will be the Medo-Persian; after that will be the Macedonian; and then the Roman. In the days of the Roman kings God will set up a kingdom. Well, the Roman kings are on, they are now in authority and are ruling. What happened ? "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand." No wonder that John thus made the announcement unto the multitudes that assembled that the kingdom of God was at hand—and that was in the days of the Roman kings, at which time God had said that he would set up a kingdom upon this earth. To all who are not members of the body of Christ I want to apologize by saying that I have some brethren in error. They teach that the kingdom here mentioned by Daniel has not yet been established. I am sorry to have to say, that within the midst of the church of the Lord this are brethren that have risen up to deny that which has been affirmed and defended in debate and proclaimed all over this land for more than a hundred years.

Well, this are some things that I think need to be said. Our premillennialist friends argue most earnestly tonight that the kingdom predicted by God as revealed in Daniel 2:1-49 has not been established upon this earth, but that it must be established in the days of Rome. But they say Rome is gone, and you know that’s so. The Roman Empire fell in 476 A.D., and passed out of existence, and this has not been anything of the kind in the physical affairs and political realms of men from that time until this. But the proponents of that premillennial theory suggest that Rome must come back and become a world empire again, and when such is done, then God will establish the kingdom. These erroneous brethren further say that Jesus Christ fully intended to establish the kingdom at the time John said, and when it was declared that in the days of the Roman kings the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, such was the intention; but when Christ came, the Jews would not accept him, therefore he postponed the kingdom and decided that until the Jewish nation, as a whole, got ready to accept him, he would establish the church instead. Therefore, we are in the church age now, and will not be in the kingdom in fact until the Jews get ready. Then Christ will come and fulfill that which he aimed to do 1900 years ago. Such is a theory that has already done much harm to the body of Christ.

I am saying, tonight, with all the power of my being and with perfect confidence of my ability to sustain myself, that the premillennialists among the churches of Christ do not believe that the kingdom of God is in existence, In fact, upon this earth. And yet when I announce that, some little up-spurt says: "Brother Hardeman, you don’t understand it." Yes, I do understand it. Well, you ask, what’s the proof of the thing? Friends, whenever a man publishes a book, that book becomes public property. I have here "The Kingdom of God," a book written by R. H. Boll, of Louisville, Kentucky. I am reading to you on page 61, hear it: "Yet all the while, though unrecognized by men, Jesus Christ was God’s king." Now you watch how—"as it would be put in legal language, the throne was his, de jure et potentia," what does that mean? By right and by authority, "but it is not his, de facto et actu." What does that mean? As a matter of fact! Now let some fellow who thinks I am misrepresenting come out in the open. This it is. How is it that the kingdom belongs to Christ and how is he king? He’s king by right, but he’s not king in actuality, therefore the kingdom is here

by right, but not as a matter of fact. Brethren, when Paul said: "God bath delivered us from the power of darkness and bath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son," that means by right and authority, but not actually. So brethren, you are in the kingdom by right. You are not in, sure enough. You just think you are in it. Now, that's the doctrine.

Well, let me read again, this time from the "Word and Work," the issue of June, 1936, from the pen of Robert H. Boll, Louisville, Kentucky. Hear it: "The Roman Empire Reappears," "Mussolini solemnly proclaimed the rebirth of the Roman Empire of the Caesars." (He quotes the Courier-Journal.) "After fifteen centuries, the empire has returned to the fateful hills of Rome." To the countless multitudes that thronged the public place, Il Duce addressed the question, "Will you be worthy of it?" Then this came the answer, wherein they proclaimed their fidelity. Now then, hear Brother Boll's comment: "So the Roman Empire has stirred from its long sleep and again emerges upon the world's stage, just as God's word said it would and must." Brother Boll, what are you saying? That Mussolini is the fulfillment of God's prophecy to Daniel, that the kingdom is not yet established, and Mussolini, according to God's word, has raised up and the Roman Empire has appeared. "The last of the four world-powers of Daniel's vision (Daniel 2:1-49 and Daniel 7:1-28), the Beast that was, is not, and shall come (Revelation 17:8) has reappeared to play its final act in the drama of the world's rebellion." Now what do we have this? That in the appearance of Mussolini, God's promise to Daniel is being fulfilled, the Roman Empire is established according to God's word, and Mussolini has brought it back into existence. Well, all right! I want to raise this point regarding it: Will Brother R. H. Boll fight the government of Rome, in influence, by word or with a sword? No. Why not? That would be fighting against God. All right; if he should be a loyal citizen of the United States and, in sentiment, want to defend our flag, what about it? He would be fighting against God when Mussolini tries to exercise authority over this fair land of ours. Why? Because premillennialists say that God's agent, Mussolini, is carrying out God's word, then they must not fight the Roman. Empire. And if Italian ships were to land on our eastern shores and want to plant their flag on the soil of our country, premillennialists cannot fight them. Why ? That's God's order; that's God's fulfillment. Therefore, I am charging tonight that all premillennialists who believe as Brother Boll does would, of necessity, have to become traitors to the government of the United States or else fight against God.

Friends, let me ask you in all candor. Do you subscribe to a doctrine of that kind? Do you think we are not actually in the kingdom? Do you think that Jesus Christ is not now king in fact, and that he will not be until Mussolini extends the Roman Empire over all the earth? I have had brethren say: "Brother Hardeman, I don't believe a word of that." Well, I want to accept that statement, and yet, some of that type will criticize me for exposing such teaching. This is inconsistent, and it has the effect of encouraging those who thus teach. Brethren, I'm ashamed of any man on God's earth who says: "I think the doctrine is erroneous, but, Hardeman, I don't want you to fight against it. Don't mention it." Now where is your influence? You say you don't believe it. All right, whom are you criticizing? Here's the Gospel Advocate, contending for the old paths; here's the Apostolic Times; neither one of those brethren knew that I was going to say this, but they are fighting for the old principles and denouncing such erroneous doctrines as are taught, and what about it? This are some preachers over this land, criticizing all such, and they criticize N. B. Hardeman, and they criticize every other preacher who dares to raise his voice. By your silence and by your failure to endorse and stand by, what are you doing? You are lending your influence to the side of error as

certain as God reigns, and here we are tonight. It behooves every child of God to uphold the hands of him who's holding aloft the banner of Christ and to see to it that error shall not prevail upon this earth. Therefore, let us contend, just as God's word declares, that we are in the kingdom tonight, de facto et acts, in fact and in actuality, and not simply de joke—by right.

Now brethren, the next time you find a sympathizer with premillennialism who says: "Oh, you don't understand it; we believe the kingdom's in existence," tell him you do understand that Christians are actually in the Kingdom of our Lord. I believe God's kingdom is actually in existence. I think that I am not in it by right; I am in it by actuality. I have literally, really, and actually been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, therefore I can raise my voice unto the King of kings, Lord of lords tonight and plead for his mercies. That's the doctrine. That's why much of the ado; that's why much of the criticisms; and that's why I do not aim to let it alone.

Friends, thirty-five years ago, when digression raised its head in Tennessee, brethren were troubled and the result has been a division of the body of Christ. I never saw one of that crowd in my life, back this, but he said: "Oh, I don't believe in all those things; I never mention it." No, except in privacy, they would slip around from house to house and get all the converts possible. This were brethren back this who said: "Don't ever mention it; let it alone." I know what happened. We did let the thing alone until many meetinghouses all over this country, built by loyal brethren, were literally stolen by that crowd, and after all that, we came to ourselves, and the fight has been on. Now, we are getting back in line and digression is on the wane. It is scarcely found in Tennessee, except in some of the larger cities.

Brethren, a similar fight is now on. This is a great menace threatening the Church of our Lord, and it begins within our own ranks. This are those that say: "Oh, don't fight it; don't say anything about it; let it alone." If let alone, its proponents will talk it and teach it, mostly from house to house. They will assume a very pious air and deceive many good men. Finally, the church of Christ will wake up to find the old landmarks removed and the congregations of our land wholly absorbed in such an error as has not crept over the land since the generation gone by. I am wonderfully in earnest about matters of this kind. I believe with all the power of my being that the kingdom of God is in existence. I think when John said: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," he meant exactly that, and when Christ told the disciples to pray "thy kingdom come," it was near enough for him to encourage them to look for its approach. And when he said to the disciples further: "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom," it was not this then, but later he said: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine any more until I drink it anew with you in the kingdom of God," or "It is so near, brethren, that the next time we observe this, the kingdom of God will have appeared." Then further, this are "some of you" right here standing, now living, "who will not taste death until you see the kingdom of God come in power," not simply by right, but actually and genuinely, and it will surely come within the lifetime of some of you brethren. Well, how long ago has that been? Nineteen hundred years. Some say the kingdom hasn't come; I wonder where those old brethren are. You talk about Methuselah's being an old gentleman at 969. If that theory be correct, and some of those standing this were not to taste death until they see it, and it hasn't yet come, they could say to a young fellow like Methuselah: "Son, how are you coming along? When you get to be a man, 1900 years old, like we are, you'll know something." Now, isn't that a ridiculous set-up? And how any sensible brother in the church of our Lord can stand for it, and apologize for it, and criticize me for telling the truth about it, is beyond my comprehension. And

brethren, I am appealing unto you, what do you hope to gain by the encouraging of things like that? You say you don't believe it, and yet you think I ought to say nothing about it. I like some of these brethren. They are fine men, and very devout. Yea, they are the most pious to be found. They always manifest a sweet Spirit. But I know plenty of Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and Lutherans who are just as good moral men, just as good neighbors, as charitable, as philanthropic, as prayerful, and as pious as any premillennialist dare to be upon this earth. Question: Does that make Methodism right, and shall I apologize for it on the ground that they are good men? I know Baptist preachers who are wonderfully fine men. Can't I recognize and distinguish between an upright gentleman and a false doctrine? Shall I compromise God's word because I think the fellow sponsoring error is a good man morally? Not on your life. Now, that's the trouble with us tonight. This are brethren who will allow their friendship and their sympathy to cause them to put the soft pedal on error and compromise God's truth. I don't want to appear at the judgment bar of God under such a white-wash and a camouflage, and a compromising air.

Friends, I said to you some nights ago that the purpose of this meeting was not, primarily, to convert sinners, but it was for the purpose of trying to heal the breaches that are among us, to encourage brethren to put aside personal feelings, personal sympathy, personal friendship, and let God's truth override any kind of personal relationship whatsoever. I have said to you from this platform a number of times that I have nothing unkind to say about any living man. I have, I believe, no hatred in my heart toward any soul that lives on God's earth. So far as I know, this's not a man but to him I'd lend a helping hand if I could. I have for years tried to impress and to transmit to our student body the sentiment of Alice and Phoebe Carey, who said: "We make it an invariable rule to treat every person with perfect civility, no matter what garb he wears or what infirmity he bears." Friends, that's the sentiment; that's the very genius of the Christian religion. But when it comes to the gospel of Christ and the truth of God Almighty, no man ought to come between me and the performance of duty. If I turn back to bury my dead father, Christ said: Sir, "you are not fit for the kingdom." If I turn back to bid farewell to my loved ones at home, I am unfit. What does Christ mean to say? This is absolutely nothing; this's no kind of a tie, personal, friendly, neighborly, blood relation, marital ties, or anything, that can stand between you and the performance of God's truth and the obligations that are resting upon you.

Well, friends, Daniel prophesied that in the days of the Roman kings, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom. Now mark it—if, as the proponents of premillennialism would declare, Mussolini is but the rise of the Roman Empire destined to sweep over the face of the earth and have kings, they would not be the same ones mentioned by Daniel. Daniel pictured directly down the line Babylon, MedoPersia, Macedonia, Rome. What Rome? Oh, not the Mussolini Rome, but the Rome that followed the footprints of the Macedonians. In the days of those Roman kings God would set up a kingdom. Well, 1900 years have gone by. Now suppose it were true that Mussolini is destined to become a world-wide ruler, and this should be a line of kings, and God should establish the kingdom, it would not be the same ones predicted by Daniel. But that's an extremely slim hope. I just want you to see one other thought, how wonderfully contradictory error can get, and yet folks will subscribe to it.

All of that crowd are talking about the "imminency" of the kingdom. What do you mean by that? That word means that the thing is near at hand, pending, just like a rock with the center of gravity almost beyond the support and just ready to fall at any minute. Now, that's the doctrine. The

Kingdom is likely to occur any minute, and yet, it cannot occur, say they, until Rome gets worldwide dominion. I quote R. H. Boll: "A great world empire must exist before transfer of dominion to Son of God." I just ask, if you brethren think that it is quite imminent that Mussolini is liable to become world-wide ruler between now and tomorrow morning. I don't think the thing is quite that imminent. That is but a sample of the foolishness connected with the guesses of premillennialists. But again, throughout the entire Bible from Creation down to the day of Pentecost, every prophecy and every statement regarding the kingdom points forward; the index finger points down the line, but it stops with the second chapter of Acts. You turn to the last chapter of Revelation and every statement you read regarding the kingdom points backward to the second chapter of Acts. Now, in this chapter, the place is revealed where God established His kingdom. In the first part of that chapter, God's Spirit had not yet come, but in the last part of the chapter, God was adding unto the church. Hence, between the first part and the last, that thing called the Church of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, was established upon this earth.

Well, note some other things. Paul said in Hebrews 3:12 : "Brethren, take heed lest this be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." To the Elders at Ephesus he said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost bath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he bath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Now that's bad, but here's something worse: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." And again: "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." Do not be shocked, therefore, and surprised that men are teaching error regarding the Kingdom. Paul told Timothy to "preach the word," but he also told him to "reprove and rebuke." It is as much the duty of every preacher to reprove and rebuke as it is to preach the word. Many brethren seem to think that no criticism should ever be offered against that which one considers error, but they are wrong in such a conception. Paul said to Timothy: "Them that sin, rebuke before all that others may also fear." It is pathetic to go into some churches and listen to the long string of announcements which require fifteen or twenty minutes, and then to hear this followed by a little sermonette made up of pretty phrases and smooth sentences which are absolutely void of real gospel truth. "The world seemingly wants a bowl of ice cream with a cherry on it, when in reality it needs a plate of beans with an onion on it." Such services are responsible for the indifference among the churches today. If you want a general revival of old-time religion and one that will stir up the brethren to greater determination, preach to them on the Great Commission, the first gospel sermon, the conversion of the Eunuch, etc., and follow such with real sermons on Christian living. Encourage brethren to stand four-square for that faith once for all delivered unto the saints. But this is enough for tonight. The hour has passed, and in conclusion I beg of you to take what has been said and study it, carefully and prayerfully. Be like the Bereans in that you search the scriptures daily to see whether or not the thing spoken be true. Should this be one or more in this audience who understands the will of the Lord and who is disposed in heart and in mind to do it, the invitation is now extended.

Chapter 94

4.12 - PREMILLENNIALISM

PREMILLENNIALISM My friends and brethren, in looking over this audience tonight, I have an idea that we have not fewer than 6,000 people assembled. I am tremendously impressed, not only with your presence, but with the significance of it in view of announcements made last night.

I want you to know that I feel, very keenly indeed, the responsibility that is mine, and I am praying God that, with the right Spirit prompting every statement, nothing but good may come from our mutual study of those things that now challenge our concern.

I am talking to you tonight, as stated, about premillennialism, and some things connected with it. I might just say to you that that word means the reign or a period of a thousand years with Jesus Christ coming back to this earth before that thousand years begins, and after that, matters as I shall state, take place. l The leading Spirit sponsoring this doctrine among the churches of Christ has been Brother R. H. Boll of Louisville, Kentucky. His teaching it among the people of God, has disturbed their peace and led to a number of things rather bitter in their nature and threatening to the unity of the body of Christ. But my friends and brethren, this matter, though considered by some of small moment and no importance whatsoever, except on the part of those who want to raise a fuss about things, cannot be confined to the church of the Lord, and only those make such statements, who have not studied the matter and really do not know just what is taught by the theory and the consequences that follow the same. In all denominations the same trouble exists, over this land. The Baptist church of Fort Worth, Texas, of Dallas, of Detroit, Michigan, and wheresoever J. Frank Norris, and his influences have gone, is disturbed over the teaching of premillennialism. It’s in the Methodist church to their hurt and to their sorrow. And right here in Nashville, I read in the Nashville Tennessean Sunday morning, of the Second Presbyterian church and of the trouble between the church and the preacher, Mr. Stroud, whom I do not know. But it seems that the church is trying to get rid of Mr. Stroud as their preacher, that they have preferred charges of various kinds against him, and in his statement of their trouble, he says one of the causes for the opposition is that he talks too much about premillennialism.

I mention all of that, friends, to show you that this theory, sponsored by a number of people, is affecting all religious bodies, everywhere. Now, I appeal to you, brethren, is a thing of that kind to be passed lightly by? Are we not of that type who have subscribed to the principle of investigating all matters, comparing them with the word of God, and making a careful study of all things? I assure you that, to me, it is an unpleasant task to talk about those things that cause differences, hard feelings, and ugly sayings among brethren. All of that is unfortunate. The only way on earth that I know how it may be possible to heal our breaches, and for us all to come together, is an open, frank, honest, and candid discussion of these things, and I appreciate the concern that you have about it, as evidenced by your presence tonight.

Now, as best I can, I want to state to you the theory of premillennialism, as I have been able to get it.

First, God Almighty promised Abraham that through his seed a great nation should exist upon the earth. Second, Palestine was to be their home and they should inherit it and inhabit it; and third, the Gentiles were to be blessed through Israel as a nation. Now, that's the original plan, in which this was no provision made for Gentiles except through the Jews as a nation. For the accomplishment of that purpose, God sent forth the prophets and the harbinger of Christ, announcing that He would establish a king" dom among men. Jesus Christ in company with John the Baptist, announced the same thing, and they broke the silence of the wilderness of Judea, by saying, "the kingdom of God is at hand." "The time spoken of by the prophet is fulfilled, and the kingdom is at hand," but the theory says God missed it, and Jesus Christ did not figure correctly. Why ? Well, when the time came, as spoken by God through the prophet and announced by John and Christ as at hand, the Jews said, "No sir, we will not accept the Christ," and hence, God was unwise in the proclamation of it; John the Baptist miscalculated affairs; and Jesus Christ did not understand that his preaching would be rejected and his purpose thwarted. Why? Because when the time came, the Jews practically said: "We know the voice of the prophets has heralded the coming of the kingdom; John the Baptist has announced it; and Jesus Christ has proclaimed it; but we are not going to have it." Therefore, they upset the plan of God and of Christ, and rejected him as king. Hence, the purpose of God was not carried out.

Now, I just want to stop and insert some parenthetical things. Friends, if God miscalculated the disposition of the Jews then, and if Christ missed it in saying the kingdom of God was at hand, due to the fact that the Jews did not prove ready, how can God know that the Jews might be ready the next time Christ comes? What assurance could this be that any time on earth would meet with the approval of the Jews? God might be disappointed again ! Well, with that program all upset, this was a readjustment. The theory suggests that when Jesus Christ found that he was rejected as king and could not set up the kingdom as he intended, he substituted for it, and established the church instead. Well, what for? Now mark it—that through the church, or what is called the gospel age, out of the Gentiles he might develop a ruling class. And when enough of the Gentiles are prepared for rulership, Christ will come back from heaven for his saints, and then both the living and the dead saints will rise and meet the Lord and go back to glory. That's the first resurrection, as the theory proclaims. When they get back this, the respective places over which the Gentiles will exercise rule on this earth, will be assigned. Now you get that. The marriage feast will be on, and every Gentile Christian during the church age that proves worthy, will be appointed a place. One fellow will be appointed mayor of Nashville, another chief-of-police of Knoxville, and so on down the line. In the meantime, the Jews will be gathered back to Jerusalem, the old service of the Jewish age will be re-established, and the temple will be rebuilt. Jesus Christ will be in preparation soon to occupy the throne, prior to which the Roman Empire, will have once again ruled the whole earth. Now, when all of that setting is complete, then, Christ will come back to this earth with his saints, destroy the Roman Empire and sit upon David's physical, literal throne. The Mosaic rites and ceremonies will all be continued, together with the burning of sacrifice, the observance of the Sabbath, and all things characteristic of the old law. All of this will continue for a thousand years, at the end of which time, the devil will be turned loose and deceive the nations, and the whole thing will end in a failure. Then the rest of the dead will be raised and judged.

Now, as best I have been able to gather, from quite an extensive bit of reading, that's the program of premillennialism. I just want to stop and ask, my friends and brethren, do you believe that or

not? With that program stated, I want to suggest some things further. That theory also says that God's promise to the Jews regarding their occupancy of Palestine has never yet been fulfilled. Well, I am disposed to read to you a number of passages from God's word right on that point, and I do that just to be careful about the matter, because I know this talk is being critically heard and observed. I thank God for the facilities for making it permanent, so that after I have gone from Nashville, this can be no misrepresentation of what Hardeman said on this night. In Joshua 1:1-18, God is encouraging Joshua to be strong and of good courage. He said: "This shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Now I am turning next to Joshua 21:1-45 and am reading from Joshua 21:43 : Hear it—"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land," wait a minute. Does that say the Lord will give? No. This is toward the close of Joshua's reign. Now then, Joshua said: "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein." Now what had God promised? That the land of Palestine should be theirs to possess. Joshua, before you died, what about it? Well, you've heard me read what he said. "And the Lord gave them the rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and this stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand." Now mark it—"This failed not ought"—now what does ought mean? Anything. "This failed not anything of all the good that God said he would do unto Joshua or unto the house of Israel, all of it came to pass." Well, what was the promise? That the seed of Abraham, with reference to the land promise, should occupy the land of Palestine. Well, Joshua, what do you say about it? Joshua said that's exactly what they did.

Well, I read the last part of Joshua 23:1-16, commencing with Joshua 23:14 : "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you." Now, I just want to raise the point to an honest man: Does the Bible say that God promised the land of Palestine to the Israelites ? It does. Well, who was left to see to its fulfillment? First, Moses; second, Joshua. Well, Joshua said at the close of his career, this had not failed one single thing which the Lord God had said regarding their possession of the land, but when they turned from God and began serving idols, they should quickly perish from off the land. Well, I read again, this time, from Jeremiah 25:1-38, commencing with Jeremiah 23:9 : "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them,"—this is a prediction of the Babylonian captivity—"and will make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Now

watch—"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." Now note—"And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations." This's the prophecy regarding their captivity.

Now, I'm reading from 2 Chronicles 36:1-23, "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years." Now note "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished." God appeared unto Cyrus and bade him write a decree that the Jews should go back unto the land of Palestine. Now, take the very next chapter, Ezra 1:1-11 : and you'll find that thing they did. Now then, you ask, why are they not this now? I turn to Hebrews 8:1-13 and this is this: "They continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Why is it, friends, that the Jews did not keep the land into which Joshua said he would place them at the command of God Almighty? Paul said the reason was that they continued not in God's covenant. Well, friends, observe; when a covenant, which is an agreement or contract, is made, both sides are bound to it so long as the terms are executed; but suppose one side fails and violates it, then what about it? That covenant is broken and the other party is under no obligation whatsoever. Now get it: because, they, the Jews, "continued not in my covenant I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Therefore, the Jews were lost to Palestine, because they failed to keep their part of the contract, and were scattered abroad upon the face of the entire land.

Now, it is declared that in the next phase the Jews are to be converted as a nation and, therefore, are to return to Palestine. Friends, may I say to you in all candor, this Bible does not teach that, and that thing is so clear that it seems to me this could be no possible misunderstanding. I beg your indulgence for I don't often read, but I am doing so tonight. This time from Romans the 11th chapter:

"Thou wilt say then, The branches," the Jews, "were broken off, that I," the Gentile, "might be grafted in." Well —; "because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches—" who is that? The Jews, "take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Then what's the next point? He tells just how the Gentiles got into the original vine, and that was by the process of being grafted in, and he said, therefore, if the Jews continue not in un belief, they also may be grafted in. Well, how? Just like the Gentiles. One individual after another. Not as a nation. Are the Gentiles all converted as a nation ? No Well, how is it? I am reading from Romans, in the gospel age. We are converted one by one. Well, is it possible for all of us to be saved? It is, if we submit to God's process of grafting.. Now Paul said, if the Jew does not continue in unbelief, he can be grafted into the promises of God just like a Gentile, "and so, all Israel shall be saved." What do you mean by that so ? That's not the conclusion, but so is an adverb, and means in this way all Israel shall be saved How? By being grafted in. That's the only hope for either Jew or Gentile. So that much of it.

Now then, friends, I want to talk to you tonight about the serious consequences of this premillennial theory, or Bollism, as sometimes it's called. And yet it's not peculiar to Brother R. H. Boll. It started in modern times by old William Miller, back in 1843, at the beginning of Adventism It was brought on down the line by Charles T. Russell, by Judge Rutherford, and others, and R. H. Boll is but in company with speculators.

But, let's think about the consequences of it. First of all, I am charging that the belief of a doctrine of that kind nullifies, makes void, the commission as given by Christ unto the apostles. Now, I think this is not a member of the church who does not know that Christ said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." I believe that you think that is binding upon all men. But, let me tell you friends, if the doctrine of premillennialism be true, that Commission does not and cannot apply to our Jewish friends. Someone asks why ? Well, I'll just tell you why, and let me say that I don't generally shoot until I can "see the whites of their eyes," and know what I'm talking about. I have here a book written by R. H. Boll under the title, "The Kingdom of God." All right, now on page 84, here's the statement: "Moreover Israel is not in this judgment. It is the nations that are here judged before the King, which term means the Gentiles, and always means nations as distinguished from Israel who is not among the nations." Now let's get it, Brother Boll, when you talk about nations, whom do you mean? "I don't mean Israel, they are excluded from the term, the nations, and are not incorporated in it." Now what does the Commission say? Go teach all nations. But Brother Boll says the Jews are not in that, therefore, where is authority from God's word tonight to preach the gospel to a Jew ? Friends, I speak candidly because of the intense earnestness. You know that Peter stood on Pentecost, after that Commission was given by Christ, and preached unto the Jews, but here is a declaration that says the Jews are not included in the nations—only the Gentiles. Then what? The Commission is nullified as it pertains to the Jew. And furthermore, this deponent saith not. Someone may say: You're misrepresenting. No, I'm not. That's what he says about it, that in the term Nations, the Jews are excluded. Well, to whom was the Commission? Go teach all nations! But the Jews are not in that. Well, all right, where is the Commission for the Jew? This is none according to this theory. Friends, what do you think about it? Someone says: I don't think this's anything in it. Well, this isn't for the Jew. If the theory be true, Christ treated them worse than Hitler will ever do.

Well, let me state another thing, friends, regarding this doctrine. It not only nullifies the Commission, but it makes the church of Christ absolutely an accident. Friends; Brother Boll, and other premillennialists, teach that the church is an accident, and not intended. Well, lots of folks are from Missouri, and I love to talk to them. I have here, R. H. Boll's magazine, the Word and Work March, 1938. All right, now you listen to what Brother Boll says right on that point. "If after all, God has solemnly promised and sworn to his people Israel that he does not fulfill his word in giving them the land of Palestine, but turns into a spiritual and Figurative fulfillment to a new spiritual contingent, called the church." Now what does he say the church is? A contingent. Now then, look at the definition of the word "contingent," and here's what it is. It means "that which might happen, that which is incidental, that which is accidental, that which comes by chance." Therefore, friends, you who have relied upon the promises found in the church of the Lord, are in a thing that God never had in mind, and if the Jews had accepted Christ and let him establish his kingdom when he did come, this would have never been a church. So, but for the rejection of the Jews, that contingent never would have existed upon this earth. I want to ask you if you believe that? Is that

church, bought with the blood of the Son of God, and filled with his Spirit, and crowned at last by his matchless glory, just an accident, or a contingent, and did it come by chance? Friends, is that your hope tonight of the eternal promise beyond? Well, I want you to listen—that's Brother R. H. Boll, and this's his magazine; I'm not giving it to you second-hand. Anybody here is at perfect liberty to come after service and say; "Hardeman, I want to see it myself." I'll be glad to let you see it.

Now again, in contrast with that, I want to read to you from the third chapter of Ephesians, commencing with verse eight; Paul said: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" Now Paul, what do you say about the church ? Paul said the church is according to God's eternal purpose. Brother Boll, what do you say about it? That it's a contingent, accident, that God never intended it. Friends, I am positively ashamed to have to make a statement of that kind. And if my brethren, before whom I have gone preaching the gospel of Christ as best I could, have decided that the blood-bought and heaven-born and worldwide institution called the church, is a mere accident, I don't know what to say further. If the preaching of God's truth regarding such does not bring my brethren to unity, and cause them to quit all that speculation, and theorizing, then I do not know what to do that our differences may be healed. Look at it—Brother Boll, what do you say about the church ? It's a contingent, accident. Paul, what do you say about it? It was according to God's eternal purpose from the foundation of the world. And you say, "Oh, that doesn't amount to anything." Yes it does. It destroys faith in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and robs us of our fondest hopes of a blissful crown because of our membership in the body of Christ. Now, I am appealing to brethren, without any feeling of a partisan; I am asking brethren; did you know that such is the doctrine of premillennialism? It destroys the commission to the Jews; it makes the church of the Lord Jesus Christ a mere accident, and an incident, and a matter of chance.

Well, that's not all. The doctrine of premillennialism denies, positively, Peter's statement on Pentecost, when he said: "This is the last days." Now let's see about that. According to the premillennialist theory, here we are in the church period. Well, when will the last days begin' After Jesus Christ comes back from heaven, sets up business in Palestine on old Mt. Moriah, and then begins to exercise authority. That will be the beginning of the last days. Now friends, 1900 years ago, Peter stood upon Pentecost after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them and said to that excited crowd: "These men are not drunk as you suppose, but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," namely, "it shall come to pass in the last days." Peter, what do you say about it? That was the beginning of the last days. Brethren, that was the establishment of the church. God says it's the last days. But, if the doctrine of premillennialism be true, then it's not the last days. Why? This's to be a period of a literal thousand years after the days called the last ones. Now, I just want to ask you if you believe it or not? I am appealing directly to my brethren, for whose benefit this meeting is held. Do you believe that we are in the last days?

Well, again, Hebrews 1:1, hear Paul, "God, who at sun dry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

Now do you believe that, or will you accept some man's speculative, theorizing, guessing conclusion ?

Brethren, I've preached enough to know this; I know when I drive home an argument. I know just what it takes to sell my brethren and to convince them. Whenever I can show them God's word, that's the end of the controversy. Now then, I've read to you what Peter said; this is the last days, Paul said; God has in these, not those that are yet to come, but in these last days, spoken by his Son. That's God's word and, unless we are wonderfully partisan' and are determined to have some new-fangled affair, that's the end of the controversy with us.

Now I just wonder, if this is an under-current and a question being raised to this effect: viz., Brother Hardeman, if Brother R. H. Boll, or some representative were present to answer, would you say all of that? Now, if you are really inquisitive about that, suppose you try and see. I am perfectly willing for you to find out to your own satisfaction.

Again, I want to suggest, my friends, another thing right along this line. The idea of premillennialism dethrones Jesus Christ, demotes him, takes him from God's right hand, where he's crowned King of kings, and Lord of all, and destroys the idea of his ruling as our King in fact. In Acts 2:1-47, which my brethren ought to know by memory: When the argument had been made by Peter regarding the resurrection, this is this: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David. He is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would raise up one to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ." Well, what about him? That Christ was raised up, to sit, now mark it—to sit, for the purpose of sitting, that he might sit, in order to sit. Why did God raise Christ, who is of the fleshly seed of David? To sit. To sit where? On his (David's) throne. Friends, I don't know how to argue with some folks. If this is the disposition to deny that, I cannot say that I am like the proverbial boy that ran over the calf, I don't know whether I've got anything fitten to say or not. Peter said: Brethren, David is not risen, his sepulcher is right here, but being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, therefore, seeing this, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that Christ's soul was not left in hell, nor did Christ's body see corruption. But note again as I read further right along that line: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now Peter, where is Christ ? He's raised from the dead. What for? To sit on David's throne. But premillennialists say, he's not sitting on David's throne. Well, what's he doing then? Don't you see that the resurrection could have been postponed until now. Where is Christ sitting? He was raised up to sit on David's throne. Peter said, this he is, Lord of lords and King of kings. And yet, I've got to come before you with a degree of embarrassment and say: "I have brethren who fly in the face of Peter and say, that's not so." Well, David said he shall sit upon his throne until his foes be made his footstool. Now listen at Paul's wonderful resurrection sermon, 1st Cor. 15, Christ must reign. Well, he's reigning, then. How long? "till he hath put all enemies under his feet." That's what the prophet said. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Jesus Christ is reigning at God's

right hand, and will reign until the last enemy shall be destroyed. Now then, premillennialists say that's not so. That he is not doing anything of the kind. Brother Boll says: "Jesus Christ is King, de jure et potentia, but not King, de facto et actu." That's wonderful, isn't it? Brother Boll, what do you mean by it? Of course, anybody that knows the Latin language knows what it means, but let's let him tell it. "Christ is king by right, but not in fact and in act.' Who said that ? The fellow that wrote this book. Brethren, what about it, then? Is Christ your king tonight? Brother Boll says he is not; he's only a king by right, but not in fact Well, all right, does he have a kingdom? Yes. How? By right, but not in fact. But Paul said: "God has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." How are we in the kingdom? Only by right, not in fact. So, if you think you are in the kingdom of God, Brother Boll said you are mistaken about it. You are in no such thing. You ought to be in this, but you are not; you have a right to be in this, but you are not. But I read again to you, and it but confirms the same thing. Now listen at this, Page 71, hear it—"so long as Satan's throne is on earth, Christ is not exercising the government." Well, is the devil's throne on earth? The same writer says it is. What about Christ? He's not ruling. Then who is your Lord, brethren, tonight, and whom are you serving? You say, I'm serving the Lord. No, no, he's not ruler; he's not exercising authority. He's not even king and doesn't even have a kingdom. Where are you—better put all At after it, to get the matter clear. Friends, that's the tragedy, and when I see what I know to be good brethren hold up their righteous hand, and say: "Oh, this's nothing to that; you brethren just want to cause trouble." I'm sorry to say it, brethren, but you simply don't know what you're talking about. Now, that's the plain facts about it. You haven't studied the matter; you haven't read all the speculation regarding it, and therefore, you have no right to criticize those that are exposing error of this kind. But it is characteristic of this cult to profess an extremely pious air, and to be negative on all questions, and not to try to expose any kind of an error, even out in the sectarian and denominational world. They can put their arms around folks in error and honey them up, and say: "Brother, kindly lead our prayer." Now that's the Spirit of it. This's the harm. It's the sacrifice, brethren, of the old landmarks. It's the giving way to the least resistance, and it's loving the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Well again, this theory, friends, also denies most positively, salvation to the Gentile world. Now, if I don't read that, I'll take down my sign and never again appear before a Nashville congregation. I am reading now from the 15th chapter of Acts. In that great Jerusalem council, after various ones had spoken, James said this: "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets. As it is written, after this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." Now what's going to happen? I am going to return and build again the tabernacle of David. What does the word tabernacle mean? Well, sometimes it means a tent, or a booth, or a house; again it means a descendant, posterity, those that are to come after. So what do we have in this connection? "I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down." Now with that, 2 Samuel 7:12 is perfectly harmonious: "And when thy days be fulfilled,"— this is talking about David—"and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." Now whose kingdom? That of the seed of David. Therefore, I will build again the tabernacle of David that is fallen down.

Wait just a minute, while I present a matter. Friends, the kingdom was established over Israel in 1095 B.C. Saul reigned for 40 years, and upon his death David took the throne, 1055. He reigned for 40 years, and then Solomon 40. This brings the time down to 975 B.C. At that time, the kingdom divided. Ten tribes went down to Bethel, after Jeroboam and two stayed at Jerusalem, with Rehoboam. These two were in the Davidic line; they were of the house or tabernacle of David, and his seed continued on down until 587 B.C., when Zedekiah, the last one that could trace his ancestry back to David, rebelled. Zedekiah was dethroned and the family of David went down and so remained for 600 years. Amos said; after this the sifting of the house of Israel, I will return and build again that family of David. No one of David's bloodline has been on the throne since the days of Zedekiah. But Christ is of the seed of David, and Peter said that God raised up Christ, of the loins of David to sit on his (David's) throne. After this, "I will return and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down." Now what for? Let's get the purport. Here it is, "That the residue," what does that word mean? Well, the other, the remainder. "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord." Consider seriously. Couldn't they seek after the Lord until the tabernacle of David was rebuilt? No sir. Why are you rebuilding the tabernacle of David? "That the residue of men might seek the Lord." What else? "And that the Gentiles might seek the Lord." Friends, we belong to the Gentile nation. We are sons of Noah through Japheth, and the Jews are sons of Noah through Shem, hence, we are Japhethites or Gentiles. Now then, James, what do you say? David's family as ruler is gone. This must be another of David's seed on the throne or else the Gentiles cannot seek the Lord. I insist, therefore, based upon God's word, if Jesus Christ is not on David's throne, this is not a Gentile on earth that has a shadow of a show of salvation. But let's pass to another passage. I am reading to you now Second Corinthians five, and verse 16, "Henceforth"— what does henceforth mean? From now on, and on, and on, and on. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Paul, what did you say? This was a time when we knew Jesus Christ after the flesh, but that time will never be again. Now look how premillennialists fly right in the face of that. They say: "Paul, you're mistaken; when he comes back and sets up business in Palestine, this he'll be in the flesh, exercising the functions of government and ruling with a sword in a bloody warfare." Don't you see that such flatly contradicts God's word? Paul said we will never know Christ after the flesh again, but the very heart of premillennialism is that Christ will come and reign in the flesh, and we'll know him in the flesh. Friends, it's a direct violation and contradiction of God's word. Notwithstanding such opposition to God's word, some deluded brethren think that kind of teaching amounts to nothing. Brethren, does error of that kind disturb the church? What do you think about it? And then again and finally, watch this picture: Premillennialists think they know just how all will be when Christ comes again. But John says: "Beloved, it cloth not yet appear what we shall be." Now John said that and he was the last to write. He said he did not know but premillennialists have heard from heaven since John did. They seem to know. John said: "it cloth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Friends, I thank God, that when the time shall come, I'll not look upon Christ as he was while traveling o'er Judean hills and across Samaritan plains; I'll not see him tired, footsore and weary; I'll not see him humiliated by a blood-thirsty crowd; I'll not see him as he was while on the tree of the cross suspended; nor yet in Gethsemane's garden praying with agony to the Father that all might pass: I'll not see him between the heavens and the earth as though rejected by both and fit for neither; but I'll see him as he is in a glorified state, having triumphed

over the powers of the Hadean world and now at God's right hand crowned. That's the picture, and with that I am perfectly content. If, after life's dream is over and the time comes for the ransomed to be gathered home, I can be like Christ as he is, at God's right hand exalted, that will be glory enough for me. I thank God for the exceeding great and precious promise therein contained. But I must close this talk tonight. Is this one, two, any number, who believe that the kingdom of God is in existence; that the church was really purchased with the blood of God's Son; that in the body of Christ, this is salvation and forgiveness of sins? If such this be, the invitation is once again gladly tendered while we stand and sing the song selected.

Chapter 95

4.13 - HOW GOD SPEAKS TO MAN

HOW GOD SPEAKS TO MAN A fine audience like this, assembled from time to time, gives so much encouragement and enthusiasm as to make us resolve to carry on.

Far more than I am able to express it, do I personally appreciate that disposition on the part of so many men and women to long for and to study Bible truths that challenge our concern. Always on occasions like this, where good is being accomplished and where sentiment is aroused, this are some characters of very small caliber that would like to be galvanized into respectability. They make every effort to gain attention. Young people, if they don't mind, are disposed to get too smart too soon. Some of them have never learned that "while larger ships may venture more; little boats should stay near shore." In the Gospel Advocate of this week this is a very fine article. I want to commend it to you. It's written by Brother F. B. Srygley. The article quotes from R. H. Boll on "What's It's All About," and then proceeds to expose the discrepancies, the deception, and the contradictions. I want to urge you to subscribe for the Gospel Advocate, and tell them to give you this week's issue that you may see a live topic discussed.

Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, that I preach the truth. Of that I have not, of course, a shadow of a doubt. I am exceeding careful in making statements, especially, when some other doctrine is discussed, but after I have made them, I want you to know this; I stand four-square for the defense of the truth, as I conceive it, against the lawful claims of all persons whomsoever. And that's enough to say.

I am reading to you tonight the first verse of Hebrews one. I bid you note the sentiment as expressed by the writer, supposedly Paul. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Then he continues with an exaltation of that Son far above all and any who might have gone before.

Now the beauty of preaching, as I see it, is its absolute simplicity, and I want you to get just what's said, analyze it, and you'll appreciate it all the more. That verse declares that God, at sundry, or at different times, spake in time past unto their fathers, and he did it in divers, or various manners. It wasn't always the same, but varied as circumstances and occasions demanded. But be it remembered that when God has ever wanted to transmit His will to man, He has not done it in some vague, mysterious way, but He has spoken unto man, and in the long, long ago, it was by or through the prophets. But in these last days, He is speaking "to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things." First of all, friends, we ought to rejoice because we are privileged to live in the last days, where God is not speaking in divers and various manners, but rather speaking unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Now through that kind of an exalted character we are privileged to hear God tonight in these the last days, the gospel age. Be it remembered, friends, that after God had created man, He placed him in the garden, with

but one prohibition round about him. To that, man proved unfaithful, and in order to uphold the dignity of high heaven and the sovereignty of God Almighty, something had to be done. God, therefore, drove man out and separated him from the tree that perpetuated his existence, and made him grope his way down the darkened aisles of the future, where this's yet not one star to cast its light upon the distant horizon. But, notwithstanding his being driven out, God loved him still and went about the inauguration of a system of religion suited to man and at the same time commensurate with Heaven's will and the Father's dignity. Well, the families were few, the human race was in its infancy, and God adopted a unit around which all things else centered, and that was the head of the family. Hence, he spake unto the father, and through the father, expected his will to be transmitted to the children. Now, very correctly, that has been designated a government of the father, hence, Patriarchy.

Now, be it remembered, friends, that in that kindergarten department man had no use for a book; as yet he had to be taught in divers manners. Therefore, you ought to appreciate and understand the fact that 2500 years in the history of the human family went by, during which time, this was not a line from high heaven penned to mortal man. This wasn't any Bible; this wasn't anything in a permanent form. How was God dealing with him? Just like a good teacher deals with a kindergarten department. It was by means of pictures, and of demonstrations, and concrete examples. Now it took 2500 years for God to get the human family prepared to receive a textbook.

Now think of some other matters. The revelation of God to man was a gradual affair, and it had to be that way for him to appreciate it. The obligations placed upon men were given one at a time, as they were able to receive them. Hence, you may commence with the first pair in Paradise and descend the stream for ten generations and you will find only one thing that God ever commanded man to do as an act of service or worship, and that was the offering of animal sacrifice, which so far as the definite record is concerned, dates back to the first pair born on this earth. I know good and well that God had commanded such an offering to be-made, and I'm not stopping to go through with the whole affair, but Paul said, that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Therefore, since faith comes by hearing, God had spoken. Now whether he had spoken direct to Abel about that or whether he had spoken unto the father, Adam, respecting it, I am not absolutely certain. This is a suspicion, and I offer it only as a suggestion, that perhaps Adam and Eve offered animal sacrifice before Cain was born. Now if you ask where is this ground for any thought along that line, I'd suggest this. The Bible says in Genesis 3:21 that after Adam sinned, God made for them aprons or coats out of the skins of animals. Well, I stop and raise the point: What use had they for animal skin? They were not allowed to eat flesh and yet, this they had the skins of animals, and the suspicion is not lacking, that they had offered sacrifices and had transmitted that very thought unto their sons, according to the system of God speaking to the father and in turn, the father committing the same unto the son. But be that as it may, that's the first thing that God demanded as an act of worship. Hence, he outlined exactly how that thing should be, and early in the morning of time taught us in a very definite concrete manner through Cain, as an example, that man can't substitute for God's word. You can't do something else and think that will meet with Divine approval. If thou doest well, Cain, all is well; if not, sin lieth at the door, knocking ready to come in. That's the principle this involved.

Now then, let's pass down the line. You may commence with Adam and go on with Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah, ten long generations—and

what revelation is made for man? None, other than that of animal sacrifice. But with the passing of those generations, wickedness began to multiply upon the earth and a state of almost total depravity prevailed. Finally, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil and that continually. And then God decreed and announced, in the days of Noah, that everything that lives upon the face of the earth in whose nostrils is the breath of life should be destroyed and wiped from the face of this earth. This was the decree regarding the destruction brought about by that wonderful flood, which submerged the highest hill and over-topped the loftiest mountain.

Well, after Noah had prepared the ark as God had directed and had been piloted across that boundless ocean untouched by a single shore, this started out afresh, Noah and his wife, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives— eight souls saved from the destruction and saved by means of water. Well, how? Oh, back before the flood they were tormented and vexed with wickedness and vice on every hand. Now then, by means of the flood, they were transferred from an old sin-cursed world into a new world purified by the great baptismal flood. After this, God commanded them exactly as he had Adam, "multiply and replenish the earth."

Now note, ten generations more are born before anything else comes to pass, and here they are: After Noah, then Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abraham. Now we're ten generations from Noah and we may ask, what next? God speaks unto Abraham, He calls him out and establishes the covenant of circumcision, which was the placing of a physical mark on every male born in Abraham's house, and purchased with his money. Time rolls on; they are true to the circumcision covenant and likewise to the promise made concerning the land, and after a while, that posterity down through Isaac, Jacob, and his sons, drifts into the land of Egypt. This they multiply until the number becomes six hundred thousand men, beside the women and children. In Egypt they were made to serve with rigour until finally, God looked upon them and heard their murmuring, and saw their wonderful burdens. He set about to lead them out of the land of Egypt, in which they had been captives. This brought them across the Red Sea, and in about fifty days after leaving Rameses, they were at Mount Sinai. They have outgrown the family idea, and now they're big enough and prominent enough to become a great nation, hence, watch the development. They are now ready to receive permanent instructions and therefore, for them God wrote the Constitution upon both sides of two tables of stone, and then He told Moses to write out a book of the Covenant.

Think again. Under that first system, every father was a priest unto God; wherever he chanced to go, God gave him the right to stop and build an altar and this offer a sacrifice unto Jehovah. Hence, Abraham came into the land of Canaan, stopped first at old Shechem and built an altar. He then went on south to Bethel and did likewise. That was the order. Through the father the family approached the throne of God. That system was suited to their nature. They were wandering, nomadic in their dis- position. Now God fitted that system of religion to their manner of life, and wherever they went, they could worship God with absolute assurance. The father was the priest and he could build an altar anywhere, and worship God acceptably. But after they had come out of Egyptian bondage and gone on to Mt. Sinai, they stayed this for an entire year, and I want you to note what all was happening. God was a God of system, "all things were to be done decently and in order." During their stay at Mt. Sinai four things were done: first, God gave the law, the decalogue; second, this was the worship of the golden calf and the punishment for the same; third,

this was the building of God's tabernacle, a house of gold upon a foundation of silver; and fourth, they numbered and organized, ready to march on toward the land that flowed with milk and honey. An entire new system has been set up and we inquire, what is it now? Instead of its being a family affair, it's now a National Religion. Instead of God speaking in divers ways and on various occasions, He now is speaking through His written word. They were to assemble time after time and hear the word of the Lord, which they gladly did. Not only that, but instead of having their altars builded just anywhere, it must now be in front of the tabernacle and no where else could they offer a sacrifice acceptable. Watch another change. Instead of each father's having the right to worship God by offering sacrifice, this must be a man of the tribe of Levi and of the house of Aaron. None other could approach the throne of God to offer a sacrifice. Can't you see a wonderful change and transition in matters and the unfolding and development of God's plan? Friends, that was a law given unto the sons of Abraham and to nobody else. I regret that I feel it necessary to speak of another thing.

It is strange to me that intelligent people imagine that that law, in some of its phases, is applicable unto us tonight. This isn't any excuse for making a blunder of that kind. Let me say to you that the law of Moses has been abrogated for nearly 2000 years, but if it were in full force and effect tonight, it would not apply, in any of its provision, to us. Now why? Because it was never given unto anybody except the sons of Abraham, of whom we are not.

Now, may I just call your attention to this, in order to provoke you to think earnestly? Lots of people are interested in tracing back their family history. I never have been very much sold on a matter of that kind. I'm not especially interested in my ancestors. I just know that if I were to commence and go up that family tree, I wouldn't get far until I'd strike a limb that ought to have been sprayed a long time ago, and so I let it alone. But, to make the point that I intended, I want to say this: after the flood, this were three sons of Noah, from whom the entire human family sprang. Here they are: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Would you be surprised and shocked if I were to ask you of which son you came? Are you a Japhethite, or a Shemite, or a Hamite? Now, let me tell you. I think this is about as intelligent an audience as usually gathers. I doubt if many of you know from which son of Noah you sprang, and yet, that's very important. Let me trace down just a minute: Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, NAHOR, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and then Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and on down the line of those who went down to Egypt. From whom do they descend ? From Noah, through Shem. Well, what's our line of descent ? Without going into the matter further, I want to say to you that the best evidence on earth is this: you and I get back to Noah through Japheth. Hence, we are not related to the others, except wonderfully far-distant cousins. Now then, who are the Shemites? They are not our kind. Who went down into Egypt? Sons of Shem. Who came up out of Egypt? Sons of Shem. To whom did God give the law? Unto the sons of Shem. Therefore, our ancestors were never a part of it, nor were they incorporated in it. It is inexcusable for a man to claim that any part of that law was given unto other than the sons of Shem. It did not apply to a son of either Ham or of Japheth. A knowledge of God's Book and a genuine appreciation of it depends upon a correct analysis of matters at the beginning. One must recognize its divisions and dispensations. Now, that law emanating from Mt. Sinai, which applied to the Jews, lasted for 1500 years. I raise with you this point: under what was the rest of the world worshipping during the existence of the law which applied to the sons of Abraham? Were all the sons of Japheth and of Ham left out? Was this no way by which they could worship God while the

Jews were gathered about the tabernacle? The giving of the law at Sinai to the sons of Abraham does not necessarily, declare that this was no system by which the rest of the world could worship. How do you know that Patriarchy ceased until we reach the house of Cornelius? God, by the death of Christ, was to make of the twain one new man. The law of Moses lasted 1500 years and during that time the prophets stood upon the hilltops of Israel and pictured the coming of the Christ. John the Baptist came during that time, and it was during the law of Moses that Jesus Christ came and preached the coming of the kingdom. It was under the law that not only Christ Jesus our Lord lived, but during the law of Moses, he suffered and sorrowed and ultimately bled and died, and on the tree of the cross he said: "Father, it is finished." Well, what's finished? That thing that I came to fulfill. What was it? Turn back to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5: 17, Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Remember on the cross, he said, "Father, it is finished." What is finished? The law and the prophets pertaining unto me. If that be true, friends, and true it is, what about the idea then of claiming those same prophecies as yet unfulfilled? Christ said, on the morning when he walked with the disciples: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you"—now mark it—"how that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Think about it a minute. Lord, what are you saying? All things written in the law and all things written in the prophets have been fulfilled. What about our premillennial friends? They say, "Lord you never made a greater mistake in all of your life; things concerning you have not begun to be fulfilled yet." Friends, that doctrine of premillennialism is contrary to God's word at almost every angle and from every point. Christ said the law is fulfilled. Paul said that he blotted it out; that he took it out of the way; that he nailed it to the cross and that he gave unto us a better covenant founded upon better promises. Can't we thank God for that? "For," said Paul, "if that first covenant had been faultless, no place should have been sought for the second." But finding fault with that one, he said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Well, how is it, Paul? "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers." When? "In the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." Why? "Because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with them, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their minds." Well, where is the old one? On tables of stone, but now I will put "it in their minds and write it in their hearts. I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more." What about the other ? In those sacrifices this is remembrance made again of sin every year. Why? Because it was not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats, which they offered, to take away sin, but unto this, their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Friends, that's the end of the national system. And then what? Beginning first with a family where the father is the priest, he offered sacrifices 2500 years. Then came the inauguration of a national system at shaking Sinai, destined to last for the next 1500 years, and after that, when the fullness of time was come, Jesus Christ was born upon this earth. He lived thirty and three years. He came to break down the middle wall or partition that had stood between Jews and

Gentiles for, lo, these 1500 years, and "that he might make in himself out of the twain, the two nations, one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace unto you who are afar off, and also unto you that are nigh." Therefore, you Gentiles "are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." Again Paul said: "Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end." And what do premillennialists teach? That the church will end when the next age begins. But God said, "Unto him be glory in the church throughout all ages; world without end." My friends, don't insult my intelligence by saying that the church is incidental, accidental, a contingent, and will cease to be when the kingdom shall have come, not only de jure, but de facto, and actu. Brethren, you ought to know that the church was from the beginning, according to God's eternal purpose. Paul so declares in Ephesians 3.

Conscious of the fact that the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations have passed, we now have a world-wide, heaven-born, blood-bought institution through which the wisdom of God is to be made known unto all the world. Hence, in anticipation of its being fully established, Jesus said to those disciples who were to become its charter members, all power in heaven and in earth is mine, not de jure, not simply by right, but as a matter of fact. I am on David's throne, not only by right, but also by actuality. "Go, therefore, and teach all nations." Friends, no such a declaration had ever been made, from the morning of time until now. Even John the Baptist preached only to the Jews. In the personal ministry of our Lord, he said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But after the tragic death of the cross, the burial in a borrowed tomb, and the triumphant resurrection over the powers of the Hadean world, Christ came forth and said for the first time: "Preach the gospel unto every creature." Friends, that's where we are tonight, and I rejoice together with you, and thank high heaven, that we are not under the system of our fathers, nor are we under the system of Levitical priesthood, but we are under Christ Jesus our Lord, who is at God's right hand exalted, crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords, and that he is really and actually exercising the power and sovereignty of a ruler. Christ not only said: "Go preach the gospel to every creature," but he added the terms of salvation. "He shall be saved." Now, suppose Christ had put it just that way, unmodified? Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, "he shall be saved." Well, Christ did say that, but he limited that to a certain kind of he. "He shall be saved!" Lord, what he? Just any he? No, not that. Well, what he now are you declaring salvation unto? Of what he do you predicate salvation? "He shall be saved!" What he' Now mark it, Lord, did you say he that believes, shall be saved ? No. Did you say he that is baptized shall be saved ? No. Well, what did you say then? I said, it's the "he that believeth and is baptized." What about him, Lord? That "he shall be saved." Friends, you tell me that I can't understand that? I want to tell you and it may be a shock to you. I could not misunderstand it to save my life, even with expert help. I just couldn't misunderstand that. What did the Lord say ? "He that believeth and is baptized"—he that does two things. Lord, were you talking about an innocent babe? No. All untaught heathen? No. An unfortunate imbecile? No. Then, Lord, whom are you talking about? "I'm talking about a certain he who believes and is baptized." What do you say about him, Lord? "That man shall be saved." "He that believeth," number one, "and is baptized," number two, "shall be saved," number three. Friends, look at it honestly, candidly, seriously, soberly: where did God put baptism, before or after salvation? Did the Lord put salvation before or

after baptism? If this's anybody here who can't understand that, I'd be afraid to let him run loose in Nashville. The Lord said belief plus baptism equal salvation. Man says, belief minus baptism equals salvation. Now, which way do you believe it, as the Lord put it or as man puts it? This are some who may think such issues are dead and ought not to be preached. They think we should go on. God knows we ought to get back this where the truth is. You can't insult God's word by reflecting upon it, with impunity. Jesus Christ, in his farewell message, in his final doxology, and valedictory to mankind, said to those disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The soul that believes it and is baptized stands upon the promises of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Friends, I must meet these issues on the plains of eternal judgment. I'm not afraid to appear and answer for this preaching. I have preached what the Bible says and that's all we know about it. I am appealing, therefore, to those who honor me with their presence and lend patient, polite, and courteous attention, to do just what Jesus said. We'd better accept the terms by Him laid down, and stand upon His everlasting promise. It is a wonderful privilege to preach the gospel; it is grand to believe it; it is glorious to obey it. The invitation is yours while we sing.

4.14 - THE FIRST SERMON UNDER THE COMMISSION

THE FIRST SERMON UNDER THE COMMISSION

I know of nothing, my friends, more gratifying than the continued presence of this company which is made up, practically, of the same people night after night. And, your presence, I repeat, is the greatest encouragement that could be given. This meeting, as has been said before, had a definite object in view. I tried to state that at the first service. Carrying out that objective, every service has had its bearing upon it.

I want, before it closes, to present some of the old-time, simple gospel stories, so familiar to all of you people who chance to be with us from time to time.

Tonight, I am talking about the first Gospel Sermon ever preached in the name of the risen Lord. I recognize the fact that, to many of you older brethren, this is exceeding familiar ground. I'll have nothing new to reveal to you, but just bear in mind, this was a time when you and I did not know it, due to the lack of opportunity. This are possibly hundreds of people in our hearing tonight, and on various nights, who likewise have not been blessed with the privilege of hearing these elementary matters discussed, and that's the reason for the repetition of these old-line talks. In harmony with that outline of last night, be it remembered, that I reviewed God's dealings with man from the very beginning. He saw His plan unfolded and developed through the different ages, until the fullness of time was come, when Jesus Christ was born upon the earth. He lived a third of a century; walked among men; and left us an example that we should follow in His steps. After the tragic scene of the cross, He came forth triumphant o'er the powers of the dead and br ought life and immortality to light, and then, for the first time in all the history of the world, this was the glad announcement that the gospel was to be preached unto every creature on this earth.

I want you to think just a moment how simple that matter is as planned by God, executed by Christ, and revealed by the Holy Spirit. God drafted the plan of human redemption. When all was complete, He transmitted that blue print to his Son, with direct specifications to come to this earth and carry out that which the Father had planned. And then the Holy Spirit stepped in with his particular work and made known what God had planned, and what Jesus Christ had executed. Hence, the work of the three, and yet, all of them are one. Of course, you believe that God's plan was adequate for the purpose intended. You would not think of asking Jehovah to draft another scheme of redemption, but with what He has done, those who believe the Bible are satisfied. You wouldn't think of asking Jesus Christ to leave heaven again, and come to Palestine to carry out the Father's will and to suffer, sorrow, bleed, and die once again for a lost, a ruined, and a recreant race of mankind. Why? You believe that he did that and tasted death for every man. Then, my friends, when the Holy Spirit comes to consummate the work of redemption, and has finished his revelation to man, and closed the record, it's an expression of a lack of faith for any man to pray God's Spirit to make known to us any other than that which already has been revealed. What we need, therefore, is to study God's plan, Christ's execution, and the Holy Spirit's revelation. So, when Christ gave the great world-wide commission to the apostles, to teach all nations and to

preach the gospel to every creature, he said to them: Go to Jerusalem and this wait until ye be endued with power from on high. Why that? Simply because of this: the message that you are to deliver to mortal man is fraught with such momentous importance, that I do not want to leave it to you unaided, but wait till power comes upon you, and then it'll not be you that speaks, but God's Spirit that speaks through you. Therefore, wait in the city of Jerusalem. Thither they went and with them we are, tonight, ready to begin the execution of that Great Commission but recently received.

I propose the following method of studying this first sermon: namely, I want to find out, first, the time of it; I'd like to know next the character of the audience assembled; then I want to study who the preacher was; and next, I want to analyze that sermon thoroughly, and then, after it's proclaimed, I ask what the effect was, and what the further results that followed? Now, can you think of any other vital topic that ought to be included in an investigation of this kind? I think those cover it, and to them I address myself tonight.

I am raising a point: when was this first sermon delivered to mortal man? The record says: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come." That's the time. It's the first Pentecost, of course, after the resurrection of our Lord. Now Bible students remember that Pentecost was one of the three annual feasts of the Jews; that it always came on the first day of the week. This never was a Pentecost on Monday, nor on Thursday, but always on what we call Sunday, the first day of the week. This Pentecost, especially, was the time of many prophecies, and the inauguration of various things this came to pass. It's the day when God's Spirit was to come; it's the time when Jesus Christ was to be crowned at God's right hand; it's the time when the administration of our Lord was to begin upon this earth; it's the time when the church of the Lord, or the Kingdom of God, was established upon this earth. Hence, it was a wonderfully memorable occasion. Thus, we are at Jerusalem, according to God's announcement, on the first day of the week, around 9 o'clock in the morning. Well, with that answered, note the next.

What kind of an audience was here assembled? Here is what the Bible says: "This were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Now, we read that carelessly, and it makes not much of an impression, but, notice it, where did you ever see or hear of an audience like that? You've been in big crowds where multiplied throngs of people came together, but you've never seen an audience wherein this were devout men, representing every nation under heaven. I've preached to big crowds right here in Nashville, many times this auditorium has been packed to its capacity, but we've never had a crowd like that. We've had perhaps various nationalities, but not all of them assembled, and furthermore, our crowd has not always been made up of men as devout as they might have been. But here is a select crowd of honest, upright men devoted to religious matters, and they had gathered from every nation under heaven to attend this Jewish feast of Pentecost. I know that this are brethren who sometimes visit in Nashville and, while here on some other business, they might drop in to church. Friends, that wasn't the character of the audience this assembled. They went this for one definite purpose, and that was to worship God Almighty. Hence, they were men devoted and they were this out of every nation under heaven. Then the writer of the book of Acts enumerates fifteen different nationalities, and if you'll draw upon your memory with reference to geography, I want you to see the countries. From away up yonder northeast of the lands of the Bible, around about the Caspian Sea, this were representatives; then sweeping on down toward the Persian Gulf, and up the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates, you'll find men from this. Passing across the great Wilderness of Wandering into the

country of Africa, you'll observe representatives from parts of Libya about Cyrene, and on west as far as Rome, this were strangers, Jews and proselytes. That's the most wonderful audience of which I have ever read, and it is so fitting, for Christ had said: "Go teach all nations." That's the fine audience thus assembled.

Now, watch the next point. I am asking, who was the preacher? Just naturally, you would center upon Peter. Why? Because Christ had said to him, I'm going to give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and, therefore, it'll be your task to inject the key, turn the lock, open wide the door, and bid characters to enter in. Peter is the preacher. But it is not the Peter who wavered; it's not the Peter who followed afar off; it's not the Peter who denied the Christ and boasted of what others might do, but he never would. That's not he, but it is Peter as a new man, filled with the Spirit of God, who stood like a stone wall, with powers from on high granted unto him. It was not Peter speaking but the Holy Spirit using him as a medium through which the truth of God was to be proclaimed. That's the preacher of the occasion.

Well, you note the next point, the sermon that was delivered. But be it remembered, that before Peter could get their ears, gain their attention, and begin that address, this were certain difficulties that had to be cleared away. When the noise from heaven was sounded abroad, as the result of the Holy Spirit's coming, and filling all the house wherein they were sitting, the people were all in confusion. The Bible says "the multitude came together, and were confounded," they marveled, they were amazed, they were in doubt, saying one to another, what does all this mean, how is it, this here we are listening to every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Now, to them, that was a real problem. They understood it not, and therefore, they were bothered, confounded, confused, amazed, and wondered, how can these things be? But did you ever note, that in any kind of a crowd, this are always some smart enough to explain almost anything? So, some mockingly said: all these men are drunken. "These men are drunken," "they are filled with new wine"; and for that reason, all of this amazement, and confusion. Well, when Peter got their ears, he lifted up his voice, and said: "Ye men of Israel, these men are not drunken as ye suppose." Well, why? "It is but the third hour of the day." Now, that's Peter's explanation in refutation of their charge that these men are drunken. "It's but the third hour of the day." I am not sure that I understand all about that. I don't know whether it was just simply contrary to their custom to get drunk before nine o'clock in the morning, or whether some other explanation is due. I just know that that wouldn't hold good here in Nashville, or in West Tennessee; we've got stuff that will make a fellow drunk before nine o'clock. But, be that as it may, Peter's statement that they are not drunken because it was the third hour of the day, was perfectly satisfactory to that crowd. They argued it no more. Now, Peter, if that's not the explanation, what is it? Peter appealed to them through their Old Testament, the scriptures which they were forced to believe. He said to them: these are not drunken, but here is the explanation: This is the fulfillment of that which was spoken by our Jewish prophet Joel, namely, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." While Peter, therefore, unfolded Joel's prophecy the audience regained their reason and were soon ready to hear what further Peter had to say. Now then, with explanations having been made and with their ears tuned, Peter began: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Now that is rather lengthy, but it is the statement of one proposition. Now what is it? You know that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is a God-approved man, and the proof is,

the performance of miracles, wonders, and signs that he's done right in your midst. You know it. Now Peter never did refer to that again. He simply stated that proposition and clinched it by saying, you know it. Well, all right, what's the second one? "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Now, that's the second proposition laid down by Peter. All of this is according to the foreknowledge of God, and our Jewish scriptures abound in statements to that one effect, that God has foreordained and according to his foreknowledge, Jesus Christ was thus to be. Well, now what's the third one?

Here it is: "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." That's the third statement. Now, I just want to ask you, do you think that needed argument? This they were, who a little more than fifty days before, had seen Jesus Christ on the cross, and had said to old Governor Pilate: "Crucify Him, Crucify Him; away with Him." Well, that didn't need any argument. Nobody on earth knew that any better than did they. Hence, the mere recitation of it was sufficient.

Well, what's the next statement? "God bath raised him from the dead. It was not possible that death should hold him." Here we have a model sermon outline. First, the introduction, including the clearing away of all misunderstanding, and preparing the audience for the reception of the more sober and more solemn declaration. Then, step by step, this was the statement of his four propositions.

Now, let's get them again. First: Jesus of Nazareth who went among you, is approved of God by the performance of miracles, wonders, and signs, which he did in our midst, and you know it. Next, what is number two ? That he was delivered according to the foreknowledge of God. And again, what is number three? You have crucified him by wicked hands, and they are right now dripping in the innocent blood of the spotless Son of God. Finally, what is the fourth one? God has raised him from the dead.

Now friends, I want to submit to you this simple thought, and I think all of us ought to get some lesson from it. Sometimes we are in the habit, as preachers, of stating a thing that everybody knows, and which nobody denies, and yet we'll argue that point for fifteen minutes. Now, all such ought to be eliminated, and here is a fine example. Peter never argued the fact that Jesus is God-approved. He said, you men know that. Neither did he stop to argue that Christ was delivered according to the foreknowledge of God. He simply stated the fact.

Well, what's the next point? You have crucified him by the hands of lawless men. Now, why talk five minutes on that? Anybody doubt it? Nobody knew it better than did that crowd. Therefore, Peter passed it by and he said, God has raised him from the dead. Now, that's the only point among the four that Peter's crowd denied. They were bound to accept three of the propositions, and hence, he spent no time in arguing matters of that sort, but he devoted his time to the proposition that needed support, and that was the resurrection from the dead. Now, may I submit to you that Peter adduced three arguments in behalf of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and here they are: I read from Acts the second chapter: "Whom God bath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." I want you to note how skillful and how accurate Peter's argument is. It wouldn't do for him to turn to some Gentile and introduce him as authority. So he goes right back to that crowd's own prophet David, whom they recognized, in whom they had confidence, and whose testimony they must accept. Peter said, you killed the Christ and God has raised him from the dead. You deny it but that's the thing

I’m going to prove to you, and I’ll commence with our own prophet David. Hear him: "David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer shine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." Now that’s what David said. He declared that somebody was going to die, but that his soul was not to be left in hell, and that his flesh would not see corruption. Now they were bound to admit that David said that.

Now, watch Peter’s comment: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." Possibly Peter pointed out exactly the spot where David’s body was lying. David "therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." Christ’s soul was not left in Hades and the body of Christ did not see corruption. That’s Peter’s argument. He said to them: if you’ll accept our own David, you must admit the resurrection, for he prophesied this very thing. He said somebody would not be left in hell, nor would his flesh see corruption. But David wasn’t talking about himself, for David knew that God had sworn to him, with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins, he would raise up someone to sit upon his throne, and, therefore, seeing this before, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did Christ’s body see corruption, but God raised up Christ. For what intent? To sit on his, David’s throne. That’s Peter’s argument thus far, but he presented another and here it is: "This Jesus bath God raised up." What’s the proof of it, Peter? "Whereof we all are witnesses." Now I want you to see just what an array of testimony this statement included. That audience to whom he is preaching, must say either that all of you twelve apostles and you 120 disciples are liars or else it must accept the statement thus given. So that’s argument number two. Watch argument three. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he bath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Hence, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with its like demonstration is the third argument in behalf of the resurrection of Christ. I submit to you, again, the four statements of Peter’s sermon: First, Jesus is God-approved among you and you know it. Second, he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Third, you have crucified him. Fourth, God bath raised him from the dead.

What’s the evidence of the resurrection? First, the evidence is David’s own testimony, when he prophesied not regarding himself, for this his body lies as yet, but he is talking about Christ. Second, all of us testify. Third, look at this wonderful demonstration.

Friends, that’s the sermon. Now then, I want you to think, what effect did it have? "When they heard this." This what ? The climax of Peter’s sermon. Well, what was it? "That God bath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now Peter, what has been your procedure? "I have stated matters fundamental, three of which you do not doubt, and the fourth one I have produced evidence to support. Hence, I want you to know that God has made that very Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now note the effect of that address.

"When they heard this they were cut to their heart," conviction to them was brought. They were affected by the proclamation of the gospel of God's Son. This was God's Sword of the Spirit bringing conviction of their guilt. Therefore, they cried out to Peter and to the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now let's just see matters as they are. What has been the program? First, Peter has preached. Second, that multitude has heard. Third, conviction to their hearts has been brought, and it expressed itself by their inquiry, "What shall we do?" I want to ask, were they believers or infidels? To ask that is to answer. Where, friends, did you ever hear of a set of infidels cut to the heart by the preaching of God's word? Where did you ever see a set of unbelievers crying out, saying: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now then, if Peter had subscribed to certain doctrines he might have said: "Gentlemen, you can't do anything; all was fixed before the foundation of the world, and the number to be saved is definitely settled," or he might have said: "If you men believe what I have preached you are already saved and nothing else is required. You know we are justified by faith only, and that's a most wholesome doctrine." Now this audience knows that Peter did not subscribe to anything that even sounded like such doctrines. I want you to see it, friends. Sacred and serious matters are confronting us tonight. Those Jews heard the gospel as preached by Peter, and the effect of it was, they were cut to their hearts. It brought conviction unto them. It stirred them up. It made them conscious of their guilt, because they were made to believe that their hands were stained in the innocent blood of the Son of God. Therefore, they cried: "What shall we believers do ?" Now watch it— "Then Peter,'; speaking by God's Spirit, "said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Friends, I just want to ask you, is that perfectly clear and easily understood? Is this anything difficult about that? Can a man responsible to God Almighty misunderstand it? What is the program?

First, preached the gospel unto them; they heard it; as a result of hearing, faith was theirs, and due to that faith they made the move and cried: "What can we do?" For what? "To rid ourselves of the heinous crime, that you have charged upon us in that we have killed the Son of God. What can we do about it?" Now God's Spirit, speaking through Peter, said unto that crowd of believers: "Repent and be baptized." Now it's strange to me that folks resent a matter of that kind, that a great many preachers, with high-sounding titles and terms attached to their names, would not tell a Nashville audience just what Peter told that multitude on that memorable Pentecost. My friends, are you here tonight believing that you have heard the gospel of God's Son? Do you believe in the Lord with all your heart? If so, are you anxious about your eternal welfare? If you are, and want to go to heaven when you die, Peter said, my dear sir, "repent and be baptized." Do what? Two things, repent, and, what does "and" mean ? Addition, plus, something else. Repent plus be baptized. "Repent and be baptized." Well, why? "For the remission of sins." Why repent? "For the remission of sins." Why be baptized ? "For the remission of sins." That's God's word about it. Someone may saw, now, Brother Hardeman, that's just your opinion and your view of it. No, my friends, that's not my opinion; that's what God said; that's not nearly it, that is it, and everybody knows that's exactly what God said.

Friends, it isn't a question of understanding. It is just a question of whether or not you and I believe what God said, and are willing to take Him at His word, do what He requires, and then trust Him for every promise. Now that's the story. He said to them: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

It’s not popular to proclaim Peter’s answer to that guilty crowd on Pentecost. It’s not popular to stop and tell our friends today just what to do "for the remission of sins." Some would much rather hear a psychological discussion. If I were to announce to you that I’m going to preach on "The Physiological Analysis of the Psychological Anthropos," many would say, I want to hear that; I imagine that will be deep. Yes, so deep you’d never know one thing on God’s earth about it. But when I come and announce the simple story of redeeming love, and tell it just as the Bible tells it, men say: "Well, I’m disappointed in that, I just can’t see it that way." Friends, yes, you can see it that way. Don’t insult your intelligence; don’t deceive yourselves by saying: "I can’t understand that." Yes, you can. What does it say? God says to every believer: "Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins." The man who can’t understand that reflects upon his own intelligence.

Peter said further: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Note again: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." How save yourselves? Surely, not in procuring the salvation, nor the means of it, but by laying hold of that which he had pre. sensed for their consideration.

I once stood on the American side of Niagara Falls, and a gentleman told of some boys once coming down the river beyond the danger point. Fortunately, their boat ran against a boulder and this they were suspended. From the Canadian shore, this was thrown out the life line, with the command: "Boys, save yourselves." They laid hold of it and were brought to the shore and saved. God provides, but man must appropriate. It’s Jehovah-jireh all the way along the line. God provides water, by which our physical thirst is slaked. He provides us with a drinking apparatus, and all round about us this is water. But, suppose, I just refuse to drink. Don’t you know that I’ll die of thirst? Friends, I have sense enough to know this, if I get the benefit of that water, so abundantly provided by Jehovah, I must appropriate it, drink of it, apply it, and work with God to bring about the physical blessings. The atmosphere is all round about us. It is about fifty miles in every direction from the surface of the earth. Well, here I am with a breathing apparatus, nostrils, a pair of lungs, the ability to inhale and exhale. Well, does God want me to have air? Certainly. Do I have to have it to live? Yes, sir. Well, when do I get it? This it is, without money and without price, and whenever I accept it, the physical blessing is mine. Paul said: "We are labourers together with God." Watch the point: God provides the means of human redemption. By God’s grace men are saved, but while it’s a matter of grace on the part of God, it’s a matter of faith and trust on the part of man. Do I have sufficient faith in God to lay hold of that means provided? If so, I can come to shore, stand justified, purified, washed and cleansed in that fountain filled with the precious blood of His spotless Son.

Now, you ask what was the further effect of Peter’s sermon ? They, on that Pentecost day, that received God’s word "were baptized, and the same day this were added," put together, "about three thousand souls." But who did that? "The Lord added to the church day by day."

Friends, that’s the system. I am hoping tonight, as we come to sing the invitation hymn, that this is not only one, but two, three, and many, in this audience who will gladly duplicate the experience of these Pentecostians and rush to the outstretched arms of Him who said: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I’ll give you rest." Friends, do you believe the story tonight? If so, why linger any longer ? Render that obedience demanded by God. But you say, "I just don’t see

any reason for being baptized." Friends, the very fact that God said it, that God commanded it, is the highest reason possible for man. Out of deference to His authority, out of regard for His word, do it and trust Him for every promise.

4.15 - THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH

It is exceeding fine, friends, to be greeted by an audience of this kind again tonight. You have been quite faithful in coming to our engagements, and I am persuaded to think that you are enjoying all that comes to pass here.

How any soul cannot be stirred by the singing of such songs as these just sung is almost beyond my conception.

I am talking to you, tonight, about the Church of the New Testament.

I am reading from Ephesians 3:1-21 Paul said: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Where I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Now, in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, I want you to hear again: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" Never mind about the other fellow, what do you think about it? "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood bath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." The time had not yet come. In those passages, together with a host of others, specific reference is made to the church about which I am proposing to talk.

My friends, I have just called your attention again to the statement of the Christ, when Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the response made by Jesus was a benediction pronounced upon Peter for making that confession. I regret to say that the effort of the unbelieving world is to rob Christian people of their faith in that one fundamental statement, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

All of these books and LECTURES exalting Jesus, the man; Jesus, the Great Teacher; Jesus, the Matchless Man of Galilee; Jesus, the Great Philosopher, are laden with downright infidelity. You may not see that at first mention, but the effort is to exalt Christ as a man towering above his fellows in his ability to teach, to instruct, and in his philosophy of life. But they never mention the fact that he is God's Son. Let me say to you, brethren and friends tonight, I'm not especially interested in Jesus as a man, nor as a teacher, nor as a philosopher, but I am tremendously interested in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind. This's where the emphasis needs to go. "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." "Blessed art thou, Simon." Where did you get it? Flesh and blood didn't reveal it, but my Father did. Now Peter, I'm telling you, "Upon this rock," that is, upon this great fundamental truth which shows my relation to the Heavenly Father: "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I think this is the strongest determination expressed. "I will build my church." I've had it in mind; it's according to God's pre-arranged plan, and from the foundation of the world, it was the intent of Jehovah, that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, and for that reason, I expect to build it. All the powers of the Hadean world shall not prevail against my so doing. Now let's analyze just what he said in that. Christ said: "I will build my church." Who is the builder? Jesus said: "I will build." Now, don't you see this, that any church built by anybody other than Jesus Christ is not the one of the Bible? I, Jesus Christ, "will build my church" Well, suppose N. B. Hardeman were to start out and organize or build a church, could it possibly be the one mentioned by Christ? Don't you know that's not the thing that Christ was talking about? Well, note again. This church mentioned by Him was builded in the year 33, according to our calendar. Well, again, in Zechariah 1:16, we love the prophet's declaration: "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it." In what? In Jerusalem shall my house be builded. Now mark three things: Who built the church? What's the answer? Jesus Christ. When did he build it ? In the year 33. Where did he build it? In the city of Jerusalem. Now that's just as simple as it can be.

Without going into details I'm referring you to the origin of all the denominations on this earth. You'll find an account of them, not in the Bible of course, but in the "Federal Statistics of Religious Census," a book your Congressman will send you on request. Now then, after you've investigated, you'll find this: each one of them was built by some other man than Jesus Christ, at some other time than the year, and at some other place than Jerusalem. Well, what is the conclusion? They were, therefore, begun by the wrong person, at the wrong time, in the wrong place. Therefore, they cannot be the thing which Jesus Christ had in mind when he said: "Upon this rock, I will build my church." I think that's very important, and that much depends upon it. Such things ought to challenge our most serious concern, research, and investigation.

Now, note another thing. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16:18 in the year 32: "Upon this rock," a great fundamental fact, "I will build my church." Well, that means that he had not done it previously. "Will build," certainly cannot point backward. It refers to something not yet done. Now, I

just want to say, that unless people in general will get the basic idea, and the fundamental conception of affairs, we can't make much progress in our efforts to come together. All of you, who perchance, are attached to some organization which teaches that the church was organized and set up previous to the time mentioned in this connection by Christ, are bound to be wrong about that. Christ said, I will build it. Now may I say to you this, that practically all the leading denominations represented in the city of Nashville, are based upon the erroneous idea that the church started back in the days of Abraham, or in the days of John the Baptist, or during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ our Lord. This lives not a man on earth, who can prove the correctness of such contentions. Now we've got to plant our Jacob's staff at the right corner and get our tripod correctly set, or else, we never can run the line aright and come out with no dissension and no controversy. Let's everybody, therefore, march back to Jerusalem, to the year 33, and recognize Jesus Christ as the builder of that great institution. The church was organized on that day of Pentecost. It was filled with the Holy Spirit and started out upon its great mission as God's in situation through which His wisdom was to be revealed unto mortal man.

Now, let me say to you next, that the establishing of the church of God was the main purpose of Jesus Christ our Lord. It was contemplated by the Father. Already have I read that from Ephesians 3:1-21. Hear it again, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Now watch it—"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world bath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now what do you have? The very medium through which, from the foundation of the world, and according to God's eternal purpose, His revelation was to be made known to mortal man. Brethren, friends, based upon that, let me say; for any man to come along and say, that the church was a "spiritual contingent, an incident, accident, or a mere chance," is but little short of blasphemy in the sight of God Almighty. And yet, such statements are made and they are disturbing the peace of God's Israel tonight.

Well, look again. Paul said, 1 Timothy 3:15 : Timothy, I hope to come unto you shortly, but if I do not get to come, then I'm writing. Well, what for? "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God," now mark, "which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." You ask tonight, friends, upon what did God intend the truth to rest, upon what is it founded, and what is its support? God says the church is not only the pillar, but it is the very foundation, the ground of the truth. Now then, for me to minimize the church and talk about it as a contingent, or as a mere chance, a mere accident, I repeat, is quite contrary to the very sentiment that prevails everywhere in the Book of God. The church is the ground and the support of the truth, but when I tell you brethren, now, that the church is made up of men and women who have been born again, born of water and of the Spirit, it imposes on you that responsibility, and I tell you but that which you ought to recognize and feel very keenly. I am making the appeal, are you upholding the truth, do you stand four-square like a stone wall in defense of God's word? To you elders and deacons and members, are you standing in support of God's truth ? All over this land, are brethren upholding the hands of preachers who are "fighting the good fight of faith"? What about it brethren? Are you behind them 100 per cent? Are you supporting the truth? If you

constitute the church, this's your responsibility. You ought to be like Aaron and Hur who held up Moses' hands all through the battle and until the victory was won. I sometimes fear that brethren, through lack of courage, or lack of information regarding matters that disturb us are not as firm in support of those contending for that faith once for all delivered, as they should be.

Since this meeting has been on, several members of the church have been to see me. They are saying: "I did not understand all this quite so clearly, but now, since I have a conception of it, I'm into it 100 per cent; I'm standing as I could not have otherwise done." Therefore, the obligation rests upon preachers to teach the church. Let's tell them what it's all about. They should know about all kinds of opposition, every phase of error, and how to expose the same and defend the truth. Hence, the church of the Lord is God's great organization through which His wisdom is revealed unto mankind.

I am calling your attention now to just what the church of the New Testament is. That's not intended to reflect upon anybody's intelligence. But here we are, in the midst of the twentieth century, and I am persuaded to think that it is perfectly in order to talk about what the church is. Friends, what is that thing which you read about in the New Testament, called the church? Well, of course, it's not a material building, and yet that idea has always been prevalent. We see a meeting house towering heavenward, and we talk about the church upon the corner of the street. That's not uncommon. Back in the days of Paul and of Stephen such an impression was corrected. Stephen said in Acts 7:48 : "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Paul said on Mars Hill: "The God that made the heaven and the earth and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of all, that God does not dwell in tabernacles made by the hands of men." So the church is not a material building wrought out of stone, marble, lime, and mortar. That's not it.

Well, again. The church is not that old Jewish institution perpetuated on down the line. How do you know it isn't? I know from the third chapter of John that Jesus said to Nicodemus, who was a ruler of the Jews and a member of the Jewish organization, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And then to impress the matter, he said, I tell you, Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now then, the fact that you are a member of the old Jewish church does not give you a passport into the kingdom of God. But although a member of that, if you ever see the light of this, you must "be born again, of water and of the Spirit." What does that argue? The church is not a continuation of that organization gone before, but it's a new institution. Absolutely and positively it is different.

Well, again, my friends, the church of the New Testament is not a denomination. That's the hardest matter to put across that I've ever yet tried. Why? In this country of ours, we've been bred and born and reared in the denominational idea until it has become such a mass of confusion that it's next to impossible for any man to make clear the distinction between the church of the Bible and a human organization, founded by some uninspired man, at some other time than the year 33, at some other place than the city of Jerusalem. Just ask yourself where, in the Bible, did I ever read about a denomination existing by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord? Now don't you know that regardless of how many times you've read the Bible, you cannot think of a single passage where anything that even intimates a thought of that kind can be found. Such all idea, friends, is a total stranger to God's Book. If you think the church that Jesus said: "I will build," is a denomination, then I have this question to ask, which one was it? This are more than 200 in our

fair land. Now which one was Christ talking about when he said: "Upon this rock, I will build my church." Friends, the idea of a denomination does not attach to a statement of that kind. When Christ said, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it," I raise the point, for what denomination did Christ give his life's blood ? The answer is, absolutely none, positively none. Brethren, friends, can I become a member of the church of the New Testament? I think you are bound to say, yes. Well, all right, Do I have to become a member of a denomination in order to become a member of the church of the Bible? Everybody answers, No. Then you have exactly where I want to stand, namely, a member of the church of the Bible and at the same time, not a member of any denomination on earth. And if you were to meet me or privately ask me, Hardeman, of what denomination are you a member? I'd be certain to say, None. Well, are you a member of the church? Yes. Well, what branch? I'm not a member of any branch, I am a branch myself, and a member of the true vine. That's what the Bible teaches right along that line. Now, it would be a glorious day if all of us could forget such a thing as denominationalism, and march back to Jerusalem, to the year 33 and claim membership in the institution this and then organized by Jesus Christ. This is the only possible ground of all coming together without the sacrifice of a single principle.

I now want to state further that the church of the Bible is the only place wherein all of God's children are. It is difficult for many to appreciate this statement. They just can't conceive of the idea that all of the saved people of this earth are members of the church. The common idea is, that a man first becomes saved, and then later on and by a different process, he becomes a member of the church.

Now, that's all wrong. That idea is not in the Bible. Let me read to you just one verse, Ephesians 5:23 : "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body." Well, what is the body? It's the church of the Lord. Now then, of whom is Christ the Saviour, and of what? Of the body, but the body is the church, therefore, Christ saves those in the church. Now do you know what folks say when I preach that way? "Oh, the church doesn't save anybody." Well, who said it did? I never. Now, let's get two or three things. First, who is the Saviour of mankind? The answer: Jesus Christ our Lord. When does Christ save? He said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Where does he save them? In the church, which is his body. Who, when, where? Christ, at the end of obedience, in the church, the pillar and the very support of the truth. But someone is ready to say: "I think a man can be saved outside of the church just as well as within it." I have heard that so many times. I know that the man who thus says, doesn't understand what the church is. Friends, think about it. If a man can be saved outside of the church, he can be saved without the blood of Jesus Christ. Acts 20:28 explains why Paul said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit bath made you overseer to feed the church of the Lord which he bath purchased with his own blood." And again, Ephesians 5:25 : "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Now, we are saved by the blood of Christ. "What can take away my sins?" Answer: "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." But friends, what became of the blood of Christ? It went into the purchase of the church. How much of it? The last drop. What became, therefore, of the blood of the Lord? It went for the purchase of the church. Therefore, if I ever get the benefit of the blood of Christ, I must get it in that institution into which it went, and with which it was bought.

Now, illustrative of that, let me say, that if I had five dollars, and with that five dollars, I purchased this coat, giving every penny of the five dollars for the coat, I want to ask you, how can I get any benefit out of that five dollars? You may say you got it out of your shoes. No, sir, it didn't go for the purchase of shoes. All the five dollars went into the coat. Therefore, if I ever get the benefit of that five dollars, I surely must get it, in some way, out of the coat into which I put it. So it is, beyond a shadow of a doubt, Christ's blood went for the purchase of the church. If, therefore, I become a beneficiary of the blood of Christ, I must contact that institution bought by it, and into which the blood of our Lord went.

Furthermore, the church is called the family of God; hence, it is God's family upon this earth. It is God's household. Now, if a man can be saved outside of the church as well as within it, then, he can be saved outside of the family of God Almighty, but that's going to get one into wonderful trouble; because of this fact. This are just two families on this earth, one of them is the family of God, the other is the family of the devil. Now, I maintain, friends, all of God's people are in His family. I insist that God does not have children over in the devil's family. What do you think about that? Is it complimentary to a man to say that he has children not members of his family? God's children are in God's family. Now if you want to ask just how they get in, I'm going to suggest this. In the Bible this are three statements right along that line, each of which is illustrative of our membership in the family of God. Sometimes, it is pictured as if we were married unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore, enter the family by marriage. Married unto our Lord; Christ the bridegroom; the church the bride. In that likeness, this is an acquaintance, then, a cultivation of such as results in faith and finally deepens into love, and trust, and confidence. Then this is a resolution to turn away from all else and let that ceremony be said which climaxes a change of relationship. The bride now has the right to the husband's name and to share his estate. The marriage has been completed. Just so, under that likeness and that figure, when a man hears of Jesus Christ, and cultivates an acquaintance, it will result in faith, confidence, trust, and love. He then decides to turn from the power of Satan and flee to Jesus Christ. He next comes to one properly authorized, to say the ceremony which, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, marries him into God's family.

After the marriage, can you imagine a wife's wanting to wear some other man's name? What would you men as husbands think about that? Would it be satisfactory? "A hint to the wise is sufficient." You ought to make the application. Lord, I love you with all my heart, I'll put my hand in your wounded palm, I'll pledge fidelity as long as I live upon the earth, I'm married to you; I'm leaning upon you and trusting you; but, Lord, won't you let me wear your cousin's name, or that of some other man? Friends, what do you think about that anyhow? Women, you doubtless say, "Oh, Hardeman, that doesn't make any difference." I'll tell you how to put it to a test. You try it on hubby tonight. Tell him you are going to wear your neighbor's name. You are Mrs. Higginbottom, for instance. You tell him that you are going to be Mrs. Joe Jones, and see what he has to say about it. "There'll be a hot time in the ole town tonight!" No man, with self-respect would agree for his wife, to whom he is married, to wear the other fellow's name. I don't blame him. Now, let me tell you women; if you love your husbands as you should, you don't want to wear anybody else's name.

Now then, the man who loves Jesus Christ as he ought to love him does not want to and will not wear any other name under heaven than that by which we must be saved. This is another figure

suggesting our entrance into God’s family. The Bible says that we are born again into the kingdom or family of God. Well, how born? As in all cases, this are two elements, and in this case it is, "of water and of the Spirit." What does born imply? It is a coming up and out of, into a new relationship. A child in its mother’s womb is shut out from the material world and the light of God’s day, but when it is born, it emerges into a different sphere and into a different relationship. So then, when a sinner is born of water and of the Spirit, he enters into a new realm which is the kingdom of God, the church of the Lord, God’s family, God’s house.

Now, we not only become members of God’s family under the likeness of marriage, and under the similitude of a birth, but the Bible says: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." This is God’s family, the church of the Lord. Friends, that’s it, and this’s no doubt about it whatsoever; that’s what God’s Book teaches.

Well, note some other things right along this same line, and in connection with matters of this sort. Had you ever stopped to think, friends, of the different names by which this heaven-born, and blood-bought institution is called ? Let me just call to mind as I may, a few of them. First, it’s called the church of God. It’s called the church of the Lord. It’s called "My Church." It’s called the household of faith, the body of Christ, the pillar and the ground of truth, God’s building, God’s temple, and so on. More than a dozen different names are mentioned in the Bible, either of which would meet the demands of Holy writ. Now then, here’s what I can’t understand. Why people will know all of those dozen or more names in the Bible, reject everyone of them, and get over in another list and pick out a name that God Almighty never one time mentioned, and write that over the door of their meeting house. They will then glory in a name nowhere mentioned in the Bible. Why do men do that? When Jesus comes to reward his servants, will he find us watching and faithful to his teaching, or will we be off wearing certain church names that are total strangers to anything that Jesus Christ ever knew?

Now, you ask what are the individual members to be called? That depends upon certain things, and if I may extend the time just a moment, I’d like to get that before you. In the Bible, members of the church of the Lord are sometimes called disciples, sometimes saints, again brethren, and again Christians. Now analyze just a minute. What does the word disciple mean? A learner, a student, a pupil, a follower. If brethren are students and learners and followers of God’s Book, it is in order to call them disciples.

Now, if you want to emphasize their saintly character, and their purity, the word "saint" is more fitting to express a relation of that kind.

If you want to talk about our relationship one with another, then what? "We be brethren." What does that word mean? Members of the same family.

But, if you want to emphasize our relation to Christ, the word disciple doesn’t express it, the word saint does not fit, the word brethren carries not the thought. When emphasizing the fact that I am related to Christ, then the word "Christian" is the most suggestive of any term known to mortal man.

Friends, these are the things~that I want to mention to you tonight regarding the church of the Bible. Are you a member of it? Do you stand upon the merits of the blood of Christ that purchased the church? Are you in relationship with God’s family? If so, I bid you faithful endurance until the

end. But if not, you stand absolutely without God and without hope in the world. You have, tonight, the opportunity of rendering obedience unto Jesus Christ our Lord and to stand upon his promises. Won't you do it while, once again, the invitation is tendered?

Chapter 98

4.16 - THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES On this Saturday night, I think one could hardly expect an audience superior either in number or character to that which has assembled. You have been so faithful to come that I am under everlasting obligation to you.

I am reading to you a very familiar passage from John 15:1-27. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples." That is what is called, and possibly correctly, the parable of the vine and the branches, stated in a little bit stronger terms than some of the parables. Christ does not say that he is like the vine, using what we call a simile; but he uses the metaphor, and says "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." A parable when read seems to be as simple a thing as could be constructed, but if you undertake to create one, you will find it exceeding difficult.. Teaching by parables was a favorite method of our Saviour, and for that reason, we should try to learn what a parable is and also its purpose. May I say then that a parable is the presentation of some simple matter with which the people were acquainted, and alongside of that is the spiritual application of the same. In a parable, all matters stated are realities. All the personages presented are real persons, and the things stated either did or could come to pass. I am stating that in a parable this are no fictitious things, but all are realities. To illustrate: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who called unto him his servants, delivered unto them his goods, and finally took his journey into a far country. Now that could have happened. It’s a reality, and not simply a mere fanciful presentation. The parable therefore differs from a fable in that one regard. A fable is ascribing, either to animals or inanimate things, the doings of men and the characteristics of humanity. No fable ever happened, but it is used purely to illustrate a matter. Therein is the chief difference between a parable and a fable.

Now you ask, as I do when studying, why speak in parables? The disciples asked the Lord that question once. I want to suggest to you a few reasons for speaking in parables. First, for those who love the truth, it tends to clarify the same, and to make plainer the teaching. To those who do not love the truth, it tends to blind their minds, to obscure the matter under consideration. Third, a parable tends to embalm the truth. You know a thing told in the form of a story will be remembered much longer and more easily than any abstract fact presented. And then in the fourth place, a parable is given to gain the assent of the party before the real truth and application of it are made known. Will you keep these points in minds.—You will read them in the book later, and have time to meditate further upon them.

So, Jesus Christ is presenting something known to his audience—with which they were perfectly familiar—and from that he passes to a wonderfully sublime application of the truth. I think it safe to say that the beautiful white grape represents 60 per cent of all things cultivated in Palestine. Jesus had been talking, in part of his address preceding this, about the fruit of the vine, and maybe that suggested to him this simple lesson that we are studying tonight.

Now, that your eye may assist your ear, I just picked up this (speaker holds up small vine with branches before the audience) as a concrete illustration, I trust, of what the Saviour had in mind. Hear it again: "I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman." I think it doesn't require any strain on intelligence to see that this (speaker points to the one vine) represents the Christ. "I am the true vine." All right, that locates him. Now he says "my Father is the husbandman." Well, what is a husbandman? He is the character who nourishes and prunes and looks after the growing of the vine and the bearing of the fruit. So, Christ is in this lesson; and also God is in it. I wonder if you would think I was stretching the matter if I should say that the Holy Spirit is also in it—by necessary inference? It isn't mentioned directly, but beyond the shadow of doubt, the implication is this. Well, why? In every trunk where this are branches and where this is fruit, this is that thing which flows and circulates underneath the bark, which ordinarily we call the sap. With a circulatory system complete, it rises from the trunk and flows into every branch and causes the bud to appear, then the blossom and, finally, the fruit. Farmers understand that. We talk, in the Fall of the year, of the sap's going down—whether that is scientifically correct or not, I am not stopping to argue. But we speak of it that way. When all nature is brown and sere and the leaves are falling and all is passing into the winterland, the sap goes down. Well, in the Spring, we say the sap rises. And watch what happens. This is that life current beneath the bark and it brings life, growth and fruit.

Now the figure would not be complete unless you would understand that not only is Jesus Christ the true vine, and God Almighty the husbandman, but the Holy Spirit is the life-giving current that brings vitality and force to all the branches, and produces the fruit. Well, the fruit never grows on the vine itself, but it is found only on the branches. Did you ever imagine that the sap ignores the true vine and goes out to the branch and produces fruit independent of the vine? Now, nobody who is allowed to run loose, would dare think of a thing of that kind. But watch how the sap does its work: it comes up through the main vine, out through the different branches, and through the medium, of the trunk and of the branches, it produces the fruit. Hence, you can see the indirect working of the sap, or the operation of it, through these definite means, to accomplish the purpose. Just so, the Holy Spirit does not operate separate and apart from Christ and the medium ordained, but always coming through our Lord, it operates upon the branches, and thereby produces the fruit as a result.

So, then, Christ says "I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman." And may I add that the Holy Spirit is the life—the fruit-producing element. This never was any fruit but that it was affected by the operation of the sap—that is literally true. This never is any fruit, spiritually speaking, without the operation of God's Spirit. And I might just as well say here, as later, this never has been any question as to whether or not the Holy Spirit operates in the conviction and conversion of a sinner. No one doubts that. Yet, you have heard all kinds of misrepresentation and confusing ideas regarding the same. Everybody, so far as I know, believes that in the conversion of mankind, God's Spirit operates upon the heart of that one to be converted. But the point of controversy has been: By what method does the Spirit operate? I submit to you that this are but two possible ways

by which it can be done. I want to illustrate these two ways. Let this (places white tablet on pulpit stand) represent the sinner's heart. Let my hand represent the Holy Spirit. Now, I'll operate upon the heart of the sinner (brings hand in contact with tablet). That did it—but how? Directly, straightforward, immediately, separate and apart from everything else, with nothing intervening. Now that is one theory presented in the religious world. Here is the other teaching: I lay that Bible on this white booklet—between my hand and the thing to be operated on. Again, I operate on the tablet. But how? This time through the book. Now these are the two views regarding this matter.

If you believe that the sap in the natural realm ignores all means and goes direct to the fruit out on the branch and begins to do its work, then you are prepared to accept the unreasonable, the unscriptural, and the wholly foreign idea of a direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. If, on the other hand, you get the idea that the sap, in the natural world, comes through the trunk and branches, then you are prepared to accept the truth that the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart of the sinner through a medium, and that medium is the book of God!

Now with that setting, let us read further. "Every branch in me." I want you to get that—I am stopping on purpose, not to take a drink or to cough but for you to think. "Every branch in me." I am underscoring I-n, in, and m-e, me. In me! Not just stuck on superficially; not a water spout; but really, actually, genuinely, in me! That bothers lots of preachers. They would give thirty cents, with the proverbial hole in it, if the two little words "in me" were not in the Bible. It spoils a human theory. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, the husbandman will take it away. But, someone says, you can't take one away if he is ever in him. That's preacher talk, not Bible teaching. T want you to get that, and I am impressing it for that reason. If one does not bear fruit, God, the husbandman, takes it away! But every branch that beareth fruit, he will purge it that it may bring forth more fruit. Friends, that is exactly as it is and as it ought to be.

If you start out to help someone, and he responds to the opportunity, and enters heartily into the affair, and does his part—what about it? Why, you are ready to help him more, to lend him further assistance. But suppose you try to help someone and he falls absolutely down on it, and proves himself not worthwhile, then what? If you have good judgment, you'll take that help from him and give it to somebody who is worthy. That is exactly the principle involved. Unto him that hash, I'll give more! He shall have more abundantly. But to him that bath not, I'll take away even that which he hash. Every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh it away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he'll help it, purge it, that it may bear more fruit.

Well, note again: "Now you are clean." How? "Through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you." Now watch: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine," I just wonder if we appreciate that statement? On this (pointing again to the vine and branches used for illustrative purposes) are many branches. I'll pick the best-looking branch on it. This one doesn't have any appearance other than a healthy, living, fruit-bearing branch. Now let's sever it. Here we have it. "Every branch that does not bear fruit, he takes it away." "And as that branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Can it or not? Why, take the best branch on any vine or from any tree and separate it from the main trunk, and tell me how much fruit it will ever bear. That's the end of it. This is nothing hopeful or possible for it. That branch, isolated or separated from the true vine, never can produce any more fruit. Friends, you know that is true. The biggest, finest, most attractive branch on God's

earth, separated from the true vine, is not as good as the most insignificant one imaginable that is still attached to the trunk. This is much more hope for the puny, sickly-looking branch attached to the true vine than this is for any, isolated and cut loose.

Some old fellow once said that he had always noticed that when cholera broke out among his hogs and one of them lingered on and on it was more likely to get well than one that took it and died right away. I think he was correct about it. So, you can take the humblest branch in the vine. It may look unattractive in comparison with this one that stands aloof. But this's more hope of that one's producing fruit than this is of the one isolated. Now get the application: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you except you abide in me. Now you can take the best man that ever walked the streets of Nashville, an upright gentleman splendid in personality, clean in habit, noble in moral affairs, but if that man does not have vital connection with the Son of God, he cannot bear fruit that will redound to his credit on the other shore.

I have lots of fine, moral friends, who should get that lesson. They are splendid citizens, upright in all respects. They are fine fathers, good husbands, public-spirited, charitable, philanthropic in nature, and yet they are not members of the true vine. When that kind of man dies, the preacher gets up over him and makes a big ado. He eulogizes the spirit of this great man, who has done so much for Nashville; who gave so much to charity and from whom no one was ever turned away, either hungry or naked. That man, says some preacher, is basking in the sunlight of God's eternal smiles. Friends, that's not so! No man on earth has ever been saved on his intrinsic worth or on his own merit. The gospel is God's power to salvation— not my good deeds. I am going to be saved or lost according as I retain a positive connection with Jesus Christ, the true vine. I wish I could impress that on so many people whom I know, and in whom I am interested. Yet they are deceived and deluded. "Here I am—I don't do this, and I don't do that, and I do not do the other; therefore, I must be all right." Friends, that's the wrong check-up. Well, "I speak the truth and pay my debts and I am public-spirited —what's the matter with me?" Simply this: Salvation is in Christ; redemption is in Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit comes to the man who is in him. Be you ever so good, ever so attractive and powerful; so long as you stay aloof from Christ, he says, just as that branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can you except you abide in me.

It just seems to me that this is so clear, I could not help but see the point. But note again: I am down to John 15:6. "If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned." Now that raises the point as to what the branches are. This is no doubt on earth as to what the true vine is—Christ said "I am the true vine." God is the husbandman; the Holy Spirit is the life; now what are the branches? And do you know that the best argument ever made for the existence of denominations is the point which preachers try to make to the people, that they, the denominations, are the branches contemplated by the Christ? Now he is the big church and all denominations are branches. Think of that a minute. That cannot be so for several reasons: First, at the time when Christ said "I am the vine and ye are the branches," this was not a denomination on the face of God's earth. Hence, he could not address a thing that was not. Second, denominationalism, as we have it in our land tonight, did not come into existence until fifteen hundred years after Jesus spoke the parable of the vine and branches. Third, Christ said "abide in me"—well, who is "me"?—"I am the true vine." Now let me ask you: Where are you abiding? Someone says: "Hardeman, I'm a member of a certain branch."

Well, God said, my dear sir, get out of the branch! Don’t hang onto a limb, but stick to the true vine. I just want to ask you: Are you connected simply with the branch, as some church over here, which you say is a branch church? Where are you? "I’m out here in a branch." Christ said, "abide in me." We ought to be able to see that Jesus Christ speaking to men said this: "If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch." What are the branches? Men! That’s the idea. To whom is he talking? The apostles. And it is ye abide in me, individually.

Friends, the world can’t appreciate the truth. Error has been prevalent so long and gained such a footing, that even up to 1938 this old world is unprepared to accept with open mind the truth of God Almighty.

If I meet with men, as frequently I do, and they ask me, "Hardeman, are you a member of the church?" I answer "Yes." "Well, of what branch of the church are you a member?" My answer is, "I am not a member of any branch on earth," and they look as if they thought I was not all at home. Why? I talk as the Bible talks and they are not used to that.

I read a story once, that I have told time and again. A gentleman stepped off the steamer in our Southern city, New Orleans, and some boys were at the wharf ready to carry his baggage that they might make a dime or a quarter. All the embarrassment from them had gone, and as they walked along with him carrying his luggage, they raised a conversation with him. For some reason or other one of them suspected that he was a preacher, and asked him, "Aren’t you a preacher ?" "Yes, sir." "Well of what church are you a member?" "Oh, Son, I’m a member of the church of the Bible." "Yes, I know, but of what branch of the church are you a member?" He said: "I’m not a member of any branch; I’m a branch myself." That boy turned to his little companion and said, "I’ll bet you five dollars he’s a Campbellite." Now, why say that? Just because the man talks as the Bible talks. He didn’t use the language of Ashdod, but he spake as the oracles of God speak. So Christ said, "I am the vine and ye are the branches; if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire." Now sometime we pass over words without noting their bearing. I have had men, when I quote that to ask, "Well, Hardeman, why is it then that you fellows will call for backsliders, if they are to be cast in the fire and burned? Why that invitation to come back to be restored?" They think we are inconsistent. Now, let me give you a thought on that. The Saviour said: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." What does that word "withered" mean? Now you know this, you can take some branches off from the main trunk and go and set them out again or cover them over, and they will keep on growing, although severed. I have a suspicion that Bermuda grass is of that type. But let me tell you one thing: if even Bermuda is ever withered, if its life is gone and it is completely dried up, you can do for it what you will; it is forever gone. Now that’s what Christ said. So long as a man, though he sin, does not reach that point beyond which restoration is impossible, this is a hope of that man’s coming again, but let him cut loose from Jesus Christ our Lord, pass out and wither; I want to say to you friends, this is no power in heaven nor on earth by which that man can be saved. It’s impossible to renew him. Why ? He’s reached that point beyond which, his conscience being seared as with a hot iron, the penetrating rays of God’s gospel truth cannot reach nor affect him. That’s what Christ said. "If a man abide not in me." Well, this’s one that didn’t. What about him, Lord? "He is cast forth as a branch." Look at him, what about him? "And is withered," all hope of life is gone, all signs of life are gone, every vestige absent—Lord, what about him? What will finally happen? "They are gathered." Who are gathered? "The branches." What

branches? "Those once in me." Wasn't that branch one time "in me"? "Yes." Who took it away? "God did." Why? "It didn't bear fruit." What happened to it? "It withered." Then what? "Men gather it and throw it in the fire and it is burned." Friends, if that is not the thought, language has no meaning at all. It is mighty hard to get some preachers to notice an illustration of this kind.

Well, note some other things. I just wonder what kind of branches these are which are left in the true vine? Is one a pumpkin, another a watermelon, and still another a cucumber, etc? Now friends, do you know that this isn't a man living who believes that? Not one. You do not know of a single individual with little enough judgment to think that from the true vine, different kinds of fruit grow. That would be so ridiculously preposterous and so absolutely nonsensical as to make an intelligent man shudder at the possibility of anyone's imagining that a thing like that ever could happen. On the same vine, every branch bears exactly the same kind of fruit. Shall I look, for instance, upon a tree that bears apples and expect to find that, while it bears apples, they are of different kinds? Look upon it and note the great number and then ask: "What kind are they? Is that a Ben Davis, and that a Winesap, and that a Virginia Green, and is this an old Horse apple?" No, that won't work, and you know that just as well as I. Now we all see that alike, don't we? That whatever this is, that will be accordingly, and so on. Note again, every fruit bears the name of the main trunk. That's an apple tree, all right; what about the fruit? They are apples. That's a peach tree. Well, they are all peaches of the very same kind. Now, this isn't any difference on that. Well, how is it that all of us see that alike? Just because we are unbiased and we haven't had any theology to becloud or hinder our seeing it. Now apply it religiously.

"I am the true vine." Yes, and this branch is a Mormon; this other is an Episcopalian, and this another is a Lutheran, etc. Men can accept that. How can you, friends? Now, just think, how can you? Do you not know that something has been working on you, to cause you to accept a thing in religion, that would be repulsive to you in natural affairs? What was Christ teaching? Was this given to illustrate that he is the true vine and that different denominations were the branches, and that men should abide in a branch? Christ is the main trunk and every branch in him takes the name of the trunk. Hence, they were called Christians. What does the "Christ" mean? The true vine. What does the "Ian" mean? The one attached. Men will say, I'm a member of a certain branch. Why do you want to be a member of the branch, when you can be a member of the trunk? If all the denominations, about 200 in U. S., are branches, I just want to ask you: where is the main trunk? You can't have branches unless this is a trunk somewhere. My effort is to try to find and to restore the main trunk in our land. Friends, the assuming of different names and titles is more responsible for our divided condition than any other one thing. People will argue that this's nothing in a name, but everybody knows that's not so. You may argue that this's nothing in it, and then when I appeal to you, in behalf of unity, to give up yours, you become offended and positively refuse.

Friends, I want to read to you, some statements about matters of this kind, I bid you hear this, before I tell you its author and where you can find it:

"I look forward, with pleasure, to the day when this will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name endure forever." Who do you suppose said that? I want to repeat it: "I look forward with pleasure, to the day when this will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but

let Christ's name endure forever." Friends, that was said by Charles Spurgeon, the greatest Baptist preacher that ever lived upon this earth. This quotation can be found in "Spurgeon Memorial Library," Volume 1, Page 168. Someone may say: "I don't believe it." I don't care whether you do or not. He said it just the same, or else the Baptists misrepresented him in publishing that book. Now what is Mr. Spurgeon's idea ? "I hope the name Baptist will pass out of existence, that this won't be a Baptist living." He doesn't mean some individual, but he means the name, and the wearing of it. "Let it perish forever from the face of the earth, but let Christ's name endure forevermore." Someone thinks the word "Baptist" is in the Bible. Yes, "Baptist," is in the Bible, but the plural, "Baptists" is not in God's Book from beginning to end. This never was but one Baptist on earth, and he said he was going out of business. John 3:30. "I must decrease."

Well, look again. "I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. At. Paul would not let any call themselves after Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions: away with them all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes." That was said by Martin Luther, in the book called, The Life of Luther, by Stork, Page 289. The reason I am giving this is because it will be put down, and made permanent in the book of sermons. And yet, some Lutheran glories in the name Luther. Friends, old Martin Luther said: "Cease, my friends; don't call yourselves Lutherans, nor Paulites, nor Cephasites, nor Apollosites, nor any other name, except the name Christ." Isn't that wonderful preaching?

Now I am reading from John Wesley, and all you Methodists should prick up your ears and take notice: "Would to God," hear it—"that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgot; that we might all agree to sit down together as humble, loving disciples at the feet of a common Master, to hear His words, to imbibe His spirit, and to transcribe His life into ours." Friends, look at them: Charles Spurgeon, a noted Baptist; Martin Luther, the founder of Lutheranism; John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, forbid, as much as they possibly can, the wearing of their names, and yet, here we are, glorying in them. You may think you are honoring John Wesley and Martin Luther. My friends, these men resent that. What are we going to do about such matters? Are we content to live and move and pass off the stage of action and leave the world in a state of confusion, with no effort on our part to try to bring about a unity and a oneness? I never saw the day that I wanted to be distinguished from any other Christian on earth. I recognize God as our common Father, Jesus Christ as our elder brother, and all who have been "born again, of water and of the Spirit" as God's children. Therefore, we ought to be as one, wearing the name of Him who died that we might live. If Christ is the bridegroom, what name ought the bride to wear? If he is the head of the body, what ought the parts of the body to be? Every sort of an illustration imaginable, but emphasizes and stresses the need of all coming together, and of our being as the vine and the branches.

Friends, on this Saturday night, I have talked to you long enough. Are you a member of the true vine? If not, this is a wonderfully fine time for you to march quietly down any of the aisles, extend your hand to someone, and make known your wishes. Won't you do it while we sing?

Chapter 99

4.17 - IS CHRIST WITH US ?

IS CHRIST WITH US ? My friends and brethren, I am very deeply moved this afternoon by the presence of such a magnificent audience. When I call to mind that this is the sixth series of gatherings in this auditorium, wherein I have had a part, I find myself wholly unable to express the genuine and profound gratitude that is mine. Those six occasions have been as follows: four meetings, five nights in a discussion with Dr. Ira M. Boswell, of Georgetown, Kentucky, and then three nights for the delivery of some LECTURES on Palestine, Egypt, and lands evermore made sacred.

You have been exceeding and wonderfully kind in your response to our assemblies, and if this auditorium will seat eight thousand people, that number is here this afternoon. The lower floor, the galleries and platform, are filled to capacity.

We have come, friends, to the last day service of this meeting, and as a basis of what I have to say, I am reading to you from Luke 2:40 : "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him."

That’s a part of the story in connection with Jesus Christ at the age of 12 years. When his parents left their home in Galilee and went up to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover, they took the child Jesus with them. After they had worshiped and started home, the child tarried behind, but his parents knew not of it. I stop to raise the point: Could they have known whether or not he was with them? They could. What was the trouble? "But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey" and then missed him. I just wonder, friends, if that does not illustrate matters today fairly well. All people who claim to love God and respect his word, think that Jesus Christ is walking with them down the pathway of time and, ultimately, will introduce them into the glories of "over this." Are you right certain that he is traveling in your company? Have you ever stopped to make due investigation? That would not say that you are dishonest, or necessarily unconcerned. His mother did exactly that. She thought that he was along with them. She knew not of his staying behind, but went along all the day, supposing that her precious boy was in the crowd, but she was mistaken about it. He wasn’t in her company and had not been since she started. Do you think this are people today journeying on toward their eternal destiny, only supposing that Christ is in their midst? After review of such a story as this, with all of its sadness and worry, don’t you think it timely that we should carefully examine to see whether or not Jesus Christ be with us? A day’s journey passed, during which time Mary, the mother, and Joseph, the father, were walking by supposition. It never dawned on them that they were wrong, that Christ was not in their midst, and had you asked them, "Is Jesus with you?" "Certainly," would have been

their reply, but he wasn't. They went till the close of the day and when they began to pitch tent for the evening, they looked round about to gather their company, and found, to their surprise, that Jesus Christ was not in their midst. That didn't arouse them very much. Mary, the mother, thought: "Just over this is the camp of our kindred. He is with Uncle John, or with Aunt Elizabeth." But when she went over to the camp of her kindred, and made inquiry, and they took a search, he was not this. And then she said, "Well, we have some mighty good friends and they are camping just across on the other side.

I suppose he is with them." But when she went to look, lo and behold, he wasn't with them, and never had been. Then business picked up, and, of course, this was no sleep that night. Everybody was aroused, Jesus Christ is lost to his parents and his friends. After searching all around to find him not among them: "They turned back again to Jerusalem," and this they found him. Friends, why is that in the Bible? Is that simply to fill in space, with an idle story, to no profit, regarding a little incident of the Saviour at the age of twelve? I certainly think not. From it this is a most wonderful lesson, that I believe all of this audience ought to consider.

Think, today, of the different encampments marching along down life's way, supposing, each. of them, that Christ is in their midst. It would be well to turn introspective and make research. Raise the query: "Did Christ ever hear of the company with which I am journeying?" Now, you know about it. "Did the Lord ever say anything about the crowd with whom I am marching?" Did he or not? Where did you ever read anywhere in the Bible about the crowd with which you are traveling? This Is a challenge to your intelligence, and it's intended to provoke thought on your part, and to cause you to determine to investigate the crowd with which you are journeying. Is Christ in it? Was he ever in it? Did he know anything about it? Has he ever said a word regarding it ? Friends, this's the tragedy of religious affairs today, and many an honest man and honest woman are going along, like the parents of Christ, not knowing but that Christ is in their midst. They just suppose he is. It is possible for us to pass on to the judgment and this to wake up, only to realize for the first time, as did his mother at the close of the day, that Jesus Christ has not been with us all the day. I am asking all of you brethren, what are all of our efforts about? What are the congregations in the city of Nashville trying to do? Is it to organize or form some special organization unknown to the Bible? What is our purpose? If I can discern and properly understand it, our great objective, brethren, is to cut loose from things of human relations and hark back to Jerusalem, and this again, start out determined and firmly resolved to make all things according to the pattern revealed in the New Testament. You know, as well as I, that under the guidance of inspiration this was an institution established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. That institution is called the Church of the Lord, or the Kingdom of God. You are fully aware of the fact that men and women were members of it; that God added them "hereunto; and that they continued in the doctrine taught by the apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Now what did it take to make and bring about a company of that kind? I am submitting to you with all the simplicity that I possibly can an analysis of matters pertaining to just such.

Friends, in order to have a crop, this must be two things: first, a soil adapted to the nature of that committed to its kindly bosom; and second, this must be seed planted in that soil. Then by virtue of the warmth, and sunshine, and gentle showers, this comes forth the product from that seed. It starts its growth, adding fruit as on it goes. That's the simple story. Apropos of that, may I suggest this: that on Pentecost, when Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven were

assembled, this was the soil, the human hearts. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit saw to it that Peter and others, on that day, put that seed into the soil of those people this assembled. What the result? They that received the seed were baptized and Christians were born that day, "of water and of the spirit," to the number of about 3,000 souls. God called that the "church of the Lord," the "house of God," the pillar and the ground of the truth. The gospel was the thing that produced the crop. With the passing of time and the corrupting influences of uninspired men, before the last apostle died this were evidences of apostasy. All through the Bible this are warnings to the church against such. Paul said to Timothy: "The time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine," and "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith." This will be those who will overthrow the faith, and make shipwreck of it. Paul said, "the mystery of iniquity," and the man of sin had already raised his head and appeared, a threatening menace to the church of the Lord. The years were not many after the days of inspiration before this began to be an hierarchy, an organization drafted by men. to supplant the church that God ordained. In addition to that, this was a corruption of the practice of the original body by the introduction of both Jewish and pagan ideas into the church of the Lord. They sought by worldly means to embellish and adorn the church and thus enlist public interest. Six hundred years passed away and this was scarcely a shadow of an organization on earth like that planted by inspiration. Popery had raised aloft its head, and the human ecclesiasticism was riding high-handed. It was swaying the scepter over the lives and destinies of men both in civil and in religious affairs. That period is known as the Dark Ages, into which the world passed. It was characterized by corruption and crime and the blackest deeds that have ever disgraced the pages of human history.

Things went on for about a thousand years, until conditions became intolerable and decency could no longer endure. The world became tired and restless, and at last men began to throw off their shackles and to think for themselves. A new era was about to dawn and a new light was soon to shine. Men of vision looked out and fancied a new world bright with hope and prospect. Such a transition is known in history as the period of the Renaissance. The world was emerging out of darkness into a more marvelous light.

Responsible for that, most of all, was the invention of printing by means of movable blocks. As a result, religious and other literature began to be spread abroad; men began to read and think for themselves. One of the greatest leaders of that old religious body became sick, tired and disgusted. He determined that no longer would he hold his peace, but he would speak forth that which was in his heart. Hence, at the risk not only of being excommunicated, but also of being executed, Martin Luther braved the organized forces of the time, marched out and swore allegiance unto God, rather than unto any human organization upon earth. That’s the beginning of what we call "The Period of the Reformation." Martin Luther was an educated young man. He was born, reared, tutored, trained, and disciplined in the "Faith of the Fathers," but when he saw the corruption and the exceeding sinfulness and rottenness characteristic of the church of which he was a member, let it be said, that he displayed a courage equal to that of Jesus Christ before Pilate, of Peter before the Sanhedrin, and of Paul before Agrippa. Therefore, he proposed a discussion of the merit of that hierarchy wherein he was born and reared. One debate was held with old John Eck, but that one proved to be sufficient. I just wonder if it would be amiss here to call your attention to a matter. In 1923, our friends of the Christian church, in convention up at Ovoca Springs, resoluted, whereased and therefored that they would arrange for a discussion of

Instrumental Music in every county seat of Tennessee. A committee waited upon some brethren of the opposition here in Nashville and agreed upon the terms. These were that such a debate should be wherever both sides were represented. The first debate was held at the Ryman Auditorium. Some of you remember quite well that the debate was on for five nights, with immense crowds packing both the lower and the upper floors of this historic old building. At the close of that discussion, brethren said to those who had resoluted so much, "Where will the next one be?" They have not answered until this good hour, and that was fifteen years ago. Now that's but a parallel to the experience of Martin Luther, when he came out to attack and to question the doctrine of the church of which he had been reared a member. Martin Luther's idea was that, since the church was so corrupt, he wanted to reform it. He had no idea of establishing a denomination. But, friends, let it be said to his disappointment that the thing refused to be corrected; it refused to be reformed. A thing so corrupt that it cannot and will not be reformed must be destroyed. Martin Luther had that very sentiment; therefore, when brought before the powers that be, and the great accusation presented written out with the charges, instead of bowing as a puppet, he stood up and said, "This's your scrap of paper and do what you please, God being my helper, I can do none other than stand for what I believe to be right." Friends, that resulted, in 1521, in the establishment of the Lutheran denomination upon this earth. So Luther's work, although quite valuable, was a failure so far as getting anywhere in reforming the church of the Fathers. Well, you know the restless spirit that would grow out of that. John Calvin, at the same time, also had become tired and skeptical of many of the things found, as did Luther, but not agreeing with his contemporary, started out upon a different line, writing his Institutes, setting forth reasons for his belief and announcing the five points of Calvinism that have come down through the ages. The result of the work wrought by John Calvin was the organization and the introduction of the great Presbyterian denomination, which never existed either in the Bible or out of God's word. Well, time rolled on. Old Henry VIII answered Martin Luther in such a wonderful way, that the Pope commended his book and announced that the author be styled "Defender of the Faith." He stood this—a towering character in defense of the excommunication of Martin Luther; but with the passing of time, Henry VIII looked upon his wife, Catherine, six years older than he, saw that she hadn't been to the beauty parlor, that her hair was all stringy, and that she was getting wrinkled, and stooped, and didn't care much; and this was young Anne Boleyn of just nineteen summers, a beautiful, blushing maid, with perhaps both cheeks and lips painted, and her dress abridged at both ends, who attracted his attention. Indeed so much so, that he and Anne had a kind of a quiet understanding, and that was, "if I can get rid of my wife, Catherine, business will pick up in our affair." When he applied, therefore, for the divorce, it was very correctly refused on the part of the papacy; but "love will find a way," and in the course of time, he had Thomas Cranmer appointed archbishop of Canterbury; then as King of England, he demanded that his appointee write out a bill of divorcement. That was done, and as a result this was born upon this earth, as I have said from this platform before, the great Episcopal body. Now, what do you find? Denominationalism springing up. What is it all about? All effort to reform the Catholic church, which absolutely refused to yield.

Well again. With the passing of time, Episcopalianism grew cold, wonderfully formal, ritualistic, frigid in its nature, and some young men in college, members of that body, who wanted warmth, zeal, fervor, and feeling in their religious affairs, undertook to inject some of the warmth that they had into the cold Episcopal organization. What was their effort? To try to reform Episcopalianism. Leading that body was none other than John Wesley. When that effort failed, Methodism was born

on this earth, 1729. What was the purpose of Wesley? "I am trying to reform the Episcopal church" Thus he lived and died a member of the Episcopal church, working at it, trying to reform it; but when it refused, those who believed as did Wesley organized and looked back to Wesley as the founder and the beginning of that denomination.

Well, you can hardly quit, when you talk along those lines. In the course of time, two questions arose. Now be it remembered, that with all denominations thus far had been the idea of the baptizing or the sprinkling of babies and, therefore, the subject of baptism, namely a baby, and the actual baptism, namely sprinkling, became a practice among them, as borrowed from the Catholics who adopted it on a parity with immersion, at the Council of Ravenna, 1311. All right. This grew up within these different bodies, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians, this sentiment: namely, nobody but an adult is a subject of baptism, and nothing but immersion meets the demands of God's word; therefore, those elements from various parties believing that only adults should be baptized and that immersion was the act, accumulated, and gathered force until, about 1608, the Baptist church came into existence, with its name based upon the baptismal act. That was an effort to reform some of the churches gone before.

Friends, things went from bad to worse; human names and party spirit reigned high-handed, human creeds were everywhere prominent and each of them, bitter in denunciation of the others. Again, the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, sponsored by various ones, was obnoxious to those who used their heads for thinking and for study. Based upon total depravity, this comes, of necessity, the doctrine of a miraculous conversion. Hence, the world lost its head; conversion was a mystery; and every man's birth born into God's family was the result of a great miracle so that confusion became more and more confounded upon the earth. The years went by; the nineteenth century opened up; and then from various quarters of our globe, came a general demand that something must be done. "The world cannot go on with its partisan spirit, with its divided condition, with each having his own particular creed, and each bearing some human name. Can't we do something about it?" May I say to you, that, as a result of the failure of the reformers and the disappointment of those who had gone before, good men from various denominations reasoned together, and began to wonder why this could not be upon this earth again, an organization like that back in the days of the apostles. ' flat thought fastened itself upon them; they couldn't get rid of the idea. "Is it possible that this can be such an organization ?" Well, they looked about their respective company, and the various denominations, and found that Christ was not in this one. They turned to the next and said, "This one is a total stranger to Jesus Christ; he said not a word about it." They looked at a third, "Neither is he here. Brethren, what can we do?" Then this was that duplication of the thought of Mary, the mother of our Lord, when they said: "Brethren, something is radically wrong. Let's go back to Jerusalem." Hence, this was begun another great movement, different from anything hitherto found upon the earth. What was it? A determination to restore, not to reform, but to restore that which one time existed, which had been lost and buried under the rubbish of human affairs. It needed to be brought to light again. Therefore, the great Restoration Movement was launched upon this earth.

Well, I want to lay down to you some principles upon which they began their work. First: "We will not try to organize some human affair." Everybody said that this were far too many organizations, that man had no right to go into the business of establishing churches. So, they said: "Let's go back to Jerusalem and this take the Bible as our guide, and by it, let's see if we can't duplicate the

old paths and restore the ancient order of affairs." Again, "These creeds so prevalent among men, and so contrary one to the other, are but human products. Brethren, let's cut loose from every creed on earth and adopt the Bible as our only creed, our only discipline, our only confession of faith, our only church manual." Now that's a platform broad enough and big enough for every God-loving man to occupy and yet not sacrifice any principle whatsoever. That same thing can be done today by every man, woman, boy and girl in all this land of ours. "God's word as our complete guide without human addition, without human supplement—just the Bible and the Bible alone." Then "Let's subscribe to the idea of speaking where God speaks, and where He is silent, let us likewise be." Friends, those are mottoes early adopted in the effort to bring about a restoration of the ancient order of things. They saw each one over in his little denominational pen, not only with a human creed, but wearing, boasting, and glorying in a human name, unknown, unheard of, unwritten, in all the Book of God. They decided: "Let's lay aside the name Lutheran, as Luther himself bade them, which exhortation I read to you last night. Let's lay aside the name Presbyterian; let's no longer march under the banner of the name Baptist; let's go back. What were they back on Pentecost? What were they in the city of Antioch? What were they in the household of Cornelius?" And therefore, the thought seized upon them, "They were Christians," and that covered every child of God on earth. "That name is nonsectarian; it's undenominational; it's not narrow; it's not limited; it does not build a pen of human construction around anybody and say 'unless you subscribe to our creed, and adopt our human name, you can't be one of our number.' Friends, that's narrow; that's little, that's dwarfed, and dwindled; let's march out on the broad, universal platform; God's word as our guide; the name Christian as that by which we will be called, and under the banner of Jesus Christ our Lord, let us pass gloriously on."

Well, that's not all. They said: "In our practice let this be absolutely nothing required of any man other than that which is taught in the Bible either by direct statement, or by approved example, or by necessary inference." Those are planks laid down, and then to guarantee the matter, they said: "In al] things of faith, let this be unity; in all matters of opinion, let this be liberality; in all things, let this be charity." Friends, that's the only hope of this sin cursed world; that's the only hope of healing the breaches in the religious realm today. We ought to stand as a solid phalanx on matters of faith. If God has declared a thing and we can read it from His word, I would not move onethousandth of an inch; I could not compromise one idea of faith taught by God's word; but if it be merely a matter of opinion, let me have it, but let me hold it to myself. I have no right to force my opinion upon anyone else. I am out of order, a disturber of the church, if I go about from house to house, or publicly try to push my opinion upon any other member of the church. Let's hold that opinion as private property. And then, in all things let this be charity, and let brotherly love prevail so long as this is not a sacrifice of faith demanded. Friends, I believe confidently, that we have come to the time in our religious affairs, that these old principles, seemingly forgotten, need to be restated over and over again. While I have preached to you practically this same outline before, and have gone over this same matter, I have been in the schoolroom long enough to know that people forget things, that they have to be told over, and over, and over. With these young men here from FreedHardeman College, and about double their number that have not come, over and over, and then again, from varied and sundry angles, these matters are discussed, and then: "To the library, boys, for confirmation of all these notes, so that when you get out, you can say it boldly as you ought to speak, and be confident that you know what you are talking about, and with courage preach the ancient order of affairs, and let no uncertain sound go forth." Repetition is a

basic principle in teaching.

We are today in a condition possibly without a parallel. I am talking now about matters in general. Friends, in the whole world this is a spirit of anarchy prevailing. I want you to think just a moment. In our homes, rebellion is in evidence far more than it was, a generation gone by. In our cities, counties, states, nation, men do not want to be subjected to authority. Every man wants to be free to do as he pleases. I regret to say that same spirit has found its way into the church of the living God, when no longer are men content to bow in subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ. Modernistic trends are in evidence on every hand, and that means the rejection of established authority.

Another trait of the times is the consuming ambition to start something new. This are just plenty of people who aspire to prominence on the ground, "I've discovered some new thing." This is a wonderful age of invention, as everybody knows. Unfortunately, that same idea has not been kept out of the body of Christ. Paul said: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts," for prominence, for prestige, for publicity, "they'll heap to themselves teachers with itching ears" that just must be scratched. They can't stand it any longer; they'll turn away their ears from the truth, and take out after fabulous stories, and attractive suggestions. Too, this have developed, within these last years, two different types of preaching, two different philosophies of proclaiming the gospel, two methods of telling the story. One of them is, to put on the soft pedal, to preach what you believe to be right, but to do it with modification and sometimes with apology. "Be certain that you respect and give due deference unto your friends, and say nothing, even though you think it correct, that might be offensive; seek popularity and the applause and the commendations of your fellows." Victims of the current mania to preach over radio are often guilty of such an attitude. They modify what otherwise they might preach. They give some little, nice, liberal talk on modern affairs or educational matters, or social customs, and develop the habit of preaching after that fashion, till the gospel, God's power to save, is absolutely gone from their line of proclamation. Hence, they seem to love the praise of men more than the praise of God. They recognize all people who even claim to wear the name Christian. Now then, I want to say something, and if I were off by myself I would say it.

Friends, this is not a man on God's earth that has more respect for his fellows and their convictions than do I, but I believe some things; I preach certain things; I'm criticized for certain matters. Now mark it—you people who have very kindly been attending our services know this: I preach just what the Saviour said, namely: "He that believes the gospel and is baptized, shall be saved." Now you know I teach that. My brethren subscribe to it whether they all preach it firmly or not. They teach that faith is the condition of salvation, that baptism is "for the remission of sins," that salvation follows obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that no man enjoys forgiveness of sins until that man has believed the gospel with all of his heart, repented of his sins, acknowledged the Christ, and been buried in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Now, I teach that; I believe that; those are my convictions; and as the boy said, "Them's my sentiments."

Now then, here's a mighty good friend of mine, a man that I love and appreciate but he has not done that. For me to recognize him as a Christian and call upon him to have a part in the service, to pray unto God Almighty for me, is, in my way of thinking, a reflection upon that man's good sense, and presents quite an embarrassing situation. First, if I recognize him as a Christian I slap

in the face all the preaching that I have been doing for the past twenty five years. By my recognition of that man as a Christian, I virtually say, "I am a hypocrite; I don't believe what I have been preaching all these years." I simply say to him whom I count as a friend: "Sir, I cannot be consistent and recognize you as a child of God." May I tell you this: I was reared with a boy who is now a preacher of a denomination. He is quite prominent and holds place among his people. He likes me and it's quite mutual. He comes to hear me preach sometimes, and one day on the train, he said to me: "Hardeman, I just want to ask you something. I think you like me," I said, "I do. I wouldn't mistreat you at all, I'd do anything I could for you." Then he said: "You never do recognize me, never call upon me, never give me any mention, or recognition as a Christian when I am in your service." I thought that was the time to come clean, so I said: "Just look here! I teach that a man has to believe the gospel, repent of his sins, confess his faith, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be a Christian. You haven't done that; therefore, if I recognize you as such, I go back on my teaching." He slapped me on the knee, and said: "That's the first time that I have ever been made to see and appreciate that fact. Here's my hand! I respect you ten times more; I think you would be hypocritical to do it otherwise."

Let me tell you, friends, we'll never get anywhere by a compromising spirit. Brother J. D. Tant is an old preacher of the gospel of Christ. A man whose wife was a Christian, though he was not, once said to Brother Tant, "I am some kin to you. I'm a brother-in-law to the church. My wife is a member and that makes me a brother-in-law." Brother Tant said, "Well, that will work both ways; that means then that your wife is a sister-in-law to the devil." Friends, I am just as certain as in your midst I stand, that we have drifted away and departed from that type of preaching which is responsible for our existence in the city of Nashville. I know that if you would hark back to the days, for instance, of Brother J. A. Harding, and others like him, this would be a different ring from that you hear too frequently today. I have brethren who say: "Hardeman, I believe exactly like you do, but—" But what? "I don't think you ought to say some things." Preach the truth; say nothing about anybody else! Now at the first service of this meeting, I reviewed that principle and showed how inconsistent it is. I'm against gambling; I'm against betting; I think marble machines, all such devices, are out of order; but I mustn't say anything about them. "Just go ahead and preach the truth and let the gambling and the saloon-keeper alone!" This are brethren who will maintain that kind of principle with reference to religious matters; and then criticize the outside matter unsparingly. Brethren, let's be consistent and, above all, let's stand foursquare for the ancient order of things.

Let me say to you, as one of the parting messages of this meeting: It has been my heart's desire and prayer to God, that by the recitation of these fundamental matters this might be a cementing together, in closer bonds, the great brotherhood of Nashville, Tennessee, people that I love, and in whom I am deeply interested. We must stand together against the powers of denominationalism, of all kinds of error, and as Jude said, "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." You ask how can that be? We have the same soil that they had on Pentecost, the hearts of men; we have the same seed of the kingdom, God's word. If brethren will put that seed into the hearts or soil, it will bring forth exactly what it did back this; if we'll continue in the apostles' doctrine, and be not wise above that which is written, and not be lured after teaching with itching ears, there'll be unity, peace, joy and happiness, as once this was in the land wherein we now dwell.

Let me say again that all the ground we occupy is indeed sacred; the ground whereon we stand is holy ground. What is it, brethren, that has brought to us the prestige and the prominence that we have here in Nashville? Has it been the denominational world, opening up its arms and saying: "We want you in our midst"? Absolutely not, but it has been a fight from beginning to end. God recognized that, and so Paul charged to Timothy, "Son, buckle on God's armor, raise aloft the banner, unsheathe the sword of the spirit, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold upon eternal life," regardless of opposition. That's the type of men and women needed today, those who stand firm for their conviction and until convinced that they are wrong, sacrifice it not. Heed not the siren song of compromise anywhere, but bear down, impress God's truth, because the salvation of a soul depends upon it. I have heard of men who said: "Hardeman, I believe exactly as you do. I believe those things precisely, and I vacant you to preach them." I have had word sent to me by preachers: "Hardeman, lay on! I want you to do it; but I can't and stay where I am." Can a man be saved who thinks more of his job than he does of God's truth? I bid you think on matters of that kind.

Friends, I appreciate your encouragement and your exhortation, but put it down: N. B. Hardeman will be preaching it exactly that way twenty-five, forty, even forty-five years hence, if God but spares me. But I have talked to you long enough this afternoon. If this is one in this entire company who wants to hark back to Jerusalem, return to the old paths, embrace the old faith, and walk with Christ in the straight and narrow way, it is our happy privilege to remind you again of the Lord's invitation to come unto him. If you have understood the teaching and have developed a faith that urges you to obey the Lord; if you will to turn from your evil ways—repent—and here before this audience, confess your faith, thence to be buried with the Lord by baptism, to rise to walk in newness of life; will you not come as an expression of your interest? Do it immediately, as we again sing the invitation song.

4.18 - THE FINAL EXHORTATION Philippians 1:27, 28

THE FINAL EXHORTATION Php 1:27-28 This brings us, friends, to the last service of the meeting as scheduled. I just want to say now, this meeting has transcended the fondest hopes I had when I first came to have a part in it with you two weeks ago. It has steadily grown in interest and in number attending. This afternoon this was scarcely a seat to be found after all were in; that same condition prevails tonight, with some standing. When people about seven or eight thousand strong come together from time to time for no clap-trap entertainment, but the rendition of these fine old gospel songs, so well directed by Brother Ben Murphy, and then to hear a simple presentation of gospel truth, it's evidence of their interest in things sacred and sublime.

I have been the recipient, together with Mrs. Hardeman and members of the family, of so many kindnesses extended on your part. Friends from various places and different parts of the city have extended invitations, best wishes, etc. We have been guests at the Sam Davis Hotel. I have stayed in many a hotel, but with no disregard for any other, I think I have never had, on the part of the manager and all the employees, more courteous treatment, more interest and anxiety to look after every need and to see that every comfort was extended, than has been mine to receive from that splendid hotel of your city. I want all to know that I am profoundly grateful for courtesies of that kind.

I was requested by Brother Redmond to announce the meeting at Russell Street, to begin on the second Sunday in November, with Brother E. W. McMillan as the preacher. At the same time Brother I. A. Douthitt will be at Charlotte Avenue. I am glad to make these announcements and to commend to you all gospel truth and hearing wherever it may be.

I have been interested in Nashville since first I came into your midst. I was delighted last spring when I learned that you were to have meetings at all the congregations in the city, about the same time, and thus put on a campaign for the extension of the gospel of Christ. I understand Brother Paul Miller suggested that idea. My friends, it is many times fine to look back. Our Spirit? are saddened and we are made to feel our loss when we think of those who were with us in other meetings but since have slipped away. Time is so rapidly passing. It doesn't seem to me possible that it has been sixteen and one-half years since I first came to you. Of course, I cannot remember all, but I want to let you know of those that I do recall, most of whom occupied the platform: Brother E. G. Sewell, Brother Scobey, old Brother Blaine, Brother George Porch, Brother Elam, Brother McQuiddy, Brother F. W. Smith, Brother Moore, Brother Alex Perry, Brother Dr. Boyd, Brother J. W. Grant, Brother J. Petty Ezzell, Brother Lawson, Brother Allen, Brother Dennison, my good friend, Brother James T. Anderson, of Waverly, also Brother David Lipscomb, of Fanning School, together with Governor McMillin, Governor Taylor, Judge Meeks, Judge Pitts, and Mayor Hilary Howse. All of these have passed on. Brother Smith, who was then Chief of Police and who was greatly interested, has been unable to attend this meeting. They once occupied this platform and with all of those back tonight, they would fill these seats that are now occupied by others. I just mention that because in thinking about it, I made note of some whom I recall with a degree of

pleasure, and whom I counted among my friends and those interested in what I am trying to do. This meeting, friends, from various angles, has been exceeding pleasant, and I am quite certain that profit has resulted from our studying together those things that challenge our attention. So far as I know, these lessons will go on down through the ages. 'Hundreds if not thousands of young men and older ones will read the sermons, meditate upon them, revise them, and present those thoughts on down to boys and girls yet unborn upon this earth. Unto God Almighty be all the praise and the glory and unto us the encouragement.

I am reading tonight Php 1:27-28. Hear it: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries; which is to them," that is, which faith on your part, is to them "an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." That text is a little lengthy, but I want to read it again and impress upon you: Only this, brethren, "let your conversation be,"—some versions put it, "let your manner of life," others, "your citizenship"—"let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel: And in nothing terrified by your adversaries' which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." The Philippian church was the first one established on European soil. Preachers went this in response to a Macedonian call. They lingered round about the city for some little time and learned that some women were accustomed to meet out by the riverside. Thither they went. The result of that contact was the preaching of the gospel to Lydia and to her house. They were converted, and these became the nucleus of the Philippian church. To that, the jailer and his house were later added, and others as the power of God had its effect. Paul stayed with this church and planted it correctly, established it firmly, and then went on his journey southward, through Amphipolis and Apollonia and on to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and as far south as Corinth. After awhile, during imprisonment, Paul wrote to the Philippians this short letter of four brief chapters. In that he spoke the words of our text tonight: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

I am calling attention, friends, first to the fact that this letter was not addressed unto preachers, and yet to them it is so wonderfully applicable. You will not disagree with me when I declare that any man who stands before his fellows and talks about things that transcend the realms of time, when souls are at stake, and heaven or hell may be the destiny—surely when he is thus honored by the presence of his fellows and enabled to speak to them, his words ought to be of such a character as becometh the gospel of Christ. Any preacher who is called into the sick room to offer words of encouragement, and of sympathy, ought to let his conversation and manner of life be such as are becoming to the gospel of Christ. And that man who stands at the sacred casket and speaks the last word regarding some departed soul, that man, surely, ought to have his conversation such as becomes the gospel of Christ. But, friends, I said this was not written to preachers, and it wasn't, only as they are members of the church. Nor was it written to elders as though they were in a separate class, and needed instruction other than all the membership. Brethren, this letter was written unto the church at Philippi and it includes both men and women, boys and girls. Paul said: Brethren, I know not whether I will ever see you again or not, but be that as it may, I want you to get this: "Let your conversation," let your manner of life, let your

citizenship, "be as becometh the gospel of Christ." Friends, I think ail of us like things becoming. We want matters fit, suited. The world about us is wonderful in its harmony, in its fitness, in the relation of all things one with the other. I have often thought of the absolute fitness of things with which divinity has had to do. Now Paul said, Brethren, "let your conversation be" fitting, let it be suited, let it be adapted, let it be becoming. Becoming to what? To the gospel of our Lord. We are particular about our garb and the paraphernalia in which we are clad. We want our wardrobe, if you please, all harmoniously blended; we want things suited and in harmony. I have seen women in the millinery shops, and I have sat, as patient as possible, and watched them try on one hat after another. I have seen them fix the hair and touch it up nicely, and the saleslady would ask: Isn't that a darling little hat? and I thought, "Indeed, it is!" They would try this and object on the ground that it isn't suited to my complexion; this doesn't fit my type; and it isn't adapted to my height, etc. Well, that runs throughout the whole realm of our affairs. If you are going out for a rough job, and to do manual labor, you don't want to be dressed like preachers, in their finery, and superior garb (?). If you want, therefore, to do hard, dirty work, dress accordingly, and be becoming to the nature of the thing that confronts you. And so it is, in all the affairs of life. Paul said, Brethren, "let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." I'll tell you, friends, you can get a pretty good idea of how a man estimates the gospel of Christ by watching his conversation. He claims to be a Christian, but from his mouth this goes forth a continued sluice of slime. What do you know about him? He may, perhaps, sit on the front seat and sing, "I'm Bound for the Promised Land," but you know his ideal and his conception of the gospel are indeed quite low. Now if that's in harmony with what you think the gospel is, it's away down below par on the market of the world, and I think this has never been a time when our attention needs to be called to these matters more than now. The world is loose and lax in its manner of speech. Our vocabulary is not of that particular type as will always adorn the doctrine of God. The name of the Lord is used quite loosely. Bywords and slang phrases too frequently abound in the conversation of most of us, and thus I really think we belittle the gospel of Christ and the church of the Lord. If, according to some of our actions, we think they're in harmony with the gospel of Christ, the impression goes out, that the church doesn't stand for much and doesn't mean much.

I want to ask you, friends, how can we, as a body of people exalt the church of the Lord in Nashville? By just letting matters of every type go along unprotected? Shall we let all kinds of conduct prevail and nothing be said about it? Shall we allow those on the outside to point their finger and say: "Some in the church are unfit, some are unworthy, about some we know enough to put them in the penitentiary"? Can we expect the church of the Lord to be elevated, adorned, and highly regarded? Friends, this's no outside power on earth, nor are this enough demons in hell to hinder the onward march and the progress of the church of the Lord. It must survive or perish, live or die, according to what those on the inside may do. The enemy from without can do but little harm, but if this rise up an enemy from within, he can stick the dagger that will break the body and cause its life current to flow as in the days gone by. May I say to you tonight, what I have said before: I would rather be the man that injected the spear and tore asunder the body of Christ on the cross than to be the man in Nashville, or anywhere else, responsible for the dividing of the spiritual body of our Lord. Friends, let's have our conversation, our manner of life, our united citizenship in the kingdom of God, such as to be becoming unto the gospel of our Lord; let's elevate the church in the conception of the world; let's make it realize that the church stands for something; that it is God's institution; that Christ is the head of it; and that the King of the kingdom

is reigning over the destinies of men. So Paul said, Brethren, "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent." Paul didn't know what the future held for him. He was at that time a prisoner, in the custody of the enemy, and, I presume, like all prisoners, he indulged the hope that, perhaps, he might be freed, and again go to the Philippian brethren. "But, brethren, whether I do or not, I want to hear of your affairs." Friends, may I make that sentiment mine. I have been with you now for two weeks. This is the eighteenth successive effort on this platform in your midst. Life is fraught with so many uncertainties, pitfalls, dangers, incidents, and accidents all along the line, that I don't know whether I will ever stand on the platform of Ryman Auditorium again or not. I may never behold the faces of you who have so kindly come and lent your presence, your prayers, and your influence to make pleasant these relationships, but candidly, and with a degree of feeling that I am wholly unable to express, may I say, whether I ever come to you again, brethren, or not, I want to hear of your affairs. I'm interested in the cause of Christ, not simply at Henderson, Tennessee, not simply in the county where I chance to dwell, not merely in the state of my citizenship, but everywhere, from the rivers to the ends of the earth, I'm interested in the cause that Christ died to establish. I want to hear of the affairs of brethren. But, Paul, what do you want to hear? Paul said, I want to hear this: "That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Now, no man on earth could put a stronger statement down than that. Paul, what do you want to hear? That the Philippians stand fast. If I had been writing it, I might have said, I want to hear, brethren, that you stand pat, but I mean exactly the same thing. Now, do you get just what that implies? It doesn't mean to be a weakling, a negative sort of fellow, afraid of his shadow, looking out with his ear to the ground to see what public sentiment says, figuring out what is the best policy. You brethren stand fast, stay put! That's the idea. I have rooted you and have grounded you, I've stayed with you until the tap root has gone directly down and this has a footing, and then I have stayed with you until the sprangle roots, the guy ropes, are out in every direction. For more than a hundred years we have preached upon unity, but our appeal has been to the denominational world. Now it has come to pass, and I say it with profound regret, that in these last days; we must preach on "Unity" and apply it to our own brethren. May God help us and cause the time soon to come when, again, all discrepancies, all cross-firing, and all reports of every slanderous nature may pass away, and God's truth may be so sacred that we stand uncompromisingly for it, "earnestly contending for the faith once for all delivered," and that this will be no division among us.

Paul said, I want to hear of your affairs, "that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving." Now, friends, if I may say it, I have always been, I presume, what the world would call a rather positive sort of fellow. That's just my nature. I have never been afraid, regarding any matter that I ever heard of, to tell the world where I stand. And why not? Sometimes you find brethren who are afraid to express themselves on issues that threaten the peace of congregations. They usually say: "I just haven't studied that." Brethren, that is not so. That's an alibi, an excuse to get by without committing themselves. May God forbid the time will ever come when that any matter appertaining to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ may be presented, and N. B. Hardeman doesn't know where he stands. My friends, I believe that in the kingdom of God this's no place for a negative character; this's no place for a weakling; this's no place for an apologist; this's no place for a compromiser. Fancy the peerless apostle Paul, Peter, James or John, of any other type than that of a positive, firm, aggressive character, willing to stand four-square for God's truth against the

claims of all opposition whatsoever and whosoever they may be. Now Paul said, Brethren, I want you to strive. Someone may say: "I don't think this should be any strife." Well, I don't either. God never said strife, s-t-r-I-f-e; he said, brethren, I want you to s-t-r-I-v-e, strive. I just wonder what purpose some people have. They are wholly negative in nature, not doing this, that, or the other. Take, for instance, the one-talent man. What have you against him? What did he do? Nothing. What accusation? "I ain't done nothing." Well, what can you say against him ? Wherein was he a transgressor ? Nowhere. Yet the Lord cast him out into outer darkness. Why? Because he hadn't done anything. Now, let me tell you, friends, this will be more folks in hell for not having done what they ought, than for flagrantly and openly violating God's word. Matthew 25:1-46 gives the picture of the last judgment. To them on the right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." Why? "I was ahungred." What did you do about it? You got busy and gave me something to eat. "I was thirsty." You acted. "I was naked." You moved. "I was sick and in prison," and here you came. All right, "Enter in." But to them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Why, Lord, what have they done? Let's see. "I was hungry." What did you folks do? Nothing. "I was thirsty." Then what? You kept on doing nothing. "I was sick and in prison," and you did more of the same. To hell you go. Why? Just because you haven't done something.

Friends, don't you know this are two ways of sinning? One is by commission, the other is by omission. Many people sit and take an inventory of their lives, and they nearly always take it negatively: "I haven't done this, or that, or the other. Hence, I am all right." Friends, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is not simply to be good, but the religion of the Bible is to do good. It's an active, aggressive, progressive sentiment starting in the hearts of men, finding expression out in their relationships to their fellows. Paul said: "Brethren, I want you to strive." How, Paul? "I want you to strive together."

I was reared away back in the country. I don't usually have to tell that. I used to drive oxen, and some of you old-timers know the kind of vocabulary it takes to get anywhere with them. It was a pleasure to crack the whip over the backs of Tom and Jerry and see them step together. I often boasted that they could pull anything loose at both ends. But I remember to have had steers that strived hard, but they were pulling against one the other, until a great knot was on the outside of their necks. Of course, you city folks don't know a thing in the world about such things. They were striving, but they were striving one against the other, and they needed swapping off or selling to the other fellow.

After the days of the ox my father used horses, and we had a good team of beautiful bays that stepped together. I liked to drive them, I took pride in getting up fine harness with brass top hames, leather tugs, back-bands, bellybands, choke-straps, flank-straps, etc. But I have seen teams much better than I ever had. I have seen big Percherons stepping down the street in perfect unison until the wagon wheel dropped in a hole up to the hub. This they stopped. Of course, I know what's on hand now. The driver talks kindly to them; he walks around and pats them on the neck and says nice things, and then by and by, he gets back and gives the word "go." Then the off horse lunges forward while the lead horse doesn't budge. Well, that got nowhere. The wheel is still resting on the hub and in the mud. Well, the driver goes around and tries to quiet them down again. He says nice things to them when he really feels like beating the life out of them. After a while, he picks up the lines and gently gives the word "go," and the lead horse lunges, while the other one stands stock still. Then both horses and driver get in a mood of excitement and anxiety.

The horses begin to see-saw, back and forth. Perspiration breaks out in great drops of sweat, and they get to foaming and champing the bits. Finally, one of those horses lays his chin over on the other one's neck right in front of the hame. Do you know what that means? That means, "I'm balked, nothing further doing." Now, after that failure to strive together, I have seen some fellow drive up with a pair of little peg-leg mules that weigh about 800 pounds. They have rope bridles, shuck collars, cotton back-bands, iron traces, no breaching, no belly-bands, nor flank straps. Without any great big show, this man just drives his little mules across the tongue, hooks them up, while he sings, "Blest be the Tie That Binds." He then gets back and picks up the lines. They set their little legs; he gives the word; and they move together, all eight feet in the same direction; and that old wagon comes out of the mire and moves on down the street, while the big horses, finely harnessed, look like thirty cents with a hole in it. This shows what can be done by striving together. That's the philosophy; that's the keynote of success. I care not how inferior, or how small a matter may be, a business, an organization, or a congregation. If every member in it will strive together, that thing is going to succeed. Paul said: "I want you to strive together." For what? "For the faith." Not for some new-fangled idea, not for some modern philosophy, not for some fancied theory, not for something speculative in nature, concerning which you cannot be certain, and which at best is only a guess. I'm not asking you to strive together for that, but for that "faith once for all delivered unto the saints." Brethren, put your shoulders to the wheel, get your feet properly set, and when the word is given, let's strive together, and as a solid phalanx we can make heaven and earth move, for the accomplishment of God's purpose among men. In all of that, Paul in effect said, Don't be terrified now, don't be disturbed, nor agitated by your enemy. Of course, this will be opposition; this will be those to hinder your progress; this will be those to throw the proverbial monkey wrench in the wheel; but don't you be "terrified by your adversaries: which is to them—" Which what? Which contention for the faith "Is," to your enemy, a "token of perdition." They think you are going to hell. They see you working hard and striving together for the faith. They say: "That's dead sure to lead to perdition." Don't you be worried about that. While they interpret it that way, let me say to you, brethren, it is to you a token of salvation and that of God.

Friends, those are the sentiments tonight. Now the final verse that I transmit to you is also from Paul. "Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," now mark it—"forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Paul wasn't a wishy-washy character; he wasn't a policy man; he cared nothing about what the world said. "I count all that but as the refuse of earth that I may win Christ." "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus that testify the gospel of the grace of God." Therefore, brethren, "be stedfast, be unmoveable." Think of it: those characters whose pictures have adorned the pages of profane history have been men, first, of convictions; second, of courage; third, of faith. They neither doubted nor were they afraid of any adversary. They are the type that has moved forward all the affairs of the world. That's what we need in every department of life. This need to be, may I suggest, in the home, fathers and mothers who stand for the best interest of their children. I think you know that. In the school room, this needs to be a firm hand, and yet one characterized by sense. It won't do to turn matters over to our children in the home; they have not had their senses exercised as yet, to discern between good and evil. The old-time discipline has faded away, hence, we are leaving things for the schools, for the courts, and for the state to rectify, and our penitentiaries are overflowing with boys and girls who, if correctly governed and disciplined back at

home, would not be on the state and behind prison bars. In our city and county administration we need men who will stand foursquare for their convictions. In the State of Tennessee, as governor, as executive, we need men who have conviction, who are nobody's puppets, not mere echoes, not "me too" fellows. It's a tragedy, friends, in matters political, when we have a candidate put out by some great politician, and then, perchance, nominated or elected. What's the common sentiment over Tennessee? "Some man will run him. He's but a puppet in the hands of somebody else." The governor of Tennessee rarely ever lives in Nashville.

Sometimes as elders in the congregation, we have men who are weaklings, who yield to every kind of a suggestion, and who are afraid to do their duty. In the pulpit we need men who believe God's Book, who stand like a stone wall against all error, who are neither afraid nor ashamed to denounce that which is antagonistic to the body of Christ. Lord, give us men of that type. "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding," not simply as Job said, "by the skin of the teeth," but "abounding in the work of the Lord." Why? "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." We work at lots of things, friends, put in our time and money and our very best effort; yet all the while we are not absolutely certain. Things come along and destroy the crops, after the hard days' labours have been expended; fire breaks out and destroys the goods piled up in our storehouses; the Cumberland River overflows and submerges large parts of our stock—labor in vain. This's but one thing that I know about wherein this is an absolute certainty, and that is the work of the Lord. Stand fast in that, because we know that when we labor in His name, and according to His word, it will not be in vain; but on fairer fields and in brighter climes, in the glad sweet by and by, in a land across which the shadows have never come, a home of an unclouded day, we shall reap the handsome reward. I am saying, therefore, friends, to all of you that love the truth: buckle on God's armor afresh tonight, raise aloft the sword dipped in the blood of the spotless Son of God, unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, march faithfully on under the leadership of Him who has never yet lost a single conflict; and by and by, when life's dream is over, when its race is won, its battles fought, and its victories won, He'll bid us lay aside our old battlescarred armour on the glad plains of eternity, hang our swords upon the jasper walls of that eternal city, while with palms of victory and with crowns of glory, we sweep through the gates into the beauties and grandeurs that passeth understanding. In the sweet by and by, what will it mean to be this?

If this's one or any number, tonight, not yet bound for the Promised Land, not yet headed toward the sweet by and by, I bid you come; make preparation for that just now, while together we stand for the song.

5.00 - Title

HARDEMAN'S TABERNACLE SERMONS

VOLUME V A Series of Sermons Delivered in the War Memorial Building and Central Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, November 1-8, 1942 BY N. B. HARDEMAN President of Freed-Hardeman College HENDERSON, TENNESSEE GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 1976

5.00.01 - Introduction

INTRODUCTION

There are important elements in a sermon which cannot be reduced to writing. They cannot be recorded on the printed page. The spoken word of the preacher may be preserved in writing; but "the light in his eye, the glow of his cheek, the sweep of his hand, the attitude of his body, the music of his voice"—these we cannot print. Yet, apart from these, the spoken word may possess such intrinsic value and power as to justify its preservation in writing. Such is true of the sermons delivered by N. B. Hardeman. This is the fifth volume of Tabernacle Sermons. Thousands who heard these sermons when originally delivered have bought them in book form and read them with an eagerness and a satisfaction that can be explained only on the ground that the sermons are sound, fearless, and scriptural. At no time during the history of the "Restoration Movement" has one man preached so much to so many people in one city. We know of no sermons for which there is a greater demand than those of Brother Hardeman. This is no ordinary demand; but N. B. Hardeman is, in point of ability and loyalty to the truth, no ordinary man. The Chapel Avenue congregation sponsored the Fifth Tabernacle Meeting with the hearty cooperation of other congregations in Nashville. H. Leo Boles was first to suggest the wisdom of conducting this meeting. It was planned that the meeting be held in the War Memorial Building, the auditorium of which is considerably smaller than Ryman Auditorium, where the four previous meetings were held. This was done for two reasons: first, the primary purpose of this meeting was the edification of the church in the "unity of the Spirit" rather than the conversion of alien sinners; second, the restrictions and disruptions brought about by the war rendered it advisable to conduct the meeting on a more conservative plan. The objective of the meeting was successfully realized. The necessary funds to pay the expenses of the meeting were easily subscribed; in fact, oversubscribed; the various congregations of the city were well represented in attendance at all services; and Brother Hardeman was shown every courtesy and consideration that Christian hospitality and propriety could suggest. As soon as it was known that he would speak in the War Memorial Building and that the facilities of a radio station were desired, Central Church of Christ extended to Brother Hardeman, through the Chapel Avenue congregation, a cordial invitation to speak daily at the noon hour over WLAC. The invitation follows:

Nashville, Tennessee October 20, 1942.

Chapel Avenue Church of Christ Attention: Brother Lee Jones

Brethren:

Through WLAC we have learned of your desire to have Brother Hardeman speak over the radio during the weekdays at some convenient hour. At our board meeting yesterday afternoon it was unanimously agreed to extend to you the courtesies of Central’s daily radio period. Should you desire to accept this offer, we will see to it that our auditorium is made ready for the daily services. The songs, prayer, etc., can commence in time so Brother Hardeman can have all of the

fifteen-minute period granted by the radio schedule. Let us hear from you. Approved by Board of Elders and Deacons. J. S. WARD. This invitation was promptly and courteously accepted in the following letter from R. W. Comer:

Dr. J. S. Ward Central Church of Christ Nashville, Tennessee Dear Doctor Ward:

Brother Jones referred your letter to me. In behalf of Chapel Avenue Church and in the interest of the cause of Christ in general, I want to thank Central Church for its offer. It is our desire to tale advantage of every available opportunity to promote the cause of Christ in general, which should strengthen each congregation and "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond oil peace."

We are glad to accept your offer, believing that Brother Hardeman will have no trouble in arranging his plane accordingly.

We will be glad for you to arrange for your song leader, Andy T. Ritchie, Jr., to take care of! the day services at Central.

Faithfully yours, R. W. COMER.

Accordingly, Brother Hardeman spoke daily over WLAC from Central Church. These services were well attended. No doubt many listened to them over the radio who could not be present in person. The sermons delivered at Central and in the Memorial Auditorium speak for themselves. They measure up to the high standard set in the preceding meetings. All who love the truth will enjoy them and be profited by them. Also during the meeting Brother Hardeman spoke at a chapel service at David Lipscomb College. Of the five Tabernacle Meetings, in which Brother Hardeman has done the preaching, many competent judges who attended them all pronounce this the best. Joe Ridley conducted the song services at the Memorial Building in a manner that was gratifying to all concerned. This volume is sent forth in the hope that it, like its predecessors, may be instrumental in turning many to righteousness. We predict for it a wide circulation and a long period of usefulness.

B. C. GOODPASTURE.

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5.01 - IS THE BIBLE TRUE?

IS THE BIBLE TRUE? My friends and brethren, I am delighted to see such a fine audience assembled—possibly twenty-five hundred are present. Just twenty years ago yesterday, I came into your midst for the first tabernacle meeting. The stenographer who was present at that time to take down that which was delivered is with us again this afternoon, and I am sure a number who were at that first meeting twenty years past are also here. To satisfy a curiosity, let me ask every one of you who attended that meeting on the first night please to stand for just a moment. (Perhaps one thousand arose.) That is fine. Through a kindly Providence we have been spared this score of years, and I joy and rejoice that it is mine to be with you at this time for another study which I trust may be both pleasant and profitable to all. It has been announced that the theme for the afternoon would be: ""Is the Bible True?" Doubtless, some of you wonder why I selected such a subject. Your very presence indicates that you are interested in this study. I have been on railroad cars when they pulled into the station. I have seen men walk along with a hammer and have heard them knock the wheels of that car on which I was. I never got alarmed at such and decided that there was danger. I understood that there was precious freight aboard and that they just wanted to make certain that everything was safe and secure. I believe that it is not amiss for us to examine that foundation, upon which our hopes must forever rest, and to take another survey of things that have challenged the attention of many people through the passing of the years.

I wonder if you are thinking of the importance attached to such a question as our subject. What does it imply? If the Bible is God’s book, it is true; if not, it is the work of man, and, may I say, if the work of man, it is the greatest imposition this world has ever seen, because from beginning to end it claims to be a product from the hand of God, and that its statements were penned by holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. If it is not God’s book, it must come down from the high pinnacle on which it has placed itself, to the common level of man. But even more than that, it would have to sink beneath the ordinary writings of honest men because of the claim that it makes. If such claim turned out to be false, then it sinks below such a level. What is involved in a study of this kind? I want to say to you, friends, that our conception of God Almighty is based upon the Bible. No people, no nation, ever has had a conception of one true and living God where the Bible has not gone. You might say that all nations have by nature been worshiping characters. That is true, but nature has never taught anybody the existence of but one Supreme Being. May I suggest to you, friends, that all that I know about Christ, the Holy Spirit, Christianity, yea, and mankind, as he was, as he is, and as he shall be, rests upon the statements of the Bible. If that be not true, then I have held the wrong ideals, the wrong impressions, and the wrong hopes all the days of my life. We are forced to acknowledge that things existing in the natural world evidence some power and some character back of them all. No man with good sense can think for long that things we behold came by chance. When we view the great system of worlds round about us, traveling at such rapid rates and moving in such wonderful harmony, we surely cannot imagine that such things just came by accident. They evidence the fact that there was some mighty power, some great designer, back of them all. But we are unable to find out just who that

somebody was. We are doomed to pass on in ignorance, if his identity is never revealed by other means.

Illustrative of that fact, I have here a watch, on the face of which I can look and tell the passing of the hours, minutes, and seconds. I know that this thing did not just happen. I know that somebody with a master mind was back of it, and saw the end from the beginning. The watch itself, therefore, testifies unquestionably to the fact that somebody was back of it, but that watch, of itself, never would tell who that somebody is or was. Hence, I must learn who he was from another source. On its face there is written the name "Hamilton." So, I conclude that while the watch bears evidence of the fact that somebody designed it, the writing upon the face of it tells who that somebody was. The heavens declare the glory of a Supreme Being. The Bible reveals His name and characteristics. May I suggest again, friends, that, compared with all other books, the Bible has been worth more to the world, not only than any other book, but than all other books combined. It would be better for the world to blot out every other book rather than to take from the world the one book called the Bible. We could better begin to build a civilization upon the one book, the Bible, than upon all others that ever have been written by mortal man. Compared, therefore, to the writings of the multiplied thousands, I hesitate not to suggest that, measured from the good it has done, from the sunshine it has brought, from the comfort that has been received from its sacred pages, the Bible stands the most important and by far the most valuable volume the world has ever known. It comes to the fair youths of our land as a lamp to their feet; to those of mature years as a guide to their footsteps; and to those of declining years with the assurance that "the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to He down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." These are the Old Testament assurances. Then from the New Testament this statement: “I go to prepare a place for you, and I if go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." It does not matter, friends, how men may, apparently, despise the Bible, ignore it and make light of it. I have observed that when they come to the close of their careers, they call for that sacred volume. What is it today that is attacking the Bible? It is not crime, for the more crime exists in the world, the more need there is for the Bible. It is not sin that is making the attack upon the sacred oracles, because the greater the sin of the world the more need there is for the Bible as a standard to measure it and to condemn it. What is the thing that is attacking it? It is the so-called educated man who disbelieves the Bible’ and who is seeking some kind of a scientific excuse for rejecting it, and for ignoring God Almighty. Therefore, throughout the land, and in many institutions of learning, and many times in the pulpit, an effort is made to minimize the Bible and to criticize it on the ground that it is contrary to science. Now let it be remembered once for all that there has never yet been announced a correct and true principle of science that, in one particle, contradicts the word of God. The Research Science Bureau, with headquarters at Los Angeles, has proposed to give a thousand dollars in cash to anybody who will find a single, solitary contradiction between the Bible and science. Young men, why don’t you and your professor go and get the money thus guaranteed? Friends, let me suggest to you that there are just three verses in the Bible worth more than all that man has ever written. The first verse is Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." You ask a Christian man how things started, and what is the genesis of all matters. He goes back to the very beginning where all men have to go. I grant you that he

assumes the existence of a God, all-wise, all-powerful, unlimited in nature. With that one assumption all else is easy of under stand)".

You ask a student of the Bible: "Do you understand how things came into existence?" "Do you understand how this old earth was formed and arranged?" "Why, of course, just as Paul understood it. (Hebrews 11:3) 'By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God.'" Now, if the skeptic asks me about my knowledge of God, I simply say that I assume His existence with the characteristics I have mentioned, and upon that I base all things else. That is the background and the cause of all that exists upon the face of the earth today. But if we ask the atheist to explain how things came to be, he will commence by assuming two things: first, that dead matter existed, and second, that natural law acting upon dead matter brought about things as they are. These are the only two theories regarding the beginning of life and the origin of things upon the earth. I must subscribe to one or the other. The Christian man is criticized on the ground that he assumes the existence of God. I grant you that. What does the atheist do? He not only assumes one thing, but two, to start with, and then, before the brakes can be put on, he will assume a third thing. Here they are: first, matter always existed; second, force was coexistent; and then, before you can stop him, he will assume that force acted upon matter, and the result was the bringing forth of life upon the earth. These theories challenge every boy and every girl that start out in life. Let me say to you, friends, that the origin of life is a real problem to all the scientists who leave God out. I took pains to write down just what some of them had to say along that line and I read the same to you now. First, from Mr. H. F. Osborn, scientist of Columbia University, with degrees not only from Columbia, but Princeton, Trinity, Cambridge, and Christiana. He was at one time president of the World Association of Scientists in its great meeting. Hear him. Mr. Osborn said: "The mode of the origin of life is pure speculation." Let me ask: Why not quit speculating about it? He says: "All experiments have proved fruitless." Of course, that is so? as anybody, not even called a scientist, would suggest. Then again, from Mr. Tyndall, a great English scientist: "From the beginning to the end of the inquiry, there is not a shadow of evidence of spontaneous generation." Some have imagined that life just spontaneously burst into existence. If they are correct, why does it not keep on "busting" and coming forth? And if spontaneous generation was once the case, what stopped it? If it did it before, why can't it do it again? Mr. Tyndall further says: "Life must be the antecedent of life." That is, life cannot come from dead matter, a statement that anybody knows without having a knowledge of science. Professor Conn says: "There is not the slightest evidence that living matter could arise from nonliving matter." And then Mr. H. H. Newman of Chicago University, who volunteered to come down to Dayton at the Scopes trial and testify to the scientific point of view, says this: "The problem of the origin of life has not been solved." And to a skeptic it has not. All efforts made on the part of the scientific world to discover what life is, and the source of it, have thus far been a failure and will continue to be. It is an axiomatic truth that out of a thing that does not hold that thing sought, nothing of that kind can come. For instance, you might strike into the mountain, and dig away for hours, and days, and months in search of coal, but if there be no coal stored in the mountain you are certain to get none from it. You search for gold, but if there is no gold in the place searched, you cannot find it by any kind of picking and digging and dynamiting. Why? Because it is not there. "You cannot get blood out of a turnip." So take dead matter and you will find it impossible for life to come out of that which does not contain life. There. fore, as these men well say, the problem of it is yet unsolved. If you leave out God Almighty, it will never be solved.

Now the second basic verse in the Genesis record, which guarantees continuity of life, is Genesis 1:24, which says: "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind." This is said nine times over in that first chapter of Genesis: "Let everything bring forth after its kind." There never has been any fact that scientists have been able to find that has rendered the opposite of that true. Nature refuses to violate that law. No change whatsoever during the passing of the centuries has contradicted that statement. Everything must bring forth after its kind. If I were ever to have a discussion with a man who denies the Bible, I would hold the argument to two points, and until those were answered I would rest at ease. First, explain the origin of life. Second, explain the different species upon the earth. Now Genesis 1:24 commands that everything shall bring forth after its kind, and the passing of the sixty centuries, or the millions and billions of years, if one wants to enlarge upon it, never has seen a violation of that sacred and divine principle as enunciated by the God of the Bible. Mr. W. C. Allee, the scientist, says that there are 636,000 different species, and he says that as yet, not one of them has been found in a state of transition from one thing to another thing. The transmutation of the species is not found, and not one evidence is there to indicate that such a change ever took place. Now I will read on that point, and suggest to you just what these men who deny the Bible have to say about a thing of that sort. Hear, again, Mr. Newman: "One of the truisms of biology is the familiar fact that like produces like." He says: "Sparrows must have sparrows as their ancestors." And yet, after stating that in the biological field, he would want me to believe that a beautiful woman, true in all regards, came from some low animal, and that she is akin to every reptile on the face of the earth. I am reading from a statement of Prof. W. M. Bateson of England, perhaps one of the world’s greatest biologists, who says: "While forty years ago the Darwinian theory was accepted without question, today scientists have come to a point where they are unable to offer explanation for the genesis of species. There is no evidence of any one species acquiring faculties, but there are plenty of examples of species losing faculties. Species lose things, but do not add to their possessions. Variations of many kinds, often considerable, we daily witness, but no origin of species." In other words, take a tomato and it may grow from a small one into a great Ponderosa—but it is still a tomato. We talk about the horse of the long ago and then of the great Percheron of today, but they are still horses. Professor Louis Agassiz, the greatest naturalist that Switzerland ever produced, says: "The theory or the transmutation of species is a scientific mistake, mischievous in tendency." I wonder what our boys and girls have to say about such quotations from scientists that are really recognized as such? Sir William Dawson has this to say: "The record of the rocks is decidedly against evolutionists, especially in the abrupt appearance of new forms. Every grade of life was in its highest and best estate when first introduced." Lord Kelvin, greatest of modern scientists, says: “I marvel at the undue haste with which teachers in our universities and preachers in our pulpits are restating truth in the terms of evolution while evolution remains an unproved hypothesis. ’ Then Professor Shaler of Harvard University: "It begins to be evident to naturalists that the Darwinian hypothesis is still essentially unverified." And yet, men of small caliber have been teaching and writing and preaching these things as matters of fact. Real scholars say: "Evolution is yet an unproved theory." Doctor Ethridge of the British Museum says: "Ninetenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of their views." I will have to read that to boys and girls that think they are smart when they are just about ready to graduate from high school. I never saw one who took that POSITION who did not feel as if he had more sense than the average fellow. All these so-called scientists look down in pity and disdain upon the rest of us

as being so obtuse as to accept God’s Word. Then we have a statement in regard to the transmutation of the species. But until somebody finds a kind of an animal in a go-between state that is, neither that from which it started, nor as yet having reached that toward which it is headed, let us pay no attention to all of the "smart alecks" that talk about the change of the species. Let us give no heed to this nonsense until, out of the multiplied hundreds and thousands of species living, and those that are dead, with their fossils imbedded in the rocks, they find something. If you go back half a billion of years they like to count long years if you go back a billion years, if you dig in the rocks and find the skeleton of a fish, it is just like the fish you catch down here in the Cumberland River. It has not changed one particle. I am calling your attention next to the fact of man’s existence upon the earth. That he is here is evident. How did he come to be? What about our origin? Whence did we come? There are again two theories. One is that there was a germ away back yonder somewhere in the depths of the sea and, after a while, that germ gave birth to two germs. One of these children was a vegetable and the other was an animal. Just think of a family starting with one parent from which two children are born. From a single source there was a little Johnny and then his little sister, Mary. Some can believe that and yet cannot believe the Bible! After a while, the animal part of the germ developed, multiplied, and became a fish, then an amphibian, and then a land animal, then a still larger one, until it came to be a monkey that wrapped his tail around limbs and swung back and forth. Then, in the course of time, he and his fellows lost their tails—and here we stand. That is the theory. There are folks who look as if they can believe that. You will be surprised when I recite to you some things about matters of that kind. You begin to ask how it was that we had certain characteristics and features. For instance, how came we to have eyes? Well, they will tell you that the little animal had a pigment in its skin, and when it was out of the water the sun, playing over the surface of it, seemed to concentrate on one little particle in that pigment, and the rays irritated that little pigment until, in response to that irritation, the eye came out. Well, it is fortunate it came out where it did, I must say. And after a while it happened that the sun’s rays irritated another little spot, and there came out another eye, and it is also fortunate that it came where it did. I wonder why one did not come out on the chin, and the other on the back of the neck. Again, you ask how it came to pass that locomotion was possible, and the theorists will tell you that a little water dog washed upon the shore. It had a wart on its belly. It is fortunate it had it on its belly instead of its back. It found by wiggling around that the little wart was of benefit to it, and after a while it began to exercise that little wart and it developed into a leg. And now it would have been mighty bad if there had not been another wart, or if that additional wart had been on the back. We would have been different animals from what we are now if the legs had come, one on the belly and the other on the back. Do you believe such stuff? I want to read to you from Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who claims to believe both the Bible and the evolutionists. He is a Baptist preacher, but pastor of a Presbyterian Church and is sponsored by the Federation of the Churches of Christ in America. Let me read to you some things he said in a little book, "The Meaning of Faith," page 128: "The biologists tell us that if a man has eyes it is because light waves beat on the skin and the eyes came out in response; that if he has ears, it is because the sound waves were there first, and the ears came out to where he could use them. Biologists assert all the powers that man has have come in response to the environment. If there had been no water, there would have been no fins; if there had been no air, there would have been no wings; if there had been no land, there would have been no legs. All of it, therefore, came about in response to circumstances"—and yet he poses as a preacher and is really a great

and an entertaining speaker; but he does not believe the Bible. Now when asked along that line some other questions, he chooses to answer on the origin of man as does Professor Osborne. In 1916, Mr. Osborne said this: "We know that man descended from some unknown apelike form." I just wonder how does he know that it came from some unknown thing? If it is unknown, how does he know about it? He said he. knew it. Yet in 1927 he said: "The myth of ape ancestry lingers on the stage, in the movies, in certain scientific parlance, but the ape ancestry is entirely out of date and its place is taken by the recent demonstration that we are descended from the dawn man." I just want you to think for a moment what a really educated man, with a string of degrees to equal which there is scarcely another, said. In 1916, he said that we know that man came from some unknown apelike origin or form. Eleven years after that he said: "The myth of ape ancestry lingers only in the movies, on the stage, and is removed from the realm of intelligence." Well, the attempted origins that these fellows give for man are interesting and amusing as well. Mr. Darwin said that the origin of man was 200,000,000 years ago. His son came along and said: "Dad, you missed it; it was just 57,000,000 of years." The difference is only 143,000,000 years. But what difference does 143,000,000 years make in science? That does not amount to anything. The smallest estimate from the scientists that I ever have seen is 24,000,000 of years since man's origin upon the earth, and the greatest estimate is 300,000,000. Boys and girls, note it: scientists are nearly together. Some of them say 24,000,000 of years, and the others 300,000,000, and yet there is no discrepancy. They can look you right in the face with all the colossal cheek and monumental gall imaginable and say: "That is scientific." How much difference? Oh, just 276,000,000 years. Yet, if they find in the Bible where a name is spelled one time "Boaz" and the next time "Booz," they shout, "Contradiction in the Bible." I want you to think of it. That old book has stood as a challenge to all of its enemies throughout the centuries. With Argus eyes and a fine-tooth comb they have gone through it with the hope of finding contradictions. They have come out humiliated with their inability to find one single contradiction between the Bible and the established facts of science I said to you that those fellows did not believe the Bible. Of course, Doctor Fosdick does not believe it. Listen again as I announce what they deny. They deny, first of all, the inspiration of the Bible; second, that man was created in the moral image of God; third, that man sinned and fell; fourth, that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin; fifth, that there is any merit in the atoning power of the blood of Christ; sixth, that the resurrection is wholly unscientific, therefore, untrue; seventh, that Jesus Christ will never come again, not having come the first time; and, eighth, there will be no general judgment at the last day. All of these points are bluntly denied by the enemies of the Bible, among whom are teachers in some of our tax-supported schools. Christians are called upon to erect fine buildings, to equip them with all modern fixtures and to furnish the children to hear every criticism of the word of God. It objection is made to their teaching, they howl about their freedom of speech. If infidels want to teach their stuff, let them erect their own buildings, equip them, provide their own salaries and likewise furnish their own children. To secure their places and to draw salaries furnished by Christian parents, they claim to believe the Bible and yet they deny the fundamentals I have just mentioned. Friends, what do you think of a Bible without these basic truths? Because I believe God's Word, in common with a host of others, Freed-Hardeman College exists today. I do not ask those who deny these basic facts to help us build, equip, and keep it going. Various denominations have their schools by appealing to those of similar beliefs. Let all infidels do likewise and thus stay out of institutions erected by those who believe the Bible. And now, let me call attention to some other matters. Have you ever

thought of the wonderful changes that have been wrought, and of the development that has come about in things material? Consider the progress in worldly things compared with the time when the Bible was written. Take our mode of travel, our manner of life, our way of living—what is the ratio expressive of the progress through the two thousand years since John dropped the pen of inspiration? It is almost unbelievable. Man has solved the problems of the earth, and has sought to unlock the mysteries of things beyond. He has delved into the bosom of the earth and made her bring forth the treasures stored away. Not only that, he has scaled the heights and has been able to reveal things hitherto undreamed of. The lightnings flashed back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were there; the thunders roared and rolled across the arched sky, but they thought nothing of it. The same condition prevailed throughout the centuries, and finally man caught on. He at last imprisoned the lightning in a small wire and has made it to serve man in a thousand ways. And again, Abraham no doubt heard the rushing mighty winds sweep over his native land. In Syria and in Palestine he viewed the falling of waters to lower depths. It never seemed to dawn upon him that these were challenges to him and to his fellows. The power of the rapid winds, the fretting and foaming of the waterfalls were ever asking: Why not use us to draw your water, enable you to travel at tremendous speed, and turn the wheels of your machinery? After so long a time, we have utilized the air and now we seek to dam every stream in all the land. Marvelous indeed has been our progress in all things material. But when it comes to the most vital things that ever challenged our attention, such as sin, salvation, and the hope of eternal reward, what can we say? There has not been one bit of progress made along these lines since John dropped the pen of inspiration from fingers weary, twenty centuries ago. What new fact has man ever learned about God or Christ or the Holy Spirit apart from the Bible? Absolutely none. What new command challenging our attention for eternity ever has been delivered? Not one. And again, what new promise ever has been made other than that found in the Bible? The answer is: None. Our progress in the material world is unlimited. Our progress in the religious realm has not moved one inch from that announced when the Bible was completed. According to accepted chronology, the time from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation is exactly 4,100 years. From Moses, the first writer, to John, the last, there is a period of 1,600 years. Here then is a volume covering 4,000 years penned by about forty writers who lived from 1,500 years before Christ to about 100 years after the birth of our Lord. It is well to ask: Who were those men? Were they college professors? No. Did they have their degrees? No. Did they come from parents who were makers of phrases? No. Who were they? Many of them were men whose ancestors had spent a long period of time as captives in the land of Egypt. Their fathers had bowed their backs to the rays of an Egyptian sun, and had marched under the crack of the whip of hard taskmasters to carry on their everincreasing labors. They lived on garlic and onions, and, according to tradition, the average life of the workingman was only about three months. Their posterity, 600,000 men, besides women and children, marched across the Red Sea, and for forty long years lived in that great and terrible wilderness fed with manna from on high. They ultimately passed into a little country of about 7,000 square miles. There, in an isolated land, they lived and moved and wrote their story. They had no great libraries with the learning of the past poured into their laps. They had no daily papers with special columnists to give them the news. They had no speedy ships to contact the nations across the seas. They had no telephones, nor telegraphs, nor cables. Radios were wanting. They were an unlearned, ignorant collection of men, with a background that the aristocracy of our time would be ashamed of. There was no possibility of collusion or conspiracy among them. They all wrote about

the same general theme—viz., man—his origin, duty, and destiny.

There were about forty of them who produced sixty-six books that cover the history of 4,100 years. And among all of these there is not a single contradiction in their historical statements nor a single discrepancy in their moral teaching. The Bible has been in the hands of the Gentiles for about 2,000 years. It has had no better treatment than it had when in the custody of the Jews. Like the Jews, the Gentiles have perverted its teaching and corrupted its practice. It may well be asked, why did not those who transcribed the ancient copies change the text so as to harmonize with their own personal views? What mighty power hindered their yielding to such temptations? It seems to me that we are forced to say the power that penned it has also preserved it. The fact that the Bible has lived through all the centuries in spite of its enemies and those who seek to pervert its teaching is among the greatest of all miracles. No two men can write at length about the same thing but there will be contradictions in their statements. No one man can write voluminously for a period of years, but he will change his mind and correct the mistakes of twenty-five or thirty years ago and thus revise his manuscript. Nothing of that kind took place among the writers of the Bible. How do you account for such? There is just one explanation, and it is that holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Let me present this for your consideration. Suppose you select ten of the most intelligent citizens of Nashville and ask them to write a history of this city for the past twentyfive years. Give them plenty of time and every means to learn what has gone on in the city. Finally, collect the manuscripts that have been penned. I will guarantee that you will find more contradictions and discrepancies than all the Argus-eyed critics have discovered in the Bible for the past two thousand years. I once heard the great Clarence Darrow lecture against the Bible. I felt like saying: "Mr. Darrow, why do you have to fight the Bible, to damn it and to ridicule it, in order to accomplish your purpose? If you will only write a better book and thus give a better account of man’s presence upon the earth; if you will give a better outline of his purpose and duty; if you will write a book that will bring greater comfort to those who suffer and sigh, and brighter hopes to those who come to the end of life’s journey, the Bible will at once pass into the realm of obsolete volumes. Mr. Ford and other builders of automobiles never criticized nor made fun of old Dobbin and the stray. They simply made vehicles that will get you there and fetch you back faster and with more ease. As a result, the old horse and buggy went the way of all the earth. No man can be galvanized into respectability by ridiculing someone else. The Bible is either the word of God or it is the work of man. If the work of man, then man ought to write a better book or admit that with the passing of nineteen centuries he has gone backward. It is embarrassing to have to admit that with all of our schools and colleges—our varied sources of information— no man for the past nineteen hundred years has been able to write a book equal to this one called the Bible. The Bible lays no claim to being a treatise on science, and yet it is the most scientific volume the world has ever known. It teaches the science of life. We must go back to the law of Moses for the foundation principles governing our relations as citizens of this world, and we go to the Sermon on the Mount to learn our moral and spiritual obligations preparatory to the world to come. My friends, the world is engaged in a terrible conflict. Death and destruction, devastation and despair are evidenced in all the nations of the earth. The intellectual, physical, and material forces are combined in the most effective manner known to the history of the human family. Regardless of the ultimate outcome, all men are going to be affected by it in one way or another. I feel certain that the way of life will never be with us as it has been, regardless of the results. I have here a letter from Mr. Roger Babson, the greatest statistician living. It bears date of February 16, 1942. Among other things, he has this

to say: "One thing is certain, namely, the world cannot recover from this deluge as long as it ignores God and His laws. That is what brought on World War II. It will be Christ or chaos after the armistice. The world will have prosperity or revolution after Germany, Japan, and Italy are defeated. These are alternatives about which we all may be well aware." Let me repeat: "One thing is certain, the world cannot recover from this deluge as long as it ignores God and His laws." Friends, I believe that. Men have tried to get the right philosophy of life; they have spent years of thinking and years of toil and have asked: "What can we do? What legislation can we enact?" I have no doubt they have done their best, but just remember, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." After all that our legislators have done, failure has been written across their path. We have learned that we cannot depend on the wisdom of man. Peace and tranquillity will not return to this land of ours until we hark back to the Sermon on the Mount, and be taught by the greatest of all teachers. Our troubles regarding capital and labor, industry and agriculture, and the almost unlimited differences among men will not disappear until we adopt the principle that "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Hear Mr. Babson as he continues: "We sincerely hope that the churches of America will soon unite and state courageously that the world must turn over a new leaf in order to bring peace to the world. Not only must the United States lead the return to God, but we who are rejoicing in and enjoying security and comforts should lead in such a spiritual awakening." I think it is well said that the churches of America must unite their varied forces. But I am wondering on what ground people who claim to love God can get together. Let me say that if some major points could be settled, all other differences would soon be gone. I submit first "Our Creed." Can the religious world ever unite upon some man-made discipline, confession of faith, or church manual? Is that possible? Absolutely not. Why? Because each one can truly say: "Mine is as good as yours."

Would, for instance, the Methodist people ever be willing to give up their human discipline to accept the Presbyterian man-made "Confession of Faith"? There could be no earthly reason for so doing. There is only one hope of unity on this line, and that is for all to give up their human booklets and to accept the Bible as the one and only rule of faith and practice. This, all must do, if Mr. Babson’s statement ever comes true. Next, we must unite upon a name all can adopt without the sacrifice of any principle. That name must, of course, be found in the New Testament. Will the Baptists give up their name and agree to wear the name "Episcopalian"? They glory in their name and yet they should know that there never was but one Baptist on this earth and that he said: “I must decrease." The name "Baptists" is nowhere found in all the Bible and, of course, the Baptist Church is a stranger to God’s Word. Will the Methodists and Presbyterians ever agree to wear the name "Catholic"? And so I might continue. What then is the hope of uniting on a name? We must surely accept that by which the disciples were first called and leave off all else. James says they had blasphemed that worthy name and, be it remembered, you can blaspheme only that which is of divine origin. Again, can we unite on the subject, the action, and the design of baptism? You may think such impossible, but it is not after we decide to accept the Bible as our only rule of faith and practice. Everyone who knows what the Bible says knows full well that teaching, faith, repentance, and confession precede baptism. These necessary prerequisites eliminate all save those who are able to comply with them. Every church on earth that accepts baptism at all believes that immersion was the act commanded by Christ. Its design was clearly stated in the Great Commission in these words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Among the last statements ever made by the Son of God upon this earth, he said salvation follows baptism. In

the first sermon ever thereafter preached, the Holy Spirit through Peter said to those cut to their hearts: "Repent, and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins." Those who believe the Bible will have no trouble in believing that "remission of sins" follows both "repent" and "be baptized." All denominations agree that when Christians meet on the first day of the week to teach, to pray, to eat the Lord’s Supper, to contribute of their means as they have prospered, and to sing God’s praise and make melody in their hearts, they have worshiped as it is written. As regards the spreading of the gospel, all who believe the Bible know that Paul said that the manifold wisdom of God was to be made known by the church and that this was according to God’s eternal purpose. He did not regard the church as a "spiritual contingent"—a mere incident or accident. Upon such grounds as thus stated, I think it possible for the religious world to unite and go forth as a solid phalanx against the forces of the devil. I cannot say that I hope for such, because there are too many "pastors" who would lose their jobs. The love of money is the root of all evil and they joy and rejoice over the division among professed followers of the Lord. The Bible and the Bible alone will solve every problem and unite all warring factions. Young men, do not reject the Bible. It gives the only sensible explanation of our origin, of our duty, and of our destiny. Don’t you be among that number who scoff at the religion of the Bible. It is the world’s last hope and its comfort and consolation you will need in the time of trouble, and in the hour of death. And now, for your presence, patience, and politeness, I want to express my profound gratitude.

5.02 - APOSTASY

APOSTASY

It has been a pleasure to me to speak to you who have chanced to come to our noonday services, and also to others, who, perhaps, have been listening to what I have had to say. In Romans 8:1-4 I read: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." There is, therefore, now no condemnation unto a certain class, which fulfills the following—viz., those who are in Christ Jesus, and who walk after the law of the Lord. Unto such an one, there is no condemnation whatsoever. It is impossible for a child of God, who walks after the law of the Spirit in Christ, to be lost. A question that has been argued since the days of Eve and the serpent is, "Can a child of God apostatize so as to be finally lost?" It is a question as to whether or not one who believes the truth can, at any time, lose that faith and, therefore, subject himself to damnation. In 2 Timothy 2:17-18, we read that two young preachers who were wrong regarding the resurrection overthrew the faith of some. What do you think, therefore, of the possibility of a person’s being saved with his faith overthrown? Then we are told of others that, concerning their faith, they had made shipwreck of it. Can a man be saved with a destroyed faith? Can an unbeliever reach heaven? Again, the Spirit expressly said that "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Those who teach the impossibility of apostasy would force eternal salvation upon that man who once was in the faith, but who had departed from it, and is now giving heed to the doctrines of devils. I am reading to you a statement from Psalms 106:9-12 regarding the children of Israel to show what transition may take place. "He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.... The waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left." Now note: "Then believed they his words." The Israelites, after they saw God’s great demonstration in leading the people across the Red Sea, believed His word. Now, can that faith ever be lost? I read right on in verses 1624: "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram." The story goes on, and finally, Psalms 106:24, "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word." If you will note carefully, you will find that the time was when the Israelites believed the word of the Lord. But with the passing of the years, their faith was lost, and the record states that "they believed not his word." Therefore, a man can change from a believer to an unbeliever and he can reach that state where it is impossible for him to be saved. But again, in Romans 8:12-13 : "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Here I stop and ask: What kind of death did Paul have in mind? A sensible man certainly cannot think that he meant physical death because that will be our lot whether we live after the flesh or not. A man can live any way he wishes and physical death will certainly follow. Therefore,

if a man lives after the flesh, he shall die a spiritual death. This is the only sensible answer that can be made to such a plain statement. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Does that mean that you can live on and on and on in the flesh until Methuselah would look like a baby in comparisonwith your length of days? That would be a foolish interpretation. Just anybody that is no akin to Solomon ought to recognize that a man may do whatever he wishes, and yet he cannot perpetuate this physical life. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Live how? This is the exact antithesis of the statement, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." That can mean nothing but spiritual death. So, if you "mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" can only mean spiritual life. And, hence, the promise of everlasting life is contingent upon whether or not a man mortifies the deeds of the body. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." Many people read that and think they have found certain proof that it is impossible for one to fall and be lost. But let me read you another from 2 Thessalonians 2:3 : "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." It will pay any man well to get the distinction between two terms "fall" and "fall away." I have been on board a steamboat; I have walked around the promenade; I have seen folks fall over some article, but they were not lost. But if one falls away, he is cut loose from the ship, and the depth of the sea is the final landing place. Now, it is possible for a man to go along and stumble in his way and fall. It is possible for him to rise again. But if that man fall away, it is impossible for him to be saved. So said Paul in Hebrews 6:4-6. I pass next to a brief study of eternal life. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Some preachers can shout "hash everlasting life" so they can be heard from a long distance. They fail to recognize some fundamental lessons. As a matter of fact, the verb "hash" and others in the present tense are frequently used with a future significance. Illustrative of this, read Isaiah 9:2 : "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Again, in Isaiah 9:6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The believer does have everlasting life. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Such expressions occur a number of times. Have you ever stopped to consider just how a man has it? Does the Bible say anywhere that the believer hath everlasting life everlastingly? No, he hath everlasting life. Everlasting is an adjective, and thus it describes the kind of life. I insist that the time of his having it is not mentioned. I might have an everlasting watch, but I could lose it. Those who believe the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy need a passage which says he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life everlastingly. They must find an adverb of time. But no such passage is in the Bible. Note John 10:27-28 : (1) "My sheep hear my voice"; (2) “I know them"; (3) "They follow me"; (4) “I give unto them eternal life." Now when? At the judgment. "The righteous shall go into eternal life." Titus 1:2 : Paul was "in hope of eternal life." But Paul says in Romans 8:24, Romans 8:26 : "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: but what a man seeth, why cloth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." A man doesn’t hope for a thing that he already has. I do not hope to have a brown coat. I have it. I hope sometime to be able to buy another. Paul declares that the thing which we have does not come within the realm of hope. For what a man has, that he does not hope for, and yet in writing to Titus, Paul said that he himself

was in hope of everlasting life. If Paul had it, then he would not be in hope of it. But, "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." (1 John 2:26) How does the Christian have everlasting life? In promise. When will he have it in actuality? "My sheep hear my voice, I know them; they follow me; I give unto them eternal life." When, Lord? At the great judgment, when the separation comes, and these shall go away into everlasting life. They had it in promise. Now, they have it in absolute perfection. But again, "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" There is absolutely nothing that can so do. If eternal salvation depended solely on the love of God, all men would be saved, for God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son. I believe that as strongly as any man living. But that is a false issue. The question is: "Who can separate us, or what can separate us from God?" "Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2) What can separate us from God? Sin. Are we guilty of sin? The man who says he has not sinned makes God a liar, and the truth is not in him. Hence, sin will damn any soul. If there is a sinner present, won’t you come and obey the gospel of Christ while you may?

5.03 - THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

Friends and brethren, I am conscious of the responsibility that I assume in arising in your presence. I know that impressions are going to be made. God forbid that they should be other than of the right kind. I am reading to you tonight, as the basis of what may be said, from Ephesians 3:8-21 : "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, in this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Brother Goodpasture announced that the theme tonight would be: "The Identity of the Church of the New Testameet." There are a number of things implied in such an announcement. The first is that there was such an institution upon this earth as the church. It was promised by the prophets, also by Christ himself, for he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." As yet it was a matter of futurity, but later on in the record we read of the Lord’s adding to the church, making it an historic organization. From that time on the Bible speaks of it as a definite institution, hence, the admonition to its members throughout the epistles. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Evidently there was in New Testament times a church, founded by Christ, filled with his Spirit, and of which every Christian was a member. I suggest to you further, based upon the reading that you have heard, that this church was not a mere accident, or, as some have put it, a "spiritual contingent," which word means an incident, accident, or that which came by chance. I have said over and over again that such a statement is almost an insult to the word of God, and I am sorry that any man was ever so thoughtless as to put in print a statement of that kind. Let us remove all such ideas from our mind, and let not a semblance of such an ill-founded thought remain in our hearts. God ordained that His manifold wisdom was to be made manifest unto the world through the church. It is Heaven’s missionary society, through which the wisdom of God is to be made known to the world. And, be it said with emphasis, it is the only organization known to the Bible through which the gospel truth of God Almighty is to be made

known to the sons and daughters of man. Since there was a church of the New Testament, having a definite existence, wherein all spiritual blessings were offered to mankind, it follows that outside of the church there is not a ray of hope nor a crumb of comfort promised to any man. After the passing of these nineteen hundred years since that record, I ask: Can such an organization be found upon the earth? If so, how can we know it when we read about it, or learn things concerning it? According to the last federal census, I think there are about 250 religious organizations or churches here in America. No man that ought to be allowed to run loose believes that all of them, or either of them, constitute that thing that Christ said he expected to build. They are counterfeit, friends, and regarding them the Bible knows absolutely nothing. Just to put a matter of that kind to the test, I offer you this suggestion: you can take God's Word, read every line in it, and you would be wholly unacquainted with the 250 different denominations that disgrace the face of this earth. I speak that candidly, and yet kindly. The Bible knows nothing about any of them. If you ask where you can learn about them, the answer is from the writings of uninspired men. Neither God nor Christ nor the Holy Spirit ever mentioned anything that is akin to the denominations of our day. They are all strangers to the sacred oracles. But, friends, a counterfeit always implies the reality, and, as you quite well know, the nearer like the genuine a counterfeit is, the more dangerous and deceptive it is. Here is our silver dollar. You can take one somewhat like it, made of lead, and nobody would ever be deceived for a moment. But make one of almost the same metal and practically the same superscription and you can deceive the multitudes. I have done my best, time and again, to illustrate the necessity of assured identity. Let me try again. Suppose that a valuable horse has been stolen. The owner advertises and offers a fine reward for his return. His description follows: First, he is a black horse; second, sixteen hands high; third, he has a white stripe in his face; fourth, his left hind ankle is white; fifth, he has a white spot under saddle on right side. There the horse is described and his identity is sufficiently complete. Do you think you could find him and know you had the right horse? Take your stand by the side of the road and watch them go by. Chestnuts, grays, bays, sorrels, and Palominos pass along, with but little attention given, because everybody knows they do not meet the description. By and by we hear the hoofbeats of another far down the road. We prick up our ears with the possibility that he might be the one. As he comes in sight we observe he is a black horse. Interest increases. As he approaches we see a beautiful white stripe down his face, and we feel pretty certain that he must be the one for which we are looking. He comes on to where we are, and we think his height is sixteen hands. We now feel pretty sure that he is the horse. We look at the left hind foot and there is the white ankle. So certain are we now that we seize the bridle and say to the rider: "Sir, this is the stolen horse." Of that we are positively sure. Why? Because he measures up to the requirements. But there is yet one mark to be checked. When the saddle is removed there is no white spot on his back. Now, is this the horse? He is lacking in one essential mark of the description. No court on earth would be justified in turning that horse over to the man who described his stolen one as above outlined. Surely everyone can understand that all essential marks must be found. As stated before, there are many churches in our land and there are thousands of good moral people, members of them. Out of the whole number, can one be found bearing the marks of that one bought with blood of God's Son? Can we identify that one so definitely described in the New Testament? There are many that have some of the marks, and the more they have, lacking some, the more dangerous they become. Now won't you agree with this next statement, that no church whose history cannot be traced back to the Bible can possibly be

the identical church founded by Christ? But, to make the point definite and beyond the possibility of misunderstanding, I mention some organizations that claim to be the church of the Lord. I assure you that I speak of them with no unkind feeling to any man or woman deceived by them. I repeat that which they have published and sent abroad to the reading public. First of all, there is in our land tonight the church called the "Adventist." They are here in Nashville and we recognize their existence. Is the Adventist Church the one Christ was talking about? The Adventist Church is here in 1942. It was in existence in the year 1900.It was here in 1876.

Go on back to 1865 and it was in existence then. It came into being soon after Mrs. Ellen White made a trip to heaven (?). Upon her return with a message fresh from the mouth of the Lord, that church came into existence. Strange it was that God told her to repeat the heavenly message when he forbade Paul's telling what he heard. Who can believe God ever heard of Mrs. White? Now hear it. Back of that date, neither in the Bible or out of the Bible, in no history, in no encyclopedia, in no magazine, or journal of any kind whatsoever is there a hint of any trace, or a single mention of anything that looks like a distant relative to even an imitation of that called the Adventist Church. So, when Christ said, "I will build my church," he had no reference to that body called the Adventist Church. Also the Mormon Church is in the land, with headquarters out at Salt Lake City, and with organizations in many states. They now exist and I have no unkind word to say about them. No reflection whatsoever is intended upon any man who has been deceived by this denomination. But what are the facts about it? The Mormon Church is in existence now and it was in existence a hundred years ago. It was here in 1835. But, back of 1830, there never was on the face of God's earth one solitary reference or allusion whatsoever to anything called the Mormon Church. Now, if that is not so, a different history of that body must yet be written. Their history is one of heinous crimes and atrocious deeds. Surely no serious, sane, sensible, civilized person ever imagined that Jesus Christ was the founder of that church. But, again, there are Methodist congregations almost everywhere. They are an honorable body of people and against any of them, personally, I have nothing to say. It is a fact that Methodism is in our midst tonight. It was here a hundred years ago and on back to 1729. At this date you are at the little end of the taproot of Methodism. Back of that date, nobody ever heard of such an organization as the Methodist Church. Bishop McTyiere was one of the greatest men in that church. He rose to the highest heights in its realm and wrote an authentic history of it, He says: "The history of Methodism cannot be given without a biography of John Wesley. To him belongs the distinction of founder." And the introduction of the Methodist Discipline says: "The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church." "Our form of discipline has been founded upon the experience of a long series of years." You will observe that neither the church nor its form of discipline claims to be founded by Christ. It follows beyond a doubt that Christ had no connection with its beginning nor has he with its continuance. Christ built the New Testament church in the year 33 and in the city of Jerusalem. John Wesley built the Methodist Church in the year 1729 in the city of Oxford. If any poor soul thinks these are identical, let it be remembered that the Lord will provide. You can study the history of all denominations and find that not one of them meets the demands of the New Testament. I was preaching in Philadelphia about a week ago, and I mentioned some of the denominations. A good Baptist woman seemed to think I had done wrong in not mentioning her church, so I decided to say something about it when the occasion seemed favorable. The Presbyterian Church is an honorable body of people, and I could say a number of good things about them, but I am talking about the facts in the case. Back of John Calvin and about the year 1535, no man living or dead

ever heard or knew anything whatever about such a church. Neither in the Bible nor out of the Bible was there anything pertaining to Presbyterianism or to the Presbyterian Church. The Episcopal Church is likewise in our midst It is a prominent organization, but it owes its origin to a human founder, Henry VIII. Back of the days of old Henry VIII, 1535, there never was on this earth such an organization as the Episcopal Church. If its members knew its origin, I have an idea they would become convinced of their error and turn in search of God's truth. The Baptist Church began in 1608 in the country of Holland. Such is the story told by Baptist historians. The attempt to trace it back to Jerusalem or to find in the Bible an organization like it is indeed a vain effort. There are many interesting things about the Baptists. In 1883 the Executive Board of the American Baptist Publication Society appointed a committee to translate the New Testament. The first edition translated the word "baptizo" and other forms of the word into "immerse," etc. When their attention was called to the fact that their name had been translated out, they brought out a second edition, retaining the name "Baptist" after "John," and elsewhere as it occurred. That crowd is determined to wear the name of "baptism"—water baptism. They name themselves after water baptism only, thus esteeming a physical act—and even that a "nonessential," above Christ. They make baptism their Spiritual Father; it is the one family name worn by them; they are children of water baptism, for children always take the name of their father. Baptists refuse fellowship to all Christians. They say that every sinner who accepts Christ by faith is a Christian, a child of God. But they will not fellowship him until he goes on and becomes a child of water baptism— becomes a Baptist. When God receives a man, he must be changed before the Baptists will take him. God is not a sufficient Father to be honored. Baptists come from baptism only. They wear the family name. The word "Baptists" in the plural is not in the Bible from beginning to end. There never was but one Baptist on the face of God's earth, and he said: "I must decrease." Let me ask some two or three direct questions: (1) Is it necessary for me to become a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian in order to receive forgiveness of sins? Their concerted answer is "No." (2) Do I have to be a Baptist or Methodist or Presbyterian in order to live a Christian life? Again, they answer "No." (3) Do I have to become any one of these mentioned in order to reach heaven when I die? Once more, they all say "No." In the light of their answer, I ask again, why be a member of any denomination when neither God nor Christ nor the Holy Spirit ever mentioned either of them? Will you think, friends, on these statements? I will grant you that some folks may consider them unkind, but they are not. I have spoken facts that cannot be questioned. We should always ask, Are these things so? As Paul one time said to the Galatians: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Do you now think that the Baptist Church is that institution founded by Christ on that memorable day of Pentecost? The last that I mention tonight is the Catholic Church, which is prominent almost everywhere. What I have said complimentary about others is equally true of them. Some of the finest folks that live upon the earth are members of that great hierarchy. Its existence can be traced for hundreds of years. But you finally reach a time when no such things as a Catholic Church is known either to sacred or profane history. It was a gradual development History fails to record the exact person, place, or time of its beginning. Its likeness cannot be found in the Bible. It is now time to ask what are the outstanding marks of a New Testament church? I mention first of all the name by which it is called, both collectively and individually. It is called the church of God, the church of the Lord, the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, God's family, God's building, etc. The members are called disciples, saints, brethren, Christians. Why cannot all who love the Lord unite on these Bible names rather than

wear some name unknown to eternal truth? Another mark of the New Testament church is the conspicuous absence of all titles that have been given denominational preachers. Such titles as father, reverend, pastor, doctor, or even parson were never attached to gospel preachers. I next call attention to the terms of entrance. No man can successfully deny that faith, repentance, anal baptism, upon a proper confession, are conditions of entering into the New Testament church. The church is the body of Christ. No recognized translation of the Bible ever says anyone "believes into Christ." Nor does any translation ever declare that someone "repented into Christ." Combine faith and repentance or repentance and faith and "into Christ" never follows. But all translations declare that we are baptized "into Christ and into his death." My friends, will you accept what the Bible teaches or will you rest upon what "our preacher" says? Bear in mind that these are eternal issues. Another New Testament mark is the worship of the church, which demands that Christians meet and teach God’s word; that they pray one for another; that they eat the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week; that they contribute of their means according to ability and that they sing God’s praise accompanied by melody made in the heart. Last of all I mention the officers of the church of our Lord: (1) Every church had a plurality of elders, bishops, overseers, pastors, shepherds. These names all refer to the same office. (2) Every church had also deacons, whose work is outlined in Acts 6. (3) In New Testament churches there were also evangelists, whose business was to "preach the word." I insist that all of these essential marks can be found only in the church of Christ. If any are present who have never obeyed the gospel of God’s Son, you are invited to do so now while we stand together.

5.04 - PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

PAUL’S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY The closest associate and the most trusted companion of the great apostle Paul was his son Timothy. Of all of his acquaintances he said to the Philippians: “I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state." Of all of the apostle’s letters, only four are addressed to individuals. Timothy received two of them and thus has a distinction from all others. In the second letter Paul warned him of the perilous times that would come in the last days. Then he said: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." I am reminded of the doctrine of "total hereditary depravity" that still lingers in some of the creeds adopted by the denominations. The theory was that all children were born totally depraved’ which means they were born as bad as they could be, and yet they were to "wax worse and worse." There never was a syllable of truth in that Goddishonoring doctrine. The Methodists changed their creed in 1910 and left it out. Up to that date "all men were conceived and born in sin," but since then "all men are born into this world in Christ the Redeemer." While the doctrine of total depravity remains in some of the creeds, the preachers are ashamed to proclaim it. Paul said to Timothy: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." men learn their religion. This fact explains all the confusion that exists among us. We are what we are because we learned it that way. I have visited Catholic cathedrals and Mohammedan mosques, along with Jewish synagogues and other places of assembly. I have raised the question: Why do they carry on as they do? The correct answer is: that is the way they learned it. But Paul told Timothy to continue in the things he had learned. So each one might take such as an encouragement to continue. That idea would not express the whole truth. Timothy was to continue in the things he learned, knowing where he learned them. He had learned the gospel from Paul, who received it, not from man, but from Jesus Christ. Suppose I had come to you wearing some human name, and that I claimed membership in some denomination. You would have a perfect right to ask of me: "Where did you learn anything about your name or that of your church?" Anybody knows that I would be forced to admit that I never learned about either in all the Bible. The information we have of any denomination must come from a human source. Not one of them is ever mentioned in God’s word. They are all, therefore, human organizations which destroy the unity and hinder the progress of primitive Christianity. Christ prayed that all who believe on him through the apostle’s word might be one, that the world might believe that God had sent him. Paul asked most earnestly of the Corinthians, and all in every place that call upon the name of the Lord, "that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." In spite of such teaching, some were of Paul; some of Apollos; some of Cephas; and some of Christ. He charged them with being carnal and unable to be fed with the meat of God’s Word. It is sinful to wear human names and thereby cause division and strife. Paul paid a great compliment to his son when he said: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." It is alarming today to note the lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, not only among children, but among our young men and young women who enter college fresh from the high schools of our land. You may contact any set of such students and you will find them abundantly able to discuss the characters who are prominent in the

realms of pugilism, baseball, and the movies. They know all from John L. Sullivan to Joe Louis; from Ty Cobb to Babe Ruth, Dizzy Dean, et al. They can tell you all about the stars, from Charlie Chaplin to Clark Gable. They even know all the wives they have had and those that are to be next. But to that same set, mention something about the Scriptures and they are wholly unprepared to speak with any degree of information. It is really discouraging to contemplate the future of the church. But well may we ask the reason for Timothy's knowledge of the Scriptures. Was he any smarter than your child? (1 am sure that he was ignorant when compared with your grandchild.} He knew the Scripture not because of his precocious mind. Nor was his knowledge due to his having attended even a Bible college. Schools were few, books were rare, and opportunities were as nothing when compared with ours. Could Paul say of your son, "From a child he has known the scriptures"? The explanation is found in this letter addressed to Timothy. He says: "I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." No finer picture ever has been painted than that of a young man in whom there dwells a faith unfeigned. If a number of such young people were in the church today, those who must soon lay aside their battle-scarred armor could be assured that the cause would carry on. When David learned to hit the target with his sling. he little dreamed that it would ever serve to slay the giant vitro defied the armies of his God. When he was learning to play the harp, it never entered his mind that one day he would be called into the presence of a king to play for him. Even so, it never occurred to Eunice, while she was teaching her son the Holy Scriptures, that someday he would be the constant companion and the most trusted friend of the great apostle to the Gentile world. My friends, we need to know the Holy Scriptures. They were able to make Timothy "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." If the Old Testament was able then, what think you of the fact that today we have not only the Scriptures here mentioned, but also the New Testament. Timothy had Moses and the prophets. We have them, plus Christ and the apostles. Paul did not belong to that class which believes and teaches that the Scriptures are impotent. He believed that the word of God is quick and powerful, and that the gospel is God's power unto salvation to all who believe it. It was the power of God's Word that knocked out the devil in the third round with the Son of God. It was his word that caused the waves and the wind to cease on the Sea of Galilee. The power of his word raised Lazarus from the dead even after four days. Finally, all that are in their graves will one day hear his voice and come forth. Let no man discount the power of God's Word. Paul said the Scriptures were able to make Timothy wise unto salvation. Nothing additional was needed. The word of God lives and abides forever. Won't you believe it and accept it now? To you the invitation is gladly extended.

5.05 - THE MISSION AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

THE MISSION AND WORK OF THE CHURCH When I consider the unfavorable night for church attendance, I am deeply impressed with your presence. I am thoroughly convinced that most people are anxious to hear the simple story that never grows old. They like plain preaching, easy illustrations, and all things freed from an appeal to the galleries. I have not announced to you any sensational subject in order to arouse your curiosity. It has ever been my ambition to speak so that common people may hear and understand. Such has been my motive and intention all of my days. Such, I trust, may be characteristic of my efforts as long as I am able to appear before an audience. In Ephesians 3:8-11 you will find a good foundation for the subject—viz., "The Mission and the Work of the Church." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The church, friends, has been in existence from the depths of the eternal past. It first existed in purpose in the mind of God Almighty. It was later promised to Abraham, and hence existed in promise. It next existed in prophecy. Later on it existed in preparation, and, on the day of Pentecost, when filled with the Holy Spirit, it existed in perfection. It was represented by Christ (Mark 4: 25) as: (1) seed unplanted; (2) seed committed to soil; (3) the blade; (4) the ear; (5) the full corn in the ear. From its completion it has been God’s missionary society, through which His wisdom was to be made known unto the sons and daughters of men. Every organization, necessarily, has a purpose, and likewise has work to be done. That is true of all human fraternities and associations of men. It is no less true of the church of the Lord. But I must know just what the church is. I know the Bible calls it the body of Christ, and I know that Paul said to the Christians: "Ye are the body of Christ." I must not, friends, view the church as some artificial body or as a cold-blooded corporation, but as a company of men and women over which Christ reigns as head and in which the Spirit dwells. The church, therefore, is made up of men and women. It is no stronger than the sum total of the men and women who compose it. It has no more influence in the world than the sum total of all of its members. It has no more money to carry on its work than that given to it by the different members. That it has a work and a purpose in the world goes without saying. Surely, God would not send His Son to suffer, bleed, and die to purchase and establish a church, and to become head of it, if He had no intention, or no plans, or no purposes for it to accomplish. God appointed work in the church because He wanted all members to be happy in this world. Happiness depends upon having something to do. To my mind, the most miserable soul on earth is the man that rises in the morning with no responsibility, no obligation and nothing depending upon him. Then he pillows his head at night without having done one single thing. I cannot see why a man like that wants to live unless it be to save burial expenses. What good is he to the world? When God created man and put him in the Garden of Eden, He could have fixed it so he could have been idle all the day long. But God wanted man to be supremely happy. He was the climax of all of His handiwork, and so for

the purpose of rendering him happy, He imposed upon him an obligation and a responsibility. I would hate to claim membership in the church and have no part in carrying on its work. I certainly do not want to be a parasite. I wish I could put that across to every member, and make each one have a burning desire to find out what the will of the Lord is; and then have a firm resolution to be about our Father's business. A working church is always happy and free from troubles. Remember that even a mule cannot kick while he is pulling and neither can he pull while kicking. Now, the amount of service to be rendered is like every other obligation imposed upon us, and that is according to our ability. I must study, preach, pray, sing, and give according to this principle. Concerning my giving, the Bible speaks in sounds not uncertain. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Again, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hash, and not according to shalt he hath not." Jesus truly said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." A stingy, penurious, closefisted person is more unlike God and Christ than any character you can imagine. God gave His Son, and the Son gave his life a ransom for man. Do not let stinginess send you to hell. Now, may I ask, what is the purpose of the church of the Lord? Suppose I discuss the negative side first. I may say some things with which you do not agree, but I bid you hear me regardless. I do not consider it a part of the work of the church to try to run the government. I am taught in the Bible to be subject unto the powers that be, just so far as I think they do not conflict with some law of God. Again, I say to you, with caution and thought, that it is not the work of the church to furnish entertainment for the members. And yet many churches have drifted into such an effort. They enlarge their basements, put in all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, and make every sort of an appeal to the young people of the congregation. I have never read anything in the Bible that indicated to me that such was a part of the work of the church. I am wholly ignorant of any Scripture that even points in that direction. Furthermore, it is not the work of the church to try to adjust labor troubles, or to supervise our social conditions. It was never intended that the church should run politics, stop wars, supervise public morals, or to be any kind of a collecting agency to pile up a large sum of money. The church should not go into the banking business. Money is contributed for the work of the Lord, and my observation is, that if you want to take the life out of a church, and rob it of doing good, just pile up a big fund in the church. Many will quit giving altogether or reduce their amount to a minimum. Churches should be encouraged to give liberally, and the money should be used, as it accumulates, for some worthy cause. Let the churches look ahead and keep the good work going. I would not criticize young preachers, to their harm, for any reason. They have my deepest sympathy, but I have thought many times that they have erroneous conceptions of success. Soon after their getting a place with some church, they make a glowing report, somewhat as follows: "When I came here, our weekly contributions were thirty dollars. Now they are up to a hundred." I must grant you that the amount contributed does indicate an increased interest, but I doubt that we should determine the whole success by the dollars collected. Why not have a report about like this? "When I went to a certain place, there was vice, and wickedness, and apathy, and carelessness on the part of the members. Not half of them attended the services. Since I came, we have about 100 per cent of attendance. Many members have quit their wicked ways; the church has become more spiritualminded; and they look upon the work of the church with a greater solemnity." I verily believe that would be most encouraging. Let us not get it into our minds that money counts for everything. Success in life ought to be determined, not by its accumulations, but by its contributions. Each one ought to ask: "What have I done in the name of the Lord and as

a member of the church to advance the spiritual welfare of mankind? What have I done to lift men and women to higher heights? Is the world better as the result of my having lived?" I have an idea that the sweetest joys that may come to any of is will be the assurance that we have plucked the thorns and thistles along life's way and have planted sweet-scented flowers in their stead. If we measure our success in life by our contributions, our only regret will be that we have not been able to contribute more of our time, talent, influence, and dollars for the advancement of the kingdom of God. I think that such is the standard that ought to characterize all of our efforts. I do my best down at FreedHardeman College to impress this ideal upon every student. Young men, get the right conception of life and duty, understand what the church is, and learn its mission upon this earth. The work of the church can be stated under three heads: (1) the building up of every member in it; (2) the work of benevolence; (3) the preaching of the gospel to sinful humanity. Now, back to the first, the building up of the membership. I think if you will travel around as much as some of us do and have your eyes open, you will observe that about twenty-five per cent of the average church assumes its whole responsibility. I have thought many times that if just a few members of any congregation were to quit, the doors would be closed altogether. There are just a few that are on the front line. I like the policy of General N. B. Forrest, the wizard of the saddle, during the Civil War. He disregarded all military rules and ordered every man to the firing line. He had no use for a lot of reserves. Such was his philosophy of warfare. Surely every member of the church should be developed and thus stand on the front line. There is no place for the weakling. We enter the church as newborn babes, regardless of our years, our furrowed cheeks, or our silver hairs. The natural law is to grow and develop. There are some fundamental facts to observe in order to our physical growth, and the same is true in matters spiritual. Let me name some of the essentials. If a child born upon the earth ever develops, it must have: (1) the right kind of food; (2) proper exercise; (3) be kept free from disease. These statements are so simple that anybody can understand and endorse them. When we first entered the church, we were babes in Christ and our need was to grow and develop. There was a demand for food. "What shall it be? Shall we feed upon the literature of man? Shall we take the moving picture and present the food that is flashed upon the canvas and expect a spiritual babe to grow?" To mention such carries the answer. Peter says: "Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Milk belongs to babies, and God's order is to feed them with it. Many times we convert men that are quite intelligent and they are in fine circumstances. They have much influence and are prominent in all affairs. The temptation is to put them in the pulpit or appoint them as elders of the church. Let us ever remember that they are as yet babes and that it takes time for them to grow. They are novices. Feed them with the milk of God's Word and give them proper exercise. It is the duty of the overseers to feed and to develop the members of any church. To do so does not require the organization of something unknown to the Bible. Many brethren have looked upon our young people's meetings with some degree of suspicion. If we are not careful, we may have an organization not at all different from others which we now condemn. Really, brethren, I have failed to find anywhere in the Bible where there is a difference made in teaching or church work between a young fellow and an old fellow. Just where is that passage which intimates that the church should be divided according to years? Brethren Srygley and Tant thought that such distinctions evidenced our drifting away. To say the least of such, there is danger. I submit to you preachers that we should be exceeding careful lest, in our enthusiasm to make a big show, we turn apart

from the straight and narrow path and have within our midst something that the Lord does not want. I said to you that a child must be kept free from diseases. They hinder its growth. Now, I need not tell you that the world is filled with attractions that appeal to the "just of the flesh, and the just of the eyes, and the pride of life." Sometimes we look out upon things that have germs within themselves. Too often they lodge within us. Many times the movies present a very fruitful field for such affairs. Suppose you take some of the stars in that realm and consider the lives they live, the looseness of their relations, and their example in undermining the very foundation of our homes. We go wild over them; we clap our hands, and think it terrible if we have to miss a single picture. Let me ask, Would you invite them into your home and have them associate with your children? Is that the company you would want to have in your parlors? Do you want to entertain, in your home, those who play the part of murderers and thieves and real divorcees, whose pictures you pay to see? Our children and some of their parents go to church on Sunday; spend thirty minutes in the study of the Bible; hear a long list of painful announcements; listen to a preacher thirty minutes; go to the young people’s meeting in the evening; and then leave before the night sermon. They then spend three or four nights that week in revelry of the type that I have mentioned. After all of this, brethren often wonder why- the church does not grow. I want to say some more about our food, its digestion, etc. I know that simply to eat food does not accomplish the end in view. Your experience is that many times you have eaten and the result has been unpleasant because you could not digest what you ate. With some it necessary to have "Tums" ever present. Now, will you bear with me if I just suggest to you some simple facts? In the process of physical digestion, there are several acts before any good results. May I name them? There is the process called prehension, then comes mastication, insalivation, deglutition, chymification, assimilation, and absorption. All must be completed before you are really benefitted by what you ate. Now let us pass to the application. Many people hear the word of God gladly; they will even swallow it; but soon they will have a real case of indigestion. The Word, therefore, is never assimilated and never becomes a part of their being. I am ready to make another statement which you may consider. There never has been a strong Christian upon this earth who was ignorant of the Bible. You can have a strong church member. You can have a strong partisan. But Bible knowledge is the stuff upon which a Christian must grow. Paul said to the elders at Ephesus: “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." Such is the Christian’s food. Upon such only can he be built up. No uninspired matter can take the place of God’s Word. To build up every member, I conceive to be one work of the church. See to it, brethren, that in your congregation every member is builded up and knows what it is all about. In 1 Corinthians 14:12 Paul said: "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." Here are two thoughts exactly the opposite: Brethren, you are quite zealous when it comes to receiving. Now, seek to excel in building up the church. Upon this our ambition ought to be centered. Let us see how much we can give rather than how much we can receive. If all of us would do that, I believe the finest results would be seen. In Ephesians 4:8-14 Paul urged the use of spiritual gifts until full manhood in the church was attained. But again I said to you there is a benevolent work to be done. In Ephesians 4:28 Paul said: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." It is surely a false conception and a mistaken idea for a preacher to fancy that he is too good to use his hands in doing that which is honorable and needs to be done. This letter was written to the saints at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. It, therefore, includes preachers, elders, and all

members. It is my conviction that every preacher ought to have some work to do along with his preaching. I think he would feel more independent and less inclined to feel that everybody should help him. Let him work and have something to give. So long as I am mentally and physically able to work, I do not want to be an object of charity. It never has been noised abroad that I am over industrious, nor am I noted for my energy, but one thing is sure- viz., when something needs to be done, I am none too good to lay aside my coat and go to it. I would be ashamed of myself if I did not have that attitude toward the affairs of life. I love to be in POSITION that I can give to some worthy cause. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men." Be like the Christ, who came not to be ministered unto, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. If you want to have a church fuss, and want things to go wrong, just let the members quit doing something. In Acts 11:27-30 we have an account of a young prophet who came to Antioch and announced that there was going to be a dearth throughout all the world, which would come to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Upon hearing this, every one of those brethren at Antioch determined to send relief unto the poor saints in Judea. This they did, every man according to his ability. I now read to you only one more passage, from Romans 15:25-27. Paul said: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are, for if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." But enough on that phase of church work. I have reserved for the last the discussion of what I consider the supreme and most important work of the church of the Lord. To teach God’s Word and to preach the gospel of His Son to dying humanity is the noblest work on this earth. You may feed and clothe humanity and provide for them good homes, but if you fail to induce them to obey the gospel, they will die and land in hell at last. The church is God’s great missionary agency for proclaiming to a lost, ruined, and recreant race of mankind the hope of everlasting bliss. Any church, therefore, that is not interested, is not active, that is not doing something for the spread of the gospel among the denizens of this earth is not a distant relative of the church Christ died to establish. The church will attract the attention of the world in proportion to its efforts to preach only the gospel and to save mankind. You know that Christ said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Do not add to, nor take from, nor substitute for it. Just be content to preach the old-time gospel. Know nothing save Christ and him crucified. The Lord never commissioned any man to preach his philosophy, his theory, or his wild speculations. There are preachers who boast that they have a thousand sermon outlines and that they never repeat. The chances are that nine hundred seventy-five of them are not worth repeating. I have been told that Dr. T. W. Brents never had more than a dozen sermons, but be assured they were real sermons. Moses E. Lard was, perhaps, the most interesting preacher of the Restoration, but no one ever knew of his great number of sermons. A good sermon should be preached over and over. A bad one ought not to be preached at all. Do not be tempted to use the pulpit for any theme except the gospel of Christ. Be neither afraid nor ashamed to declare the whole counsel of God. Men’s souls are at stake. Human lives are precious in God’s sight. They are dying day by day. Many are hungering and thirsting for the Bread of Life. I now ask, upon whom does the responsibility to preach the gospel rest? Certainly no political party is expected. No human fraternity ever considers it its business, and no denomination on earth will preach a full gospel. The obligation rests upon the church of Christ. Such responsibility belongs to members of the body of Christ, and if they do not, they will lose their own souls. "Ye are the salt of

the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" The implication is that it will be lost. Hence, in self-defense, I must try to save somebody else. The commission was given unto the twelve, but before all of them passed away, Paul said to Timothy: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This explains how the gospel is to be perpetuated, and it also names the two qualifications for a gospel preacher. He must be faithful to God’s Word and then have ability to teach. There are many brethren who are just as true to the Book as the needle ever was to the pole, but they are unable to teach. When they get up, their thoughts sit down. Combine fidelity and ability and you have God’s preacher. Friends, I have talked as long as I should. If there is present tonight anyone impressed with duty’s demand, who understands the will of the Lord, and at this time has the disposition of heart and mind to comply with heaven’s terms, the opportunity is gladly tendered to you while together we sing His praise.

5.06 - THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH Of the church we sing and preach and pray, but I doubt very much that even as yet people in general understand what the church of the Bible is. I count it not amiss, therefore, to call attention to that which is, seemingly, overlooked. The church of the Bible is not the old Jewish institution perpetuated; for Christ made it plain to Nicodemus that, notwithstanding the fact that he was a member of the Jewish assembly, he had to be born again before he could enter into the kingdom of God. Again, the church is not a political institution. Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world." And then again, it is no part of a human denomination. All of these are telling what the church is not. In Ephesians 1:22-23 Paul said: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The church of the Bible is the body of Christ. To the Corinthians he said: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." So, whenever a band of Christian people come together, they form the body of Christ. They do not form a body of Christ, and they do not make up a church. They are the church. If a man is just a member of a church, he is a member of something the Bible never mentioned. I am not a member of a church. I propose to be a member of the church, which is the body of Christ, over which he reigns as head, and in which his Spirit dwells. In the Bible we have various terms by which it is called. All of them are in perfect accord. For instance, it is called the church of God, the church of the Lord, the pillar and ground of the truth, the household of faith, and so on. Individually, the members are named according to relation emphasized. If reference is made to a person’s being a student and a learner, it is right to call him a disciple. If we want to emphasize his purity and moral character, we can speak of him as a saint. If we want to talk about Christians in their relations one with another, then "we be brethren." But if you want to emphasize the relation of a person to Christ, there is just one name that indicates such, and that name is a Christian. It is most unfortunate that so many good moral people will allow human names to separate them from others who claim to love the Lord. Really big men of various denominations have condemned such things. I want to read to you from the greatest Baptist preacher that has ever lived. In "Spurgeon Memorial Library," volume 1, page 168, he said: “I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ’s name last forever." Friends of the Baptist persuasion, that surely ought to register with you. Why do you want to wear the name of water baptism, and then say it is nonessential? I read again from Martin Luther in Stork’s "Life of Luther," page 289. Mr. Luther said: “I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not permit that any should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How, then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with them all; let us call ourselves only Christians after him from whom our doctrine comes.’, Now, hear John Wesley: "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world- were forgot; that we might all agree to sit down together as humble, loving disciples at the feet of a common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his Spirit, and

to transcribe his life into our own." Friends, the really great men, and those who know the trouble that comes from party names, are a unit in regretting that such exist. I really believe that deep down in the heart of every man he wishes that he could be free from human names and be known as a Christian only. He may think that, if he were to do so, it would put him over with Hardeman and his crowd, and hence, he cannot afford to do it. Now the church belongs to Christ because: (1) he built it; (2) he bought it; (3) he is the head of it. There are two figures in the Bible which illustrate our entrance into the church. One is that of a birth. Just as a child is delivered from its mother's womb and thereby comes into a new life, so a sinner is delivered from the baptismal womb and rises to walk a new life. Therefore, he is said to be "born of water and of the Spirit." Another figure is that of a marriage. When a woman finds herself in love with some man in whom she believes and trusts, she forms a resolution to leave her home and become his bride. But thus far she is not his wife. She must now have a ceremony said by which she is made to wear his name and to share in his estate. Just so a sinner falls in love with Christ. He believes in him and trusts him, and resolves to leave the devil and walk with Christ down life's way. But he is not yet married to him. The ceremony in connection with the act of baptism is said, and that former sinner, now a Christian, has a right to wear the name of Christ and to share in his wealth. Then, literally, the Bible says: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." That body is the church of our Lord. When folks ask me, as they do sometimes, if I am a preacher, I answer yes. They then ask of what church am I a member. I answer the church of the New Testament. But that does not satisfy. They come back and ask of what branch of the church am I a member. I reply that I am not a member of any branch at all, but I propose to be a branch myself. Still they seem not to understand. I learned a long time ago just how to answer such folks. When a man asks me about my church relation, I simply say: "I am a member of the body of Christ." I have never yet met a man with little enough in the attic to ask me of which one of Christ's bodies I am a member. Are you a member of the church of the Bible? If not, you ought to be. Are you wearing some party name? Leave it off. Have you subscribed to some human booklet? Renounce it. Be just a Christian. Pledge yourself to worship God as it is written and be faithful unto death. Let us together stand while we sing.

Chapter 110

5.07 - THE GREAT COMMISSION AS GIVEN BY MARK

THE GREAT COMMISSION AS GIVEN BY MARK This large audience has enjoyed and duly appreciated the exceeding fine addresses delivered by Brethren Goodpasture and Sanders on "Where to Place the Proper Emphasis." What they have said ought to register with all of us. I want to supplement all that has been said by adding that proper emphasis ought always to be placed upon the last message of Jesus Christ to mortal man when he announced the Great Commission and sent forth his representatives laden with the power of God unto salvation. I am repeating that commission as reported by Mark. Christ said to the apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The world ought to hear gladly and appreciate fully that upon which the destiny of the human family is depending. There is nothing contradictory in this statement as given by Mark to that given by Matthew. One is simply supplementary to the other. When Matthew said, "teach all nations," he meant the same as Mark when he said, "preach to every creature." Teaching and preaching ought to be characteristic of all efforts put forth from the pulpit. But Matthew did not tell just what to preach, and the world might never have known but for Mark’s insertion of that which was to be proclaimed. Mark said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This is more specific than Matthew’s statement: "Teach all nations." Just as long as any man confines himself to the gospel of Christ, he can look to this commission as authority, but when he launches out into fields about which the Bible is silent, he is treading upon dangerous ground. The gospel is God’s power unto salvation. I must not go beyond it, and I must not stop short of it. Nothing can be a substitute for the gospel. Sin is the same as ever and man’s requirements have not changed. The redeeming power of the blood of Christ is the same now as in the generations gone by, and the terms upon which man may receive forgiveness of sin and entertain the hope of everlasting life have never changed since that Great Commission went into effect. Christ laid down the terms of admission into his family when he said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In that statement, there are two conditions—viz., faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and baptism into the name of the sacred three. Let me now truly say that whenever salvation is predicated on any terms whatsoever, there may be others implied, but there can never be less. Upon such a statement we rest assured. Out of all the multiplied thousands of men and women everywhere, Christ picked out one class and made a positive declaration: "He shall be saved." But that "he" is limited by a descriptive subordinate clause, and we must find out what kind of a "he" shall be saved. Were there no modifying terms, I could say of any "he" that, to him, Christ promised salvation. But Christ said that a certain "he" shall be saved. Now what he is that? Lord, did you say he that believeth shall be saved? "No." Did you declare that he that is baptized shall be saved’ "No." Well, what did you say about it? Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." When a man, therefore, hears the gospel, believes it, and obeys it, he is then standing upon the promise of our Lord who said: `'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I cannot imagine how it is that any man can pretend that he misunderstands what the Lord said. I do not want to be unkind, but I seriously doubt if any responsible person can misunderstand what Christ said without expert help from some preacher who tries to pervert the gospel of Christ. Putting what the Lord said in

algebraic terms, we would have: "Faith + baptism = salvation." Preachers of the denominations say: "Faith—baptism = salvation." So it is for everyone to decide whether he will stand upon what he knows the Bible says or risk his unfounded chance upon what some preacher says. There is a clear-cut difference between what God says and what man says. Men say: "We are justified by faith only." God says that a man is not justified by faith only. Which do you believe? Let me say further that when both baptism and salvation are mentioned in the same passage, salvation always follows baptism. I submit the following: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins." And again: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins...." I also want to say that, after the commission was given, there is not a case on record where any man ever rejoiced on account of sins forgiven. until after he was baptized. I want some preacher who makes fun of baptism and who seeks to belittle its importance to find that case. And then I want this audience, each to ask himself, "Did I rejoice before I was baptized?" After the eunuch was baptized, "he went on his way rejoicing." After the jailer was baptized he "rejoiced." Well, may we ask why? Because they were standing on the promise of him who said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." They had met the conditions given by their Lord; they believed and obeyed what he said and they thus had every right and reason to rejoice in the hope of everlasting life. The gospel call is for all men. Won’t you, today, accept its invitation?

Chapter 111

5.08 - THE GREAT COMMISSION ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE GREAT COMMISSION ACCORDING TO MATTHEW The first thirty years of the life of Christ were spent in what might be called a period of preparation. Next came the period of his inauguration and the acknowledgment of his Sonship. For about three and a half years thereafter he was a public character before the world. His teaching and his exposition of the errors of the Pharisees led to his crucifixion, after which he was buried in a borrowed tomb. It was then that his enemies both in hell and on earth had occasion to rejoice; but on the morning of the third day, he burst the bars and came forth triumphant over the powers of the Hadean world. Having called his apostles, he said unto them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This was the last message ever delivered to mortal man by God’s Son. It is the most important message ever clothed in human language. Upon this commission rests the destiny of the human family. Based upon authority supreme he bade his apostles to "go . . . and teach all nations." The world was groping its way in darkness. The light of Heaven’s truth had not shined upon it, and hence, the necessity of their going to all nations and making known to them the way of life and of giving to them the hope of everlasting life. The religion of the Bible is a thing that man must learn. The Christianity of God’s book is something that is to be taught. Great indeed was the responsibility here imposed. But I ask, upon whom was it placed? I am not expecting the New Deal Administration to carry out this commission. I never think of any human fraternity’s having this obligation. Neither has it ever dawned upon me that any human denomination was obligated to do what Christ here enjoined, for to any of them he had no reference whatsoever, because such denominations were unheard of and undreamed of for the next fifteen hundred years. It was the responsibility of those who were to be first in the church and likewise to those who were to come after them. This was the first commission ever given that included all nations. Up to this time the order was to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The first religion upon the earth was that of a family; the second was national; and the last, under Christ, was world-wide and for all nations. Hence, the command: "Go teach them." That obligation rests, not upon preachers only, but upon all members of the body of our Lord. To the Hebrews, Paul said: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." When all Christian men and women everywhere study God’s Book so that they may be able to teach others and will so do, the cause of Christ will make such progress as has not characterized it since the days of the pioneers." But Christ said: "Go . . . teach all nations, baptizing them." I put the emphasis on "them" for just a moment, and without having the time to argue, I say without fear of successful contradiction that the "them" refers to the ones already taught. Technically, the antecedent of "them" is in the verb "teach." Go teach all nations, and baptize those whom you have taught. It follows then that innocent babes, untaught heathens, and unfortunate idiots are not subjects of gospel address. It is with this first part of the commission that I am dealing at this hour. Since that Great Commission was given, there have been questions

and arguments regarding the importance of baptism. We should remember that the last command that Jesus Christ ever gave was: "Go . . . teach all nations, baptizing them." Occasionally someone says to me: "Hardeman, why don't you just preach the gospel and say nothing about baptism?" Do you know, friends, that I could not introduce Jesus Christ to the world unless I told of his standing on the banks of the Jordan, when the Spirit of God descended upon him and announced: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? Were I to leave out the fact of his baptism, I could not designate the time when God first acknowledged him. And were I to omit baptism, I could not repeat his farewell message to mankind Any man who proposes to preach the gospel and who will leave out what Christ said was to be done in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, preaches a mutilated and a perverted gospel. "Go . . . teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But there are those who admit that while such is obligatory, they tell us that the baptism here mentioned is a Christian duty. Just a word; if baptism is a Christian duty, I want some preacher to explain to me why it is that baptism is the only Christian duty, in all of the Bible, that is to be performed just one time. No man can name a single Christian duty that does not recur and demand repetition. If baptism be one, then why is it that Christ did not say something about its being a peculiar form of Christian duty separate and distinct from all the rest? The fact is, there is not a syllable of truth in any such stuff as that proclaimed by uninspired man. It is but a vain effort, based on prejudice, to evade the truth of God. Let me tell you another thing. Baptism is the only duty in all the Bible specifically commanded to be done in the sublime names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Does this fact minimize its importance and indicate that it is nonessential? Baptism is the final act by which a penitent believer enters into Jesus Christ and into his death, where he meets the blood that takes away his sins. To one who has faith in Christ, and who has resolved to leave the world and walk with him, baptism is God's ceremony by which he is married to the bridegroom. Not until this ceremony has been said does he have the right to wear Christ's name or to hope to share his vast estate. Baptism is, therefore, no part of a Christian's duty. It is obligatory upon every penitent believer among all nations. There are others who tell us that, while it is true that baptism is a part of the commission, it means Holy Spirit baptism. Much ado is made of this among some modern cults. My friends, if all I do not know were written in a book, it would be a terrible volume. But there are some things that I do know, and one of them is this—viz., the baptism mentioned by Matthew in the commission is not Holy Spirit baptism. If any man will lend his ears for just a moment, I think he will be convinced of that fact. Hear it. In this commission, there are three verbs: "go, teach, baptize." They are all in the imperative mood. Their subject is understood. When supplied, that subject is "you." Hence, you go. You teach. And you baptize. The antecedent of you is the apostles. To whom did Christ give the order "go"? Who was to do the going? You answer, "the apostles." Who was to do the teaching? You answer, "the apostles." Who was to do the baptizing? You answer again, "the apostles." Friends, that does not nearly settle it, but that settles it without the shadow of a doubt Why? Because no man ever lived on this earth who ever did, ever could, or ever will administer Holy Ghost baptism But the baptism of the commission was to be administered by men. And since it was to be administered by man, it could not have been Holy Spirit baptism. Even John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, said: "I baptize with water, but he that cometh after me, who is mightier than 1, he it is that shall baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Let no man, therefore, pervert the truth of God Almighty, nor give an uncertain sound by saying that the baptism of the commission was Holy Spirit baptism. The very facts as stated preclude

such a possibility. Brethren, the salvation of the world depends upon obedience to this commission. The proclamation of it depends upon the church of our Lord. Each of us should ask, What am I doing to that end? Nashville is the Jerusalem of America, and yet there are people in this county who have never heard the gospel of Christ. In our beloved state, there are entire counties to which the truth of God has not been made known. The world can never be converted without the gospel. It is God's power unto salvation. Let us be neither afraid nor ashamed to emphasize what God has required. I preach faith, repentance, and baptism upon proper confession as the conditions of pardon. Man's need is the same as in the days of Adam. Sin never changes. The gospel does not change to be in harmony with man's progressive thoughts. Denominational preachers have ever tried to ridicule the necessity of a man's being baptized. Many gospel preachers, apparently, have considered the preaching of it as out of date and out of line with modern education. Some will recognize a man as a Christian who never has been baptized. The church needs men who believe the Bible; men who have convictions; and men who will not soft-pedal the gospel of Jesus Christ. Won't you who have not as yet accept it now?

5.09 - CHRISTIANITY, A NEW RELIGION

CHRISTIANITY, A NEW RELIGION

I want to join Brother Goodpasture in expressing personal appreciation and profound gratitude to all of those who have, in any way whatsoever, contributed to the success, to the interest, and to the pleasure of this meeting. So far as I know, all of the congregations of Nashville have had a part. I have appreciated the invitation from Central Church to speak at their noonday services. It shows a fine spirit. When I stand before an audience like this, I am made to exclaim: "What a wonderful opportunity! What a terrible responsibility! Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel of God’s Son." As a basis for the study this afternoon, I read to you from Hebrews 8:8-13 : "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Then again in Hebrews 10:19-20 : "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." And one other, Ephesians 2:14-16 : "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." I think those texts justify the announcement that "Christianity is a new religion." Let me say that Christianity is not something that has come down to us from generation to generation as a matter of tradition. It is not the outgrowth of some human philosophy, developed and formulated into what is called the "Christian religion." Nor is it a compilation of anything that has gone before. It is new in all of its phases and in all of its relationships. I submit to you some of the outstanding features wherein its newness lies. First of all, let me say to you that the religion of the New Testament is new in that it is the only religion that ever promised absolute forgiveness of sin. The very highest conception of pagan religion was to suffer some sort of selfimposed penalty in order to appease the wrath of some fancied God. They never had the idea of real forgiveness of sins. Under the patriarchal era of twenty-five hundred years, plus the fifteen hundred years characteristic of the Jewish system, there was no such thing as absolute forgiveness of sins. I know that from the time the smoke ascended from the altar of Aaron and blood flowed down inclined planes, the very best that they could expect was a rolling forward of their sins for just one year. That truth is so obvious in the

Bible that real students thereof grasp it at once. Hebrews 9:22 : "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Now hold that statement—"without the shedding of blood there can be no remission." Then in Hebrews 10:4 : "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." There must be blood shed before sins can be forgiven. The conclusion is unavoidable, that without the shedding of the blood of Christ there never was a sin absolutely forgiven. When a Jew came to the altar on the day of sacrificing and presented his victim, he had assurance that all of his sins were rolled forward. But remember in those sacrifices there was remembrance made again of sins every year and at the expiration of that year, all of his sins stood against him in full force and effect. Hence, the necessity of offering another sacrifice for the coming year and on down the line. Now every Jew that kept up those sacrifices could have a well-founded assurance that when Jesus Christ died on the tree of the cross, all of them would be blotted out, never again to be remembered. Hence, the Bible says, Hebrews 9:15 : "For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Christ, therefore, died for the sins of all that had gone before, and likewise to obtain eternal redemption for those who were to come after. There is definite assurance that under the Christian religion sins are wholly forgiven and remembered no more. Hebrews 8:12 : “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hence, when John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" he had in mind the Christ whose blood would be shed for the remission of sins. In our prayers we sometimes use expressions that are unnecessary. It is quite common to hear some brother say: "Lord, we know that we have done things we should not, and we know again that we have left undone things we should have done. Therefore, Lord, forgive us. Remove our sins from us, and remember them against us no more forever." The last petition could well be left out because, be assured, if God Almighty ever forgives sins, those thus forgiven never will be remembered again. I must evidence the same spirit if I be His. "If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." That ought to end the matter. We may forgive, but it is next to impossible to forget. Not only, friends, is Christianity new in that it offers absolute forgiveness of sins, but it is new in this respect. It is the only religion the world ever knew that offered eternal life to any man. The great question of the Old Testament was this—viz., "If a man die, shall he live again?" The ancients wondered why it was that with the coming of spring all things in the vegetable world burst forth with a new life. They wondered why the great king of day would drive across the arched sky to light up this old earth, pillow his head at night upon the placid bosom of the peaceful Pacific, and then rise again from behind the eastern hills, while human beings sank out of sight to rise no more. Their question v as unanswered by any theory of paganism. Neither in the patriarchal nor Jewish age was there a direct answer. Christ said to the Jews in John 5:39-40 : "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." The tragedy of our Jewish friends today is the deceptive thought that outside of Jesus Christ life eternal may be theirs. My friends, that is not so. Christ said: “I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Not only that, but he said: “I go to prepare a place far you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also, and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto

him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Hence, eternal life centers in Christ, and apart from him this world would be enveloped in darkness forever. There would not be one ray of hope or one crumb of comfort to mankind. Believe it, my friends, eternal life is in Christ and attaches only to the Christian religion, the "new and living way." But again, Christianity is new in that it is the only religion of which you ever read or heard that recognizes the fatherhood of God. Did you ever stop to think that before Christ came there was no such word as "mankind"? That term was wholly foreign to everything that went before. Unto the Jew everyone else was a Gentile or a dog, unfit for their association. Unto the Grecian mind everyone else was a barbarian. Unto all people the principle was that might made right. Paul announced a great truth absolutely new when on Mars' Hill, he said: God "hash made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Hence, he made known the universal kinship of the human family coming from a common Father. We can understand now why Christ said: "Our Father who art in heaven." May I suggest again that Christianity is new in that it teaches the real standard of greatness among men. When the mother of James and John, as well as other disciples, was so solicitous about the promotion and prominence of her boys, in asking that one sit upon the right hand and the other upon the left in his kingdom, Christ practically said: "Woman, you know not what you ask. Your idea of greatness is wholly foreign to mine. You ask the very opposite of what real greatness is." Then he said: "You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." From what Christ here said, you can see at once that the standard of greatness, as men count it, is wholly different from his standard. Ask any man who is the greatest man in the nation, in the state, or in the city. He will answer that it is he who has the greatest authority and who exercises dominion over his fellows. Christ said not so. Real greatness lies in service. The biggest man in all the land is the greatest servant of the people. Greatness is always characterized by meekness and humility. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Christ "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant." Members of the church and the world in general need to learn this important lesson. Christ set the example. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Christianity is new in this regard—viz., its teaching is positive rather than negative. Review the Decalogue for just a moment. Every pronouncement was: "Thou shalt not." Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet that which belongs to another. Old Confucius put the golden rule in the negative form. Said he: "All things whatsoever ye would not that men should do unto you, do not that unto them." But Christianity is absolutely positive. The great question is never, "Lord, what will thou have me not do," but "what wilt thou have me do?" Of all people, members of the Christian church need to learn this difference about Christianity. Their attitude is: "Where did God ever prohibit?" "Where did God ever say, thou shalt not?" When a man asks me a question of that kind, I know that he has never yet learned the fundamental idea of Christianity. We live by what God said and we are not to live according to things not mentioned. Christianity is a positive system of religion. He has given unto us "all things that pertain unto life

and godliness." His word is a "lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.'' Whatever that word speaks I must do, and it is dangerous to try to take advantage of its silence. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Thus spoke the Savior when tempted by the great archenemy of mankind. Think how the world reasons on almost every matter that arises and thus possibly duplicates the devil's method. (1) Lord, don't you like bread? Yes. (2) Do you ever have bread in your home? Yes. (3) Is there anything wrong in converting stones into bread? Not a thing. Then why don't you do it? Has God ever said: "Thou shalt not turn stones into bread"? No. Modern reasoning would suggest that if you want a thing, if you have it in your home, if you see no wrong in it, and if the Lord has never specifically forbidden it, it is foolish to oppose it, and those who do are both prejudiced and mean. Think again how such reasoning would apply to Christ and how little and narrow he was. But now may I ask, Why didn't Christ turn stones to bread? Now here is the answer, and it is fundamental. He no doubt would say: "Because I am not my own. I am under the will of my Father. I came not to do my will but His. When the Father wants me to have bread, He will tell me so, and that will be time enough." I am not governed by my desires nor by my pleasures. I am governed by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Let God's word be authority. Such only is Christianity. Instead of raising the question, where does God say you must not? let us reverse that and ask, where does God authorize it? Where does the Bible command it? Let us not be wise above that which is written. In matters upon which the destiny of mankind depends, we must be governed by God's Word. Brethren, if all of us will accept these principles and thus be governed, it will be next to impossible to divide us. There could be no unpleasantness. We would go forth as a solid phalanx against the forces of evil, and accomplish something worth while to the glory of God and to the salvation of the sons of men. Furthermore, Christianity does not consist simply in being good. A man can just be good and go to hell. Life does not consist in one's just sitting around with folded hands and consoling himself with the assurance that he isn't doing anything wrong. I would not give a dime a dozen for boys that have such an idea. I want a boy who has an ambition to do something and to be something worth while. I can see no reason for a man who is wholly negative to keep on living, unless it be to save burial expenses. Let us ask, Is the world better as the result of our being in it? Are we helping push forward the affairs of this world? If the church depended upon me, what would be the result of its movement? I may say: "I am just as good as I can be." If every member of the church were trying to be good and keep out of meanness, the whole thing would go to the devil. Let no one think that I do not appreciate the necessity of being good. I am trying to emphasize the fact that Christianity is positive, aggressive, active, and that its mission is to do good. When those on the left hand were consigned to eternal wreck and ruin, there was a reason given—viz., they did nothing. Did you ever think about the one-talent man? What had he done? You cannot bring a single indictment against him except he had done nothing. Christ cast him into outer darkness. Christianity is positive, aggressive. It means fighting against "spiritual wickedness in high places." Boys can fly kites, but only against the wind. Birds cannot fly, nor can the fishes swim, but for the resistance of the medium through which they pass. Christianity always will have its conflicts. Christ, the apostles, and thousands of primitive Christians were killed because they did something. "The world will hate you." Paul saw a crown of righteousness laid up because he had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, and had kept the faith. If I ever sweep through the gates into joys celestial, it will be because I have here practiced the principles of pure and undefiled religion; because I have worshiped God as it is written; and because I have been faithful

unto death. Only those who do his will shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Christianity is also new in that it is the only religion ever known that proposes to make a man a new creature. Christianity is the only religion in the world that is missionary in spirit. All others are ethnic and are content when their own race has been reached. The religion of many countries has ended, while that of others is stagnant. These are some of the things characteristic of Christianity and which thus distinguish it from all other religions. In conclusion, let me beg of you brethren here in Nashville to stand together as a united body. Do not take out after some frivolous affair or some newfangled theory. Pay no attention to some fellow whose head is filled with wild theories. Give no heed to any man who tries to lead off into speculative fields. Rather let us all hark back to Jerusalem and be determined to speak the same things and to be of the same mind. And now, with an earnest prayer that these talks of mine may result in good, and that our coming together as friends, as neighbors, as brethren, may reunite us in stronger ties than heretofore, I am leaving you with a consciousness of having done the best that I could under the conditions that have prevailed. I am hoping that it may be mine to speak to you again some time here upon earth, but if not, I want to meet you on the golden happy shore where the faithful part no more.

5.10 - FELLOWSHIP

FELLOWSHIP

I appreciate fully, friends, the opportunity of speaking to you who are here tonight, and to others who may have their radios tuned to this station. I realize that there are several preachers present who have appointments, and it may be necessary for them to leave before I have finished. You will understand, therefore, why they go. When the first gospel sermon was preached in the name of the risen Lord on that memorable Pentecost, we are told that those who received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. It is also stated that these continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. I am calling special attention to the word "Fellowship" as here used, in which the disciples of the first church continued steadfastly. In connection with that, I am reading from 1 John 1:7 : "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." May I say to you tonight that the conversion and hope of the world depend upon the fellowship of Christian people. There can be but two reasons why it is not maintained. Either we do not know what the term means or we fail to appreciate its importance. I am quite certain that in the prayer of our Lord, while in the shadow of the cross, he was emphasizing the great importance of fellowship. He prayed, first, for himself that he might be glorified with that glory which he had from the beginning. After that, he prayed for those that the Lord had given him, and finally he said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." It is evident that his plea for oneness was to convince the world that the Father had sent him. The most fruitful field of infidelity is the lack of fellowship among professed followers of Christ. Fellowship implies oneness, unity, and coherence among the members of any organization. I wish you would fancy, for just a moment, the influence that would be felt if all people in our good land who claim to recognize the Lord were bound together in such ties and upon such a basis as the Bible has recorded. There always has been a mistaken idea as to what constitutes unity among professed Christians. In the denominations of this country there is what is called the "Federation of the Churches of Christ." In that great federation each denomination maintains its individuality. They are still different in origin, doctrine, and practice. As churches there is no fellowship among them. The true "federation" is a misnomer because there is no sovereign power over the bodies that form it. I assume that all will agree that no organization can succeed unless there be fellowship among the members. I now ask what does this term mean? Next to the Bible, I have always thought that the dictionary is one of the best books in the world. In it, the word "fellowship" implies the state of an associate, comradeship, a company of equals, mutual relation among members of the same church. It means partnership, joint participation. It implies agreement. Amos asked: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" And now, may I ask, are the denominations agreed? Are the church of Christ and any other religious body agreed? If not, how can there be fellowship between them? The world has a mistaken idea of unity and fellowship. To

illustrate, we drive our automobiles along muddy roads. There is a union between the mud and the auto. That is not the kind of unity that Christ was talking about in John 17:1-26. Water will stick to a grindstone and sorghum will cling to the can for a while. This is not the unity sought. We call such things "adhesion," which is the blending together of elements different in make-up. Such is far from what Christ had in mind. Unity means the combination of elements of the same composition. It follows, therefore, that if men are united and have fellowship in the church of the Lord, they must be converted precisely as the Bible directs, and they must be of the "same mind and the same judgment." From these statements of fact, it ought to be clear to all why it is that as a people we cannot fellowship those who have not obeyed the gospel of God's Son. It would be wholly inconsistent with all of my preaching for me to recognize as an associate or comrade in the work of the Lord any man who has not "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered." Neither can I fellowship or be a joint partaker with any man who preaches or practices that which I believe the Bible does not authorize. I cannot bid such an one Godspeed. When a man of that kind comes into my audience, I try to meet him and to greet him and to see that he is comfortably seated. I have too much respect for him to ask him to lead a prayer when I know full well that he does not believe what I am going to say. I do not want him to feel that he must ask God's blessings upon me, when, as a matter of fact, I know his wish is that I could never preach another sermon. Furthermore, I teach that faith, repentance, and baptism upon a proper confession are conditions of salvation. If I then call upon someone who has not so done, I admit my inconsistency and my downright hypocrisy. I next inquire who are that company with whom we may have fellowship or partnership? John says: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." In addition Paul says: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Hence, in that great company, there are God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the revealer of God's truth to man. Also, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

It is almost impossible sometimes to present the truth on any matter so that all may understand, unless at the same time we contrast it with error. All denominations have the idea that Christian fellowship is one thing and that church fellowship is an entirely different thing. This egregious error comes from the false belief that it is one thing to be a Christian and quite another thing to be a church member. Such a thought is wholly out of harmony with every statement in the Bible bearing upon such matters. Denominations can unite for a big meeting. All of the preachers can work together for a spell and possibly convert a large number. Those thus converted are recognized by all as Christians, children of God, and ready for heaven. The fellowship is fine thus far. When Sunday comes and all of the converts "join the church of their choice," the fellowship ends, and ever thereafter they cannot work together as churches. Some Christians (?) will not even let other Christians (?) converted at the same time and under the same preaching, eat the Lord's Supper with them. As a church they have no dealings with one another. Such teaching is absolutely repulsive to the word of God. There is not a syllable of truth in the idea that a man can be a Christian and yet not a member of the church. In the Bible all Christians were church members. In the Bible all church members were Christians. All of God's children were in God's family. God has no children outside of His family. Such a thought ought to be discarded as unworthy of an intelligent man. In Romans 12:4-5, Paul said: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one

members one of another." Then again, 1 Corinthians 12:18-29 : "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body." In Colossians 1:18 we are told that "he is the head of the body, the church." Hence, we have one head, one spirit, and one body. It follows that every Christian on earth is a member of that one body by virtue of the fact that he has been "born of water and of the Spirit" into it. If, therefore, I can have Christian fellowship with a man, surely I can have church fellowship with him on the ground that all Christians are church members and all church members are Christians. Any idea to the contrary evidences ignorance on the part of him who expresses it. Paul wrote a letter "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." In that letter he said: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." We object: "But we cannot all be that way." Suffice it to say that Paul thought we could. If all of us will "walk by faith" and understand that faith comes by hearing God's Word, there can be no divisions among us. If all who claim to love the Lord would walk by faith, all denominations would be abandoned before the rising of tomorrow's sun. The Bible knows nothing about denominations. You must turn to the World Almanac and similar books to learn anything about them. Why does any sober, sane, sensible man want to be a member of some religious organization not one time mentioned in all of God's Word? I will gladly fellowship any man on matters of faith, but in the realms of opinion, I must refrain. I now ask just how does fellowship express itself? If a company of businessmen organize and have any hope of success, there are some simple matters that must be understood and accepted by each partner in the company. First, each member must have the same purpose and the same end in view. Second, it must be understood that each member obligates himself to do his part of whatever work is necessary. Third, it is expected that everyone will bear his part of the expense. Fourth, it is implied and understood that the conduct of every member will be such as will sell the business to the expected customers. Last of all, every member must be willing to share in whatever profits or losses may come. All of this is easy to understand and every person will endorse these statements. Now for the application. The church of the Lord is the greatest business company on earth, and all Christians are partners in it. Of course, we want it to succeed. As a member of the firm, let each one ask himself: "What was my real motive in obtaining fellowship in this company? Was my purpose the same as that of every other worthy member? Was mine for social advantage, political prestige, or that I might cover up some sin? Now, in the second place, when I became a member of this great spiritual company, did I understand that I was obligated to do my part of the work necessary for its success? Did I have the attitude of old Governor Pilate, who said, 'See ye to it; I have washed my hands, I have nothing whatsoever to do with it'? Did I intend to be a parasite and try to live a spiritual life upon the deeds of the other members?" God forbid. In the next place I ask: "Did I expect to bear my part of the expense so necessary to carry on our business?" God requires this of every member according to his ability. I cannot fail in this with impunity. So long as I am physically and mentally able, I do not expect to be a burden to the church. And because I am a preacher I do not want to be on the charity list. I expect no businessman to give me a better deal than he does anyone else. I want to labor that I may have somewhat to give to the cause I love. I know that it takes money to erect and equip our buildings. It costs money to have nice pews,

carpets on the aisles, good song books and electric lights. It also takes money to have the right kind of preachers in our midst. Any member of our company who is not willing to have fellowship in the expenses, according to what he has, is unfit as a partner. Again let me ask: "When I became a member of God’s great company, was it my definite purpose to conduct myself so that I would be helpful and not harmful to every other member? Have I been true to that aim? Is my conduct such that it will commend the church to the world about me? Do I have the right to ignore the reproof of other members when they think my deeds are hurting their business? Do sinners look upon me as a hypocrite or a whited sepulcher?" Let us think seriously on things of this kind. And finally, yet me ask, Are there any present tonight who are not as yet members of this great company? Would you not like to become such and to share with us the joy and the fellowship in working for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord upon this earth? I bid you come and give to me your hand, to God your heart, and to the world your best influence and your greatest encouragement

Chapter 114

5.11 - CAN A MAN BE SAVED OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH?

CAN A MAN BE SAVED OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH?

Once again, friends, do I appreciate fully the presence of such a fine audience. I am reading to you just one verse, Ephesians 5:23, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." I want you to let that text register with you because it embodies the idea that I expect to develop tonight. So once again for emphasis let me read: "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body." I have suggested for consideration a question which is discussed by many people. Can a man be saved outside of the church as well as within it? I believe this question should demand your serious consideration. Perhaps religion is unlike any other matter in one respect. I doubt if there is a man living, in what we call an intelligent land, but has some idea and opinion about religion. And, as a rule, the less he knows about the Bible, the louder is his expression of his opinion. I really think that we ought not to express our opinion about things concerning which we know practically nothing. If a man were to call upon me for an opinion regarding some problem about which I knew nothing, I think propriety would suggest that I refrain from giving him one. So anxious is the world to hear the opinions of men that it is not at all infrequent that we find in the papers the views of some great man upon religious topics. Mr. Edison, for instance, used to be called upon thus to express himself, likewise, Mr. Henry Ford and others prominent in various fields. Clarence Darrow, an agnostic and an opponent of God’s truth, carried great weight in his expression of his opinion. It is not uncommon to hear opinions expressed about everything. As a sample of what I have in mind, this is heard—viz., "There is nothing whatever in a name. It makes no never-mind what name you have."

I do not believe a man would say that about anything else in the world except religion. I almost shudder at any boy or girl, man or woman, making such a thoughtless statement—nothing in a name? Well, all of us know that a good name is the greatest asset any person can have. It is better than great riches. Another such casual remark is that "one church is as good as another." Just what does such an expression portray to a Bible student? It is certain that the one who so says is almost wholly ignorant of what the word of God teaches. Men who know the truth, and have a right to speak, are never guilty of such a foolish expression. My friends, do you candidly think that God Almighty is back of all the churches in this land when they differ in origin, in doctrine, and in practice? With the distinct understanding that all denominations are purely of human origin, I would subscribe to the statement that one is as good as another or that one is as bad as another. But if you refer to things sacred and things found in the Bible, all such expressions are absolutely foreign to anything that God Almighty ever authorized. Many people will say: "Well, it doesn’t make any difference to me. I would just as soon join one church as another." Friends, if I were in the "joining" business, I might say the same thing. But let me announce to you that which may startle some who are not familiar with Bible teaching. I never "joined" any church in all my life. And yet this is the seventh time I have held meetings in Nashville. People have favored me with their presence and I have been free to tell them time and again that I never joined the church in my life.

You have a right to ask why. I answer: I have regard for God’s Word and respect for His teaching. And I know that neither God nor Christ nor the Holy Spirit nor any man inspired ever said one word on earth about anybody’s "joining" any church. Such an expression is not in the Bible from beginning to end. I am not offering criticism upon those who have done so. They did it ignorantly and in unbelief of the truth, and there’s a possibility of pardon at the hands of God for so doing. You might ask: "If you never did join the church, are you a member?"

Certainly I propose to be, and have so claimed for a number of years. And then the question naturally comes: "How did you become a member, if you never did join it?" Every gospel preacher has illustrated. I became a member of the church of the Lord, God’s family, just as I became a member of my earthly father’s family. Now if you can figure it out how it was possible for me to become a member of the Hardeman family and yet never join it, I think the light of truth will begin to dawn upon you. I do not hesitate to tell you that forty-seven years ago—and then some I was born into my earthly father’s family of flesh and blood, and the very minute, the very second, that I opened my eyes to the light of God’s physical day, I was then and there a member of the Hardeman family. I became a member of the church of the Lord, my heavenly Father’s family, the very same way—that is, by a birth, not of flesh and blood, however, but by a birth of "water and of the Spirit." "But water does not mean water." Now let me ask why does anyone say that? Why does not God mean what He says? If He does not, how can you tell what He means? Let us not tamper with God’s Word and try to evade it to save some human theory. All such remarks as I have suggested but demonstrate the lack of familiarity with the Bible on the part of those who talk so loosely and so flippantly about things sacred. Friends, can a man be saved outside of the church as well as within it? Suppose you pass down any of the streets of Nashville and ask passers-by a question of that kind. I believe I am safe in saying nine out of ten possibly will say: "Why, sure, a man doesn’t have to become a member of the church in order to be saved. The church never did save anybody." That is just as common as can be, and lots of good moral people are thoroughly sold on the idea that salvation is not in the church and a man can be saved as well without it as within it. Just what do they mean by that? When a man makes that statement, he thinks the church is some human denomination; and when he says he can be saved without becoming a member of it, he is telling a wonderful truth. I think a man can be saved outside of a denomination. There is no argument with me about that, but when you reverse the statement it brings on more serious thought. Can a man be saved in a denomination? There is no doubt about his being saved outside of one, but the serious question is: Can a man be saved in a denomination? It certainly is in order now to ask: ""Why did God send His Son from heaven to earth, to suffer, sorrow, bleed, and die a shameful death that he might establish the church, and after having so done, it makes no difference with a man’s salvation?" He can be saved without it as well as within it. Don’t you see the consequences of a statement of that kind? But, someone will doubtless say: “I don’t believe the church saves anybody." Well, I don’t either. There are three questions that ought to challenge attention. First, who is the Savior of mankind? And, of course, the answer is Jesus, the Christ, and there is salvation in none other. Christ is the Savior. Now, the second question: when is a man saved? Well, here is the answer, and you dare not gainsay it—when he hears the gospel of God’s Son, believes it and obeys it. Christ said in his farewell message to mankind: "He that believeth [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved." Now, never mind your opinion; you know that is what Christ said. The third question is: where does Christ save? You heard me read: "As the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ also is the head of

the church, and the saviour of the body." Lord, what do you save? “I save the body." But what is the body? Colossians 1:18 : "He is the head of the body, the church." Where is salvation? In the church of the Lord. Who saves? Christ does. When? When we obey his gospel. Friends, those are simple questions and the answers are complete. The progress of all the centuries cannot set them aside. They will confront every generation that is born upon this earth. Let us consider our question from another angle. If a man can be saved outside of the church as well as within it, that is equivalent to saying that he can be saved without the merits of the blood of Christ. But apart from the blood of Christ, there is absolutely no salvation. Now I raise the point: where did the blood of Christ go? In Acts 20:28 Paul addressed the elders of the church and he said to them: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood." Now, I ask you, what became of the blood that coursed the veins of the Son of God? When that Roman soldier injected the spear, that blood freely flowed. Christ shed his blood, and it went into the purchase of the church of the Lord. Now, I ask, how much of the blood of Christ went to the purchase of the church? Every particle of it. Therefore, if I ever get the benefit of the blood of Christ, I must get that benefit where the blood went. I wonder if I could illustrate what I am trying to put across to you. Suppose that I had just ten dollars and that I went to the store and bought this coat. I put every penny of my ten dollars into this coat; none of it went anywhere else. Does it not follow that if I ever get the benefit of that ten dollars, I must get it out of this coat? There it went and its benefit can be had nowhere else. I surely would be uneasy about myself if I could not understand that. Now, friends, where did the blood of Christ go? Into the purchase of the church. "But," says one, “I can be saved outside of the church." Then you have no need and no benefit whatsoever from the blood of Christ, and you are saying that sins may be forgiven without the blood of Christ, and Paul specifically says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. That did not and could not refer to any blood save that of Jesus Christ because the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin. I want you to hear it. That is not nearly it. That is it, and no man can argue otherwise. But again, if a man is saved by the blood of Christ, it follows that he must come in contact with the blood. And, hence, I raise the point: just where can I meet the blood of Christ and have it applied as the Bible suggests? Let me read to you from Rom. 6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Now watch it. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Where do we get the blood of Christ’ The answer is: "In his death." How do we get into his death? Now Paul said: We are "baptized into his death." There the blood was shed and there the contact is made. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." There we meet the blood, and then come forth from the watery grave to walk in a new life, and we can then truly sing, "I’ve been redeemed by the blood, I’ve been washed in that fountain filled with the precious blood of the Son of God." Hence, I am a newborn babe; I have been born again of water and of the Spirit into the family of God and the blood of His Son has cleansed me from all sins. But again, the church and the kingdom are one and the same. If a man, therefore, can be saved outside of the church, that means that he can be saved outside of the kingdom of God—that is, he can be saved without pledging allegiance to, or bowing in submission to, the King of kings and Lord of lords. But since there are just two kingdoms on earth—1. e., the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil, it follows that if a man can be saved outside of the church, he can be saved in the territory of the devil, and that is nothing short of an insult to every

truth found in God’s Book. What do you think about all this now? Once more, the church of the Bible is called God’s family. If a man can be saved outside of the church, he can then be saved in the devil’s family, because there are just two families on earth. Friends, where is salvation? Do you think that God has children in the devil’s family? When a man talks about one’s being saved outside of God’s family, he is preaching the doctrine of the devil, and he is encouraging membership in the devil’s family. Does God have any children outside of His family? Can a man be saved while yet in the family of the devil? Friends, when I talk about the church, please remember that I am not talking about some human organization, some little narrow, swivelled-up, penned-off denomination with a human name and a man-made creed that has to be revised and amended every time a great meeting of that body is assembled. I have no reference to any such whatsoever. The church of the Bible is not a distant relative to an imitation of anything that looks like a human denomination. Hence, when I ask, can a man be saved outside of the church, I refer to that institution over which Christ reigns as head, in which his spirit dwells, and of which every child of God on earth is a member. Hence, there is no salvation outside of the church of our Lord. "As the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body." He does not propose to save anything that is not a part of the body. But again, all Christian people in this world are in God’s family, in the kingdom of our Lord, in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If a man, therefore, can be saved outside of the church, it follows that he can be saved and yet not become a Christian, and this is contrary to everything the Bible has to say. But, again, every spiritual blessing is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Draw a circle representing the church of which he is the head. Every blessing of a spiritual nature is on the inside and there is not one on the outside. If, therefore, a man ever partakes of any spiritual blessing whatsoever, he must pass from the outside to the inside of that circle or the church. How is a man transferred? I know what the world says about it. I am told by human denominations that if a man believes the Lord Jesus Christ, he by that alone passes from without to within. But, friends, let me tell you one thing—viz., there is not a standard translation of the Bible on God’s earth that ever did suggest that a man believes into Jesus Christ. The Bible does declare that a man is baptized into Jesus Christ and into his death. That which the Bible does not say is what denominations believe. That which the Bible does say is what they do not believe. Isn’t that strange? I do not envy the POSITION of a man who so teaches as he stands to give an account in the last great day. It is a mutilated gospel that does not proclaim all the terms laid down by the Christ himself as to entrance into the family of God. Over and over and over, in every case of conversion in all the Bible under the reign of Christ our Lord, souls believed what the apostles taught. They turned from their sins, they acknowledged the Christ, and of them it is specifically said they were baptized into Jesus Christ. That makes a man a Christian; that constitutes a new birth; that passes any man from the outside to the inside, where all spiritual blessings are. He is now a member of God’s family, a citizen of Christ’s kingdom; he has been washed in the blood, and hence is a member of the church of Christ. Many people there are who think they can be saved upon their uprightness of moral character. To themselves they may correctly say: “I don’t cuss; I don’t He; I don’t bear false witness; I don’t commit adultery; I don’t steal; I think I am all right." Then they take the opposite side and begin: “I tell the truth; I provide things honestly; I pay my debts; I am philanthropic in nature; I am public-spirited; I help move forward all civil and righteous causes. Of course, I will go to heaven when I die." Let a man of Nashville, of whom all such can be said, die, and at the funeral I will almost guarantee that any denominational preacher would wax eloquent and finally say: "Methinks

that I can see the spirit of this good man bid good-by to things terrestrial, take its flight and wing its way beyond the sunset's radiant glow, and today, while his body lies here, he is with that angelic host in the glory land." Now let me tell you, friends, in all candor, I know that a man has got to be all that I have said—viz., honest, truthful, upright, charitable, and all such; but let it be truly said that no man has ever yet been saved on account of his own moral character or individual goodness. What is the power of God unto salvation? The only answer is the gospel. If I am ever saved, it will not be because I have, perchance, lived a clean, upright, moral life. That will not be the cause of my salvation. It will not be that I have given hundreds of thousands of dollars toward suffering, sorrowing humanity. If I am saved at last, here is the reason. It will be due to the fact that I heard the gospel of God's Son, have believed it and obeyed it, and have lived according to the teaching of his word thereafter.

Christ anticipated just that kind of a character that would rest upon his own good deeds and be perfectly at ease when he said: "As the branch [however good and clean and free from disease] cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." It is certainly known to all that a "branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." Watch Christ apply the lesson. So neither can that good, clean, moral, upright man "except ye abide in me." There is no salvation outside of contact with Jesus Christ, who is the head of that spiritual realm called his body. Are you as good as Cornelius? He was a centurion of the band, called the Italian band, a devout man, one that feared God with all of his house, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. He was also a just man and of good report among all the nations of the Jews. Look at those various characteristics of this military man. Note that he was a devout man, one that feared God with all his house, had influence in his own family, which some preachers and elders do not have, and gave alms to the people and prayed to God always. Likewise he was a just man and of good report among all of the nations round about. Where is that fellow in Nashville better than Cornelius? Where is the preacher, or the elder, that will march out by the side of him and say: "I am better than he." I fear, friends, that the very best of us would suffer in the comparison when put side by side. Now I ask: Was Cornelius a saved man? Absolutely not. You may wonder how I know. I know just what the Bible says about him. About three o'clock one afternoon, an angel of God came to Cornelius and talked with him directly. Cornelius asked who it was. That angel said: "Cornelius . . . send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea side." He "shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Now, do you think Cornelius was a saved man at the time he was ordered to send for the preacher? If so, you must deny what God said about it.

It is lamentable to see so many big men, clean in life, financially able and willing to spend and be spent for the good of suffering humanity, face the possibility of landing in hell. That kind is not too good to need the gospel of Christ whereby they may be saved. Others will not obey the gospel, and thus become members of the church, because they imagine they are not good enough. Are you any worse than a whole lot of folks? Do you He to your fellows? Did you ever let things take up with you that were not yours? Did you ever kill anybody? Did you ever punish anybody for his convictions? Did you ever make havoc of a body of people that were absolutely harmless and who were doing no harm to anybody? If you are guilty of some of these, you are not as bad as Saul of Tarsus was. He persecuted the church of God and wasted it. When men were arrested for being

nothing but Christians and the time came to decide their case, he, as a member of the body, voted for their condemnation. He said: “I am chief of sinners." Saul obtained mercy and forgiveness because he did it in ignorance and in unbelief. When Saul believed on the Lord and repented of his sins, he was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Thus a persecutor and a murderer was not too bad to obey the gospel and be saved. So, friends, you are not too good to obey the gospel. And you are none too bad to accept the call of high heaven. There is salvation to all men provided, but you must appropriate it if you ever share the benefit of it. And gladly tonight is the gospel invitation extended, with the hope there be some soul who has come to himself and who has resolved no longer to linger, but to rush to the outstretched arms of him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Won’t you come, trusting in him, submitting to his will, ready to do his bidding, and then stand upon his promise?

5.12 - I AM DEBTOR

I AM DEBTOR

Brother B. C. Goodpasture spoke as follows: Ladies and Gentlemen: I have the happy privilege this afternoon of presenting a man who needs no introduction to a Nashville audience a man who is known throughout the brotherhood as a faithful minister of the gospel and as president of Freed-Hardeman College; a man whose name is a synonym for sound preaching and a tower of strength among all the churches of Christ; a man who does not hesitate in the presence of duty; a man who does not falter in the face of the foe; a man who does not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. It is my great pleasure to present here and now the speaker of the occasion, Brother N. B. Hardeman, whose subject is: “I Am Debtor." * * * * * * * My brethren and friends: I rejoice, beyond my power to express, that I have the opportunity of meeting with you all again. Twenty years ago last April, our first meeting was held in Ryman Auditorium. This, to all who were then present, will remind us of the fine audience there gathered. During the twenty years that have intervened, it is but natural that problems would come up, differences arise, and unpleasant relationships might exist. I thank the Lord this afternoon that, from every appearance, we are resolved to forget the things of the past with all the errors, all the blunders, and all the mistakes that may have been made, and that today we stand as a solid phalanx, ready to contend earnestly for that faith once for all delivered to the saints. I believe that we are of one mind as well as in one place and that we are resolved to know nothing save Christ and him crucified. I want you to know that I feel most keenly the responsibility that I have assumed in coming to you for another meeting. In the Bible, life has been presented from various points of consideration, and by means of different illustrations.

Paul, for instance, speaks of life as a building, urging us, if we have placed the foundation, to go on to perfection and finish the structure. Again, it is presented as a great racecourse, upon which we enter by complying with heaven’s rules and regulations, and there is the admonition to run with patience the race that is set before us. Then, from another angle, Paul presents it as a great warfare, in which we are to buckle on the armor of the Lord, raise aloft the banner, unsheathe the sword of the spirit, and wage an aggressive contest against spiritual wickedness in high places. But in the text that has been announced, based upon a statement in Romans 1:1-32, it just occurs to me that Paul sees before him a great ledger with double columns—on the lefthand side the debits, and over against that the credits. Hence, he said: “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The first three words of that constitute the text, “I Am Debtor." I think, friends, that there are many people in the world whose attitude is exactly the reverse of that. They seemingly have the idea "the world owes me everything, and I am, therefore, under obligation to no man. I expect to gain my support from the labors of others and go through life receiving rather than contributing."

Such is a false conception of our real mission upon the earth. I am debtor for the very food upon which I live. I recognize a debt and an obligation. I am not a producer, but quite a consumer along that line. I do not till the soil, nor cultivate the crop, nor gather the harvest; neither do I prepare the food necessary for my well-being. To all those who rise with the voice of the birds, who plant the seed in the springtime, cultivate the crop and gather the harvest, prepare it for serving—regardless of any amount of money, I am debtor. For the very clothing that I wear, the same can be said. If I had all the raw material that this world affords, I could not weave the fabric out of which my coat is made. And I know you would hate to see me come and stand in your midst with clothing of my own making. So, to those who have labored and toiled to make ready that which adorns and preserves our physical being, there is an obligation that I think we ought to recognize. The consciousness of that fact, in my judgment, is an evidence of greatness. Real greatness is always characterized by humility, by a spirit of gratitude, and genuine appreciation. I am debtor today, and feel it possibly as I never have before, for the system of government under which we have lived and hope to continue. Things are not appreciated by us as much as otherwise until we see them subjected to danger. This last week I visited Independence Had in Philadelphia. I looked upon the walls of that old building and saw the pictures of real statesmen that adorn the same. I thought of their devotion, of their unselfish interest in an effort to establish a government that would guarantee to us the blessings of life and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They announced to the world their independence, but it took six long years to make that declaration effective. A government was established, comprising only the thirteen original colonies. Westward was the trend of their going. Ultimately those principles embraced all of America, and we now rejoice to see the Star-Spangled Banner cover the land of the free and the home of the brave. Since the Revolution, other wars have likewise challenged our manner of life and our way of living, but we have come victorious from every conflict, and now we are engaged in the most dangerous one that has ever threatened to overthrow our system of government. For the preservation of our rights, of our liberties, and the opportunity of meeting in a capacity like this, undisturbed and unmolested, I for one, am profoundly grateful and recognize the debt that I owe to the government that guarantees such. And I am ready to do all I can for the advancement and continuity of it just as long as, in my judgment, the demands are not in conflict with the teaching of the Bible. A number of years ago, as you know, I had the opportunity of visiting a large part of Europe and that land forever sacred. I was in old Strasbourg, France, on the Fourth of July, 1923. I saw our flag unfurled from the top of one of those stately buildings. I passed on down to Basel, Switzerland, and to a customs officer I had but to turn the lapel of my coat, under which there had been sewed a little flag of our country. Upon observing it, he bade me welcome to the land of Switzerland. This emblem of American citizenship gave me recognition everywhere. And again I am debtor for the wonderful inventions wrought by men who labored almost day and night, while I spent the time perhaps in an unprofitable manner. They were spending long hours, hard labor, intense thought, to bring to us the product of their skill. And today we have a different world in which to live from that which environed our fathers in the long, long ago. Our very way of travel, our manner of life, the conveniences of our homes, and the pleasant relationships that we bear one to another are but the results of the labors that have gone before. I am not responsible for the easy way we can come to this building, nor for the ability we have only to turn the switch and flood it with a halo of light. I am under obligation and am a debtor to Thomas Edison for having spent the hours and the labor necessary to bring about such for my pleasure and for my joy. I shall never be able to pay the debt I owe to all surgeons and scientists

whose labors have relieved the sufferings of humanity and have lengthened man’s days upon the earth by a score of years in the last quarter of a century. But, friends, when Paul said to the Romans, “I am debtor," he was not talking about the things that I have thus far discussed. These were not in his mind. Neither did he have before him the idea of paying his grocery bill the first day of the month. That was not his thought. Hear him! “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Now, watch it: "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome." Changing the statement and making it apropos to the hour, I am debtor to all of you, and as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Nashville, and who may chance to come to our services. Well, why? Because I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I recognize that it is God’s power unto salvation to everyone that believes it. And I am fully aware of the statement and the fact that in the gospel, not in the law, is the righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith. I want to ask you, friends, how do you think Paul came to be debtor? I answer by saying the commission of our Lord was given unto the apostles, and in that the obligation was laid upon Saul indirectly. But more specifically, the Lord imposed this obligation upon him on the road that leads from Jerusalem to Damascus, when he said to him: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Hence, Paul recognized that there was placed upon him, charged to his account, the responsibility of preaching the gospel of Christ. And I would this afternoon that all of us who pose as such felt as keenly the obligation as did Paul. He said: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" If all of us who stand before our audiences in the name of the Lord felt as keenly that obligation, we would not be tempted and lured from the strait and narrow path. We would not preach on many of the things which belong, not in the pulpit at all, but upon the lecture rostrum, in the schoolroom, or on the political platform. The gospel is the thing imposed upon us, and woe is unto me if I fail to proclaim it just as it is. Paul accepted his responsibility, and after the years had come and gone he had the consciousness of having paid his obligation. When he returned from his last missionary journey, he gave a report to the elders of the church at Ephesus in which he said: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." "Wherefore, I have paid my debt; I have balanced my account." When he came to lay aside life’s affairs, he said to Timothy: "The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In the language of our text, he could truly say: “I have assumed the obligation, I hay* acknowledged the debt, and I come now to the close of life with the assurance that I have paid my obligation. I have fulfilled heaven’s demands." "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and

not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." The third chapter of Ezekiel, although written while the Israelites were in captivity, yet contains principles which continue throughout all the dispensations and are equally important unto us this afternoon. I bid you hear: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at shine hand."

Brethren, does that register or not? Are we moving along in perfect safety and security? Are we content as we are? God said to Ezekiel: "If thou fail to warn those round about of the wickedness of their way, they will die in their wickedness, but their blood will I require at thy hands. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, . . . he shall die . . . but thou hast delivered thy soul." Friends, that is the principle. Hence, I am debtor to the entire world round about, and the principle enunciated by Ezekiel in the long ago evidences that fact. Now, turning to the New Testament, I think you have the same obligation. "Ye are the salt of the earth." Now what does that mean? Unto you the saving power has been committed. If you fail, therefore, to save someone else, wherewithal do you expect to be saved yourself? Brethren, I have got to try to save somebody else in self-defense. My own salvation depends upon my using the opportunity and upon my carrying into effect that which I am—the salt of the earth. That is not all; this world is shrouded in darkness, and men are walking in the path of a black-out. God said to the disciples: "Ye are the light of the world." Hence, do not put that light under a bushel, but hold it high, that the world may see and have that toward which it may go for guidance, safety, and security. Now note just a thought or two. Christ said: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light thereof. Bring all your problems, all your troubles, unto me." But in anticipation of his departure, he said directly to the disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth, . . . the light of the world." But all the apostles are now gone. Then what? I turn to Php 2:1-30 and read from Php 2:14-30 : Brethren, "do all things without murmurings, and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." First, Christ is the light. Second, the disciples, indirectly, are the light of the world. Last, Christian people throughout the era in which we live are the light in that they are to hold forth the word of life unto dying men. All of us cannot appear upon the platform and verbally preach the gospel of Christ. Lots of men have not that ability, nor have they acquired it, and many times when they get up, their thoughts sit down. But let me say that you brethren who engage in honorable business and who support the church of the Lord are as much approved in God’s eyes as the most skillful preacher and the most interesting speaker that ever appeared in your presence. But for you, brethren, these preachers would not be here; but for the fact that, like Aaron and Hur, you stand ready to hold up their hands, the battle for truth and right could not be won. Let me say to you, therefore, brethren, that I am debtor to all classes. “I am debtor both to the! Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." I am debtor to all men. If we are not careful, we will recognize our responsibility only unto the greater characters of earth, to those who are prominent, to those who occupy important places and move in high social circles. We bow to those who are rich and recognize our obligation. Well, I think that is perfectly all right, but I would be ashamed of myself if I did not equally feel my obligation toward those we consider more

unfortunate in life. The man in humble garments clad, penniless and dependent, needs the gospel of God’s Son as well as the millionaire, reveling in all the luxuries of life. And so do all men, regardless of race, color, or previous conditions of servitude. I would love to preach the gospel to the President of these United States and to all the senators and representatives. I think they need it. I want to preach the gospel unto those poverty-stricken, and to those who are counted as the lowly of this earth. I am unfit to claim to be a gospel preacher if I appeal only to what we call the prominent class. If I raise high my head and assume the air of speaking to "just a few white folks and no darkies at all," my usefulness on earth has ended. I would better come down and stay down forevermore. Paul said: “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians." That meant to the elite and to the common as well. I am debtor "both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to" pay my debt. I have always been taught that a man who will not pay his debts to the extent of his ability is a dishonest man. I was reared under such teaching as that and the passing of the years has but confirmed my conviction along that line. Well, all right, are you a member of the body of Christ? Do you propose to be a Christian today? Do you share the sentiment of Paul when he said: “I am debtor"? Are you trying to pay your debts? What are you doing along that line? There are multiplied millions of people hungering and thirsting for gospel truths. I have been impressed, as no doubt Brother Goodpasture was, on a recent visit to the eastern part of our country with the urgent request for preachers to be sent into that section of our land. During a recent meeting in Philadelphia there came representatives from almost every congregation in the East. They are begging for help. They want strong gospel preachers sent into their midst. In nearly every town there are some members ready to keep the preacher and to help establish the cause. I just stop and ask: What are we doing along lines of that kind? Are we trying to keep our accounts balanced to the very best of our ability? If not, I fear that we will be weighed in the balances at last, and, like old Belshazzar, be found wanting. In the great picture of the judgment in Matthew 25:1-46, those on the left hand had traveled the broad way and were consigned to hell—a place prepared, not for man, but for the devil and his angels. Why were they doomed? In substance the Savior said: "Because you would not pay your debts. I was hungry. What did you do about it? Nothing. Thirsty—you were content. Sick—and you visited me not. In prison—what about it? That makes no never-mind to me. And to hell with that crowd." Why, brethren? They refused to pay their debts.

Let me suggest to you the final thought. I believe that the masses of mankind have the wrong conception of what success in life really means. I know that I got the impression early in life that the successful man was the one who had accumulated much of this world’s affairs. We often wondered what some man was worth. And we measured him altogether in dollars and cents. That was the standard. We estimated his worth in the bonds, the real estate, the personal property, and the amount of money he had. We counted such a man as a real success. Friends, I reversed my convictions along that line several years ago. I verily believe that success in life ought not to be measured by its accumulation, but rather by its contribution. When I come to the close of life’s way, I wonder if it can be said: "N. B. Hardeman has contributed to the benefit of mankind." Have I served to make the world better for those that are to come after? Have I been like wings to lift my fellows up to higher heights? Or have I been like weights to drag them down to lower depths? Have I gone along through life plucking the briars and thorns and thistles and planting the sweet-scented flowers to bloom in their stead? Is the world better as a result of my having lived? Has my account been balanced? I beg you, friends, that you think on matters of that kind. The

purpose of this meeting, may I state, is to try to pay our debt, fulfill our obligation, to all those who may favor us with their presence. Is there one here this afternoon not a member of the body of Christ? Are you aware of the terms of induction? Do you believe in Christ Jesus the Lord with all of your heart? Will you resolve, by God's grace, from every sin to turn away, genuinely and truly repent thereof? Will you sanctify your lips in confessing, even at this hour, the brightest name known to mortal man? Will you resolve further to fulfill all acts of obedience and be buried into the sacred names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, from which burial you rise to walk a new life? Will you then resolve to walk in it until at last the grave comes to claim your body, while God may claim your spirit? If there be such an one, won't you come even now, and give to some of these brethren, or to me, your hand, evidencing such a desire? Let us stand together while we slog.

Chapter 116

5.13 - AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Notwithstanding the change of time for tonight to 6 :80, we have present not less than fifteen hundred people. I am sure that this is a concrete evidence of the interest you have in these old-time, fundamental lessons. I am talking about our purposes and our aims. Brethren of the church of Christ everywhere are spending quite a lot of money for the advancement of the cause they love. We are engaged in labors of different kinds, but all are for one definite purpose. I often ask what is this all about? If it were simply that we might have a nice meetinghouse in which to assemble with friends and go through a process of religion, there would be no reason for our existence. There are plenty of meetinghouses, possibly enough in Nashville to take care of practically every churchgoer in the state of Tennessee. I hope to outline to you tonight something that you will appreciate as the specific object of our concerted efforts. That there was a church, builded by Christ and established upon this earth during New Testament times, does not admit of any doubt whatsoever. The record of that church is found in the Bible, especially in the book of Acts, and in the twenty-one letters addressed to the churches. When we read the story as found therein, there is much encouragement; but before we have finished all the letters, we observe some evidence of a general decline, a waning of interest, and the approach of a general apostasy. Secular history of the second century soon reveals the fact that the New Testament church was practically lost. Men quickly forgot the things they were so recently taught. And being as human as they were, they soon departed from the original standard, which was never in harmony with the ways of men. There was developed a form of religion wholly foreign to that found in the New Testament. With the passing of the centuries, human organizations grew, officials were multiplied, and Bible terms were so abused that, erelong, practically every likeness of the New Testament church was forgotten. And at the beginning of the seventh century there was an organization not even akin to the church established by Christ. Doctrines unknown to God’s Word were readily accepted. They ranged from holy water to sprinkling for baptism, in 1311. Thus the reign of the Roman hierarchy had its full sway upon the earth. The era of the Dark Ages swept over the face of the earth, at which times the Bible was chained to the pulpit and Christianity was buried beneath the rubbish of human affairs. I am not disposed to argue as to whether or not the church was perpetuated throughout all the centuries. I think that makes but little difference. The perpetuity of a crop depends upon the seed from which such springs, and if the seed of the kingdom never has been lost, it is possible at any time to bring about a reproduction of that which was characteristic of the first harvest. During the black-out period of about a thousand years, that human hierarchy ruled over the entire world and directed all affairs, both religious and civil. But let man go for a spell and he will reach the limit and will become so disgusting in his affairs that somebody will have the backbone and the courage to rise up in opposition. When, therefore, the great Catholic Church finally put on a sale of indulgences to secure money to repair St. Peter’s Cathedral, young Martin Luther, born, bred, and reared a devout Catholic, could hold his peace no longer. With a courage unsurpassed in all history he challenged such deeds, and set about to expose the doctrines and

practices of the mother church. That was the beginning of the end of what was called the Dark Ages. A new era was dawning upon the world and in every field the clouds began to vanish and the light of liberty and freedom of thought could be seen. Naturally, Martin Luther did not want to be without church affiliation. He held ideas of his own and began to proclaim them to his fellows. The result of his teaching was the establishment of the Lutheran Church in the year 1621. Contemporary with him were such men as John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and a host of others. While they did not agree with Luther, they were religious men, and likewise, had ideas that attracted a number of followers. John Calvin was a man of power and from his preaching there came into existence the Presbyterian Church in 1535. About the same year the Episcopal Church was born. It was purely a creature of the state, with King Henry VIII as its head. Later on there came other great men of the world, dissatisfied with the doctrines and practices then prevailing. They set about to reform conditions in the churches of their fathers. It can be truly said that both Luther and Calvin first had in mind to reform the Catholic Church. They were convinced of their failure. It refused to be reformed and they therefore sought its destruction. Each reformer had some special end in view. I believe truly that I could sum up the work of Martin Luther by saying it was his supreme ambition to loose the Bible from the pulpit and give it back to the pew. His message was that the people, rather than the pope, with all of his pretensions, ought to be at liberty to study the word of God, to interpret it for themselves, and to accept only what they believe it teaches. John Calvin was deeply impressed with the sovereignty of God and the impotency of man. He summed up his conceptions in what is known as the five principles of Calvinism. These imply man's helpless, hopeless, and hapless condition in this world. Later on came John Wesley, a member of the Episcopal Church, which church ever has been noted for its cold, formal ritualism. Wesley tried to put some fervor, some spirit, and some warmth into that iceberg form of religion. His efforts failed, and from him and three others sprang into being the Methodist Church, in 1729. It was but natural that, among these denominations thus formed, clashes and conflicts would arise. Each adopted own creed and selected its own name. Men of good sense and unbiased minds saw that something was wrong with all of them, and thus they soon analyzed the trouble. Of that number were James O'Kelley of the Methodist Church, Dr. Abner Jones of the Baptist Church, Barton W. Stone of the Presbyterian Church, and various others. They dropped their human names and turned from their man-made creeds. Their trend was back to the Bible in all things religious. In 1807 Thomas Campbell, a noted Presbyterian preacher, came to America. Two years later his illustrious son, Alexander, also came. He was fresh from the University of Glasgow. They were both members of the Presbyterian Church, but neither was content with its teachings. They found themselves unsettled in mind and were striving to find solid ground on which they could stand. They became tired and disgusted with all denominations. They were thoroughly convinced that such bodies were unknown to the Bible. At length they decided to cut loose from everything having a human name or a human creed and go back to Jerusalem, not for the purpose of trying to reform anything, but for the definite purpose of trying to restore the church of the New Testament. To establish another denomination or church was the exact opposite of their aim and intention. They believed that all denominations ought to go out of business and that there should be but one church, over which Christ reigns as head. Their plea was: no church but the one built by Christ; no creed but the Bible; no name but that found in His word; and no practice that was not as old as the New Testament. To duplicate the church of the New Testament and to restore it in doctrine and practice was their aim and purpose. Thus they laid down a platform upon which every man on

earth can stand and not sacrifice a single principle of faith. Upon such a foundation, they went forth proclaiming the gospel of Christ to a sin-cursed and troubled world. Let it be truly said that for a period of thirty years or more there were more people converted than at any other period in the history of the world since the days of the apostles. There was no kind of machinery; no high-powered evangelist; no claptrap methods of seducing and alluring men under false pretense. They spoke forth the words of truth and soberness; they preached the gospel of God's Son uncompromisingly; they preached it with all the power of their being and denominationalism was shaken throughout the length and breadth of this earth. The religious elements were stirred from center to circumference. Had those preachers continued to preach only the gospel and to practice only that taught in the New Testament, the results would have been wonderful. But in 1849 some brethren who had subscribed to the platform announced, conceived the idea that they could improve upon the Lord's plan of spreading the gospel. Accordingly, they met in the city of Cincinnati and formed a human missionary society. Such an organization is a stranger to God's Word, and, of course, there was a division among the congregations. Brethren who had adopted the slogan of "speaking where the Bible speaks and of being silent where the Bible is silent" forsook that principle and sought to be governed by "sanctified common sense." Objections were filed from all over the land, but the pleadings of faithful, loyal souls availed nothing. The advocates of the society were determined and nothing could stop their innovation. This act slowed down the progress and gave great joy to the "Canaanite and Perizzite" then in the land. Then in 1859 at Midway, Kentucky, a little melodeon was brought into the assembly. Protests again were made and the little instrument was temporarily removed. For a short while it seemed that the breaches might be healed and that peace once again would characterize the movement. But such was not to be. Exactly ten years after that, in 1869, at old Olive Street, in the city of St. Louis, a real organ was brought into the service of God. Three prominent men, not members of the Olive Street Church, but members elsewhere, were called in to settle the trouble. They investigated all matters thoroughly and recommended to the church that the organ should be removed. In spite of the fact that they had accepted this committee, and had agreed to be governed by its decision, they refused to do so, and, until this day, the organ has played in that congregation. The result of all of this was a general division in the church all over the land. Those who favored the innovations became exceedingly active among the women and children, and finally manipulated matters until many elders fell for their schemes. When they considered the time was opportune, they organized societies and put the organ into the most prominent churches. Property, built up by those who opposed such departures, was confiscated, and faithful, loyal brethren were robbed of that which was justly theirs. Such is the sad story. But for the unfortunate division among us, no one can tell how great would be the influence of the church by now. Denominationalism was on the wane, and there were evidences of its falling as the truth of God went marching on. Our only hindrance was from within. When all hope of reuniting our forces was abandoned, those who still contended for a "thus saith the Lord" in all matters of worship set about to rebuild that which had been so gloriously begun. Our sole effort now is to bring about a restoration of the "ancient order." If I know myself, I would not be a party to anything that looked like an effort to try to build up some human organization among men. But to the effort that the church bought by the blood of Christ may be restored, and that men may worship as it is written, every ounce of my being and every power that I possess is dedicated and consecrated forevermore. Humanity is exceedingly weak and it is so easy to yield to public sentiment and to follow paths of least resistance. Paul said: "The time will

come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Maybe that time is now. Our weakness today is a spirit of compromise in the pulpit and of worldliness in the pew. It does appear that many preachers among us have been influenced more by Mr. Carnegie's book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People," than by Paul's statement, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Hambone said he had noticed that when church members get to running with the devil, they become broad-minded. It is freely said of some preachers that they will not preach the word in its fullness neither will they reprove and rebuke. They seek to be galvanized into popularity. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" Paul said: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

There can be no valid objection to a located preacher so long as he is subordinate to the elders. But when he becomes the pastor, trouble is not far ahead. You have, perhaps, heard such fellows speak of "my" church, "my" board of elders, "my" deacons, and "my" officials. Such talk is the very opposite of Bible language. I am in deepest sympathy with every gospel preacher' located or otherwise, so long as he does nothing but preach the gospel. But when he gets all set and begins to play politics, his usefulness is gone, and he should be relegated. You will see that type visiting the club members and the social climbers among the dear sisters. He will also court the boys and girls and the weaker of the brethren until he feels that he has a majority on his side and then he does not hesitate to tell the elders what "my program" is and what they may expect. When a preacher wants a job, he will always apply to the elders and duly recognize their authority. But after securing the place, the elders soon become "cranks" and "out of date." They are no longer consulted. And now all decisions must be made by the majority. One of the greatest dangers threatening the church today is the tendency toward majority rule. Whenever a preacher announces a vote will be taken on any matter, he thereby announces that this church will divide. Such almost invariably follows. It also happens many times that the preacher wants the truth, but the elders and the congregation are too worldly to accept it. While in Philadelphia last week, I read in the paper the following: "Rev. Herbert J. Anderson, who recently resigned as pastor of Arch Street Presbyterian Church, Eighteenth and Arch Streets, has been dropped from the roll of the presbytery of Philadelphia at his own request. The clergyman cited 'evils' in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and asserted he could no longer submit 'to unscriptural and unconstitutional usurpations of ecclesiastical power wherein the-word of man is placed above the word of God.'

"Rev. Mr. Anderson in his written statement charged: "1. That there are many within the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. whether as laymen or elders or ministers 'who do not accept the Bible as the inerrant word of God, also others who reject other great Christian doctrines so that Christian fellowship without compromise in obedience to God has become impossible to me.' "2. There has been built up through the years a political system with the local churches, presbyteries, and boards so that a man often must disobey the dictates of his conscience to be in favor with his brethren. "3. It is increasingly impossible for a minister to be free to preach the whole counsel of God unhampered by threats issuing from the boards of the local churches. "4. The whole church is dominated by those who hold to an inclusive and compromising doctrinal policy so that unbelievers are exalted and those who seek to maintain the truth of God are belittled, persecuted, or cast out." It is wholly possible that similar conditions may exist in some of the churches of Christ. Among the elders and leading members, it may be that "unbelievers are exalted and those who seek to maintain the truth of God are belittled, persecuted, or cast out." If such there be, let us

pray that we may become free from such a spirit. But enough for the present. If there are those in this audience disposed to accept the gospel of God's Son, the invitation is once more extended.

Chapter 117

5.14 - THE CHURCH—ITS ESTABLISHMENT, ITS HISTORY, AND ITS FALLING AWAY

THE CHURCH—ITS ESTABLISHMENT, ITS HISTORY, AND ITS FALLING AWAY In spite of the rain which doubtless prevented many from coming, we have an exceedingly fine audience. Your presence I duly appreciate. I also am glad to see the interest that you evidence in matters that transcend the realms of time; I am fully conscious of the continued responsibility that I have assumed. We are indeed in the midst of perilous times. I have but little to say of world conditions and of the problems that confront us as a result of the war. The church of the Lord knows that it must continue, regardless of things material or things worldly in their nature. Involved as we are, it certainly seems that our attention ought to be the more earnestly centered upon things of spiritual importance. I am talking tonight, as was announced, upon the church of the Bible. I call attention to, first, its establishment; second, its history; and third, the warnings and the evidences of its drifting from the original standard. Now all of you will understand full well that the discussion of these different topics must be brief. This meeting is so scheduled that much territory must be covered in the least possible time. Throughout the Old Testament the word church is never found. It is strictly a New Testament term. But the prophets clearly foretold the church, the kingdom of God. In that period it was also pointed out quite vividly that Jesus Christ was to be the builder of it; that Jerusalem was to be the place in which the house of the Lord was to be built; and that it should comprise all nations. These thoughts were new to the people of former dispensations. I think perhaps that most of us do not appreciate the significance and the importance of the right beginning for the church. Many errors arise from a misconception of the beginning.

There are three general periods designated as the time when the church of the Lord was begun upon this earth. One theory is that it started in the days of Abraham and was perpetuated throughout the rest of the patriarchal and likewise the Jewish age. Now, just to help you to understand matters clearly, let me say that all pedobaptists —those who believe in baptizing babies believe that the beginning of the church was in the days of Abraham. In that number, as you will see, are our Methodist friends, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and so on. Their idea, however, that the church was thus begun is a false premise—a statement untrue. Hence, you need not be surprised at the multiplied errors that crept into those religious bodies. It just occurs to me that they fail to recognize the simple statement of Paul when he said that Christ has "obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me

a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." But under the old covenant there was remembrance made again of their sins every year, hence, their need of repeated sacrifices from year to year. Now, in the light of what Paul here says, I just cannot quite understand why people cannot see at once that the covenant of the Christian age is not the covenant made by God with Abraham. Therefore, it follows that in those denominations which claim their origin back there, are indeed many errors. Those who look to Abraham or to the law of Moses for spiritual guidance now have their minds blinded and the veil is not yet taken away. Until they forsake denominational ideas and come to Christ, the new and the living way, the light of God's truth will not shine upon their hearts. The second theory is that the New Testament church was established in the days of John the Baptist or during the personal ministry of Christ—just any time before Pentecost. Prominent Baptist preachers would one time affirm such a statement, but men of that type can scarcely be found now. There is a reason. The fact is that the church was firmly fixed and definitely established upon this earth on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. The work of John the Baptist was that of preparing the way of the Lord, of making ready a people for the Lord by giving them a knowledge of salvation. Let me say kindly, I have never yet found (and I have called upon Baptists to help me) one single historian and scholar who will put it down in cold print that the church of the New Testament was established in the days of John the Baptist or during the personal ministry of Christ. Hence, all of those preachers who have been deceived and deluded ought to turn away from this error and come to the full realization that the church of the Lord was founded after the tragedy of the cross and on that memorable Pentecost. John the Baptist came into the wilderness of Judea, a wild vacant territory, and with his clarion voice broke the silence of that wilderness and attracted people from Jerusalem and from Judea and the region round about. The burden of John's proclamation was that the people ought to repent, for "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Thus John proclaimed the approach of the kingdom of God. Next, the twelve were sent out under a restricted commission with specific authority to proclaim the same thing—that the "kingdom of God is at hand." And then the seventy were sent and they said the same thing, but clothed it in different words when they announced, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." When Jesus Christ himself began, he said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." We may ask what time is fulfilled? There is but one answer—viz., the time spoken of by the prophets. Let it be remembered that during the days of John, the twelve, the seventy, and the personal ministry of Christ, they all proclaimed that the "kingdom of God is at hand." But after the kingdom or church was established on the day of Pentecost no such expression as "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" is found in the Bible. I next call attention to what Christ said in Mark 9:1 : "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Friends, I think the man does not live that can harmonize this statement of the Lord with the idea that the church was then in existence. Everyone must admit that the kingdom was nigh, that it was to appear during the lifetime of some who were then standing there. If it be a fact that the kingdom has never yet been established, do you not think that some of those fellows are getting rather old? Christ said nineteen hundred years ago some of them would not die until they had seen the kingdom of God come with power. Again I am told that the kingdom never has come and will not

until our Lord’s return to earth. Some of those to whom Christ spoke ought to be living yet. And instead of Methuselah being the oldest man, these disciples are already nineteen hundred years of age, and no sign, as yet, of the direct and immediate approach of the kingdom of God. Such an idea is founded in a brain that fails to function in harmony with the word of God, or, in a mind that disregards the plainest statement of God’s eternal truth. But note, the kingdom of God was to come with power; the power was to come with the Spirit; and the Spirit came on Pentecost. So we conclude without the shadow of a doubt that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ was established upon this earth on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Gospel preachers, from the pioneer days on down, have been perfectly willing, and sometimes anxious, to affirm such a statement. The time was when opposition could be had, but those days are almost gone possibly forever. The opposition have learned that the better part of their policy is to evade all such arguments, and pose as being too good to enter into a public discussion. I know that such is not so. They can debate well when they have no opponent. By bitter experience they have learned some lessons, and hence, they fear an open investigation of the differences between the church of Christ and their human denominations. Let me call attention next to the history of that church established on Pentecost, in as brief a time as I may be able. On that occasion, when Peter preached the first gospel sermon in the name of the risen Lord, the Bible declares: "About three thousand souls were added." Within a short time, the number of men alone came to be about five thousand. Upon the persecution that arose over the stoning of Stephen, all the Jerusalem Church was scattered abroad, save the apostles, and they went everywhere preaching the word. Numbers and numbers of souls became obedient unto the faith. Philip then preached in Samaria the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. The people heard it; they believed it; and "they were baptized, both men and women." Hence, the church of the Lord was planted in the city of Samaria by the simple preaching of the gospel. Later on Peter was called from Joppa to Caesarea, where he preached to the centurion Cornelius and his house. When they heard the story, they were baptized in the name of the Lord, and hence the church in those parts. And throughout the country of Asia Minor, Paul and Barnabas, together with Silas and Timothy and Luke, spread the glad tidings of salvation. Then, in response to the Macedonian call, Paul and his company crossed the Aegean Sea and established churches upon European soil. Thus they continued until the record says: "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Not only that, but to be more specific, Paul declares in Colossians 1:23 : "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Under that great world-wide commission, inspired men went into the uttermost parts of the earth, proclaiming the gospel of God’s Son. Obedience to that gospel made Christians, and when they were banded together they constituted the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. From such statements it would seem that the church might soon cover the face of the earth, but such is not its history. I am calling your attention next, friends, to the warnings and to the evidences of departure and apostasy. As I talk about matters of this kind, I want you to be aware of one thing—viz., that human nature has run in about the same channel since the days of Adam. It has not changed. Members became quite enthusiastic in the first church. They were thoroughly honest and earnestly intended to be faithful in carrying out the principles thus accepted, but with the passing of time they yielded to the temptations and the allurements of the world, and erelong evidenced their indifference, their carelessness, and their downright apostasy. I am reading to you

a number of passages right along this line. I verily believe that the time never has been when these passages ought to register more effectively than in the period through which we are now passing. If I can discern the signs of the times, and the characteristics of mankind, I think I know that preachers, elders, and all members of the church ought to stand foursquare for the old paths. In observing the affairs of the church, I have seen those who have lost interest, who have become discouraged, and who have evidenced a disposition to compromise. They want to become broad-gauged and sweet-spirited. Dale Carnegie's philosophy has had more influence on some preachers than has the word of God. I now read at length from Acts 20:1-38 because, brethren, I think what Paul said should challenge our serious study. He called the elders of the church at Ephesus to deliver to them a final report of his journey. When they were come, he said unto them: Brethren, "ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." My, what a journey, and what an expectation! Now observe: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." May I inject this thought? Such was the spirit that caused primitive Christianity to spread over the face of the earth. "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Are we conscious of such warning, brethren? Have those passages registered upon the tablets of our minds? Are we aware of the fact that the same dangers that beset the church back there are still in evidence? Are our elders watching over the flock? And believe they that there be dangers lurking on every hand? Are they looking after the character of those whom they invite to preach, and the kind of sermons which the audience is called upon to hear? Are they unmindful of the fact that the preaching today is largely dealing with things secular, with matters that are foreign to the gospel of Christ? Do they know that social affairs, political relations, and world-wide issues are the chief things discussed in the pulpit? All of such might be interesting, but it is not the gospel of God's Son. Elders are falling down on their duty when they permit a preacher in their midst to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified. A little sermonette on some abstract theme makes the preacher popular and causes him to receive the commendations and the eulogies of those who are ignorant of gospel truth. Paul said: "Brethren, of your own selves there will men arise to draw the disciples after them by speaking perverse things. Therefore, for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." But do you know, brethren, that until the clouds gather, the lightnings

flash, and the thunders peal, it is hard to make an impression upon people? Last Thursday I went into the office of Secretary Hull, who, in my judgment, is the biggest man connected with any government on earth. Mr. Hull was exceedingly serious. He said: "Hardeman, back in ’33 and ’34 and ’35, I saw the gathering of this great conflict just as clearly as I ever watched the accumulation of the clouds. I did my best to warn the people of America of the coming tragedy, but they were as the somnambulist walking along the mighty precipice, unmindful of the terrible danger that lay just one step beyond." I thought what wonderful words were these coming from a man upon whose heart lies a large part of the responsibility of this country. The same principle is true regarding the church. Paul may warn, preachers may read what he said, but the church pays little attention. For the space of three years, Paul warned the churches. He knew what was going to happen. It did occur back there, and those folks were just about like we are. The elders of the church at Ephesus were not a different kind of men from the elders of the churches here in Nashville. World conditions to them were just about what world conditions are to us. People loved attractions back there just as they do now. They loved entertainment and the way of the world. They loved to be patted on the back and to hear complimentary remarks from various people whom they met. Paul declared that grievous wolves would "enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Elders, I am pleading with you. Don’t let such things come to pass. Now, if that Scripture alone would register with us as much as does "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," we would have far less trouble in our churches. But, too often, after we get on dry clothes, we forget everything of that kind. Again, in the second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul had this to say: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." There will not only be a "falling," but there will be a "falling away." The word "away" cuts one loose from all connections. He also said: "For the mystery of iniquity cloth already work." Paul could see evidence of departure in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, again, when he warns his young son Timothy to "preach the word; in season . . . out of season," he said: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Now he was not talking about some denomination; he was not talking about some political party or social club. He was talking about members of the church of the Lord. And with prophetic vision, he said: "Timothy, the time will come when members of the body of Christ, those in your midst, will not endure sound doctrine." I am not stopping to reason as to whether or not such a condition now prevails. I think you know that there are some preachers who cannot be accepted everywhere. The reason is they contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered. There are those who want that which everybody can accept, and at which no one could possibly be offended. They want that which is general and which the world can accept just as readily as the members of the church. Again, I am calling attention to 1 Timothy 4:1-16 : "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Think about it. Are members of the church going to depart? Paul said they would. Have you seen things of that kind? I think you have. We are just as human as were they. We are just as weak as was any one of them, and we are exposed to the same danger. Hence, our protection is to watch and remember, and to heed the warnings. Paul had this also to say regarding some: "Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as cloth a canker." And then he was specific. He did not deal in generalities. He told exactly who they are. Had some of my brethren been there, they would have said: "Don’t you dare

call names, because that will not be nice and you will not be sweet-spirited." Now you listen and see what Paul said about it. "They will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as cloth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred." Well, in what was their error? They said: "The resurrection is past already." Now what was the effect of that preaching? They overthrew the faith of some. These young men, so far as I know, were splendid characters and possibly fine speakers, but they began to speculate. They thought that they had found something that was new, and, therefore, they decided that "while we believe in the resurrection, we also have decided that it is already past." As is usual, some thoughtless brethren accepted their theory, and as a result their faith was overthrown. Let me say that in principle, I cannot see one particle of difference between Hymenaeus and Philetus and a lot of others that are in error tonight. Their theories differ, but the basis is the same. Some say that the kingdom of God has not yet come. They claim to believe in the kingdom all right, but it is a thing of the future. What about you, Philetus and Hymenaeus?? They believed in the resurrection, but said it was already past. What did they do? Overthrow the faith of some. What are these doing that are proclaiming the kingdom is yet to come? Likewise, they are disturbing many and are overthrowing the faith of good brethren who ought to reverse their gear and hark back and let unrevealed things belong to God. Well, that is not all. I remember another statement from Paul regarding some young preachers. He said: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." That sounds fine to nearly everybody. But I ask: "Paul, who did it?" Paul did not hesitate to tell us who some were. "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." So here they arc Hymenaeus and Alexander. No doubt many brethren now living would have criticized Paul for calling names had they been present. Let me say that I would not care one hit for any man’s telling what I have to say, provided he would in no way misrepresent me. I am sure that such was ever the sentiment of Paul. Whom was Paul talking about? He did not hesitate to say that one of them is Hymenaeus, and the other one is Alexander. But may I ask: "What have you done to them?" His answer: “I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." That is what he said about them. Do you think that was nice and sweet-spirited? Brethren, just what do you think about it? Wouldn’t you criticize Paul? Would you say that he ought to have just gone on and preached the gospel and let the other fellow alone? Had such a course been followed, Christ would not have been crucified nor would any of the apostles been martyred. "Preach the word. Reprove and rebuke." "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel of God’s Son." We will never kill the Japs nor the Germans if we just take a shotgun and give it a broad range with no aim at something definite. When we discuss errors, let us tell the audience who teaches such, for it is a fact that a large part of the people will never know unless specifically told. Let those whom we are trying to convert understand that we are talking about them. Again, Paul said to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." These warnings imply danger. They are just as applicable to us as they were to Timothy. Young people, heed such warnings. Do not seek to be galvanized into prominence at the expense of your soul. Remember that the world will hate you. It will hate the man that proclaims the gospel of God’s Son without fear or favor. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. If so, his servants would fight. Paul said to Titus: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." Now what is sound doctrine? I

have heard all along the line about a preacher being "sound." What is meant by that? What is sound doctrine? Sound doctrine is Bible doctrine. Sound speech is Bible language. "Hold fast the form of sound words," and "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." The oracles of God are God's Word. Let him speak as the Bible speaks. Let him respect the Bible. Let people understand that he proposes to go by the Bible. Let him preach nothing, practice nothing, and be nothing other than what the word of God says. Now my last thought of tonight is this: Brethren, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." This does not argue that you are wrong, but it implies that you might be, and hence "examine yourselves." Recently I went to Memphis for a special physical examination. I felt all right and, so far as I knew, nothing was wrong. I just wanted to make sure. After many careful tests, the doctor said to my delight: "I think you are all right and that you ought to live another forty years." Now, I wasn't scared. Death wasn't staring me in the face, so far as I knew, but 1 wanted myself examined to find out whether I be in good health or not. Am I more interested, friends, in my physical make-up than I am in my spiritual welfare? Examine yourselves. Are you doing something that the Lord forbids? Are you measuring up to His standard? Are you living up to the requirement of the New Testament? Are you standing foursquare for the old Jerusalem gospel? Are you behind the man that proclaims God's truth one hundred per cent? Are you holding up the hands of those who go forth to tell the story? Examine yourselves, and I think it will do all of you good. Friends, I have talked long enough tonight. If now there are any in this audience who understand the will of the Lord and who are disposed to accept it, you are earnestly invited to come while you may.

5.15 - CHURCH ORGANIZATION

CHURCH ORGANIZATION This is indeed a fine audience. Personally, I want to acknowledge your presence with genuine and profound gratitude. I feel quite keenly the responsibility that is mine when I undertake to address an audience upon whom I know impressions will be made. We are dealing not with things purely timely, but with things eternal. At the War Memorial Building every sermon has had something to do with the church, and that series would not be complete unless I talked at one time regarding church organization. I have elected this morning so to do, and upon that I bid you fasten your attention and give to it proper thought. It goes without saying that every business into which men enter demands organization. The success of all efforts, whether in financial affairs, social matters, or political realms, depends largely upon the character of those who are recognized as officials of that concern. I think that needs no comment whatever. The Lord surely is not the author of confusion, but of system and order. Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians will always apply. "Let all things be done decently and in order." I am assuming, therefore, that you agree that in the New Testament the church was organized and that there were certain qualifications necessary for all officials. I am calling attention Acts 1:1-26, Acts 2:1-47, Acts 3:1-26, Acts 4:1-37, Acts 5:1-42, Acts 6:1-15, where the occasion called forth the selection of certain men. Without reading that Acts 1:1-26 briefly state the facts. The Grecians made complaint against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. That complaint was brought to the attention of the apostles. They did not pass it by unconcerned, but recognized the need of something’s being done. They said: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." The Grecians were told to look out among themselves "seven men whom we may appoint." They were to be men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom. Any organization with officials of a bad report will suffer just criticism, if not failure altogether. It is also obvious that those who serve should have the spirit of sincerity and devotion to duty. Likewise, they should be men with good judgment. These seven men were recognized as deacons, which word simply means a "servant" or a "minister." From the account here given in Acts 6:1-15, it is evident that they were to attend to the secular wants and interests of the congregation. So they selected the number and the appointment was made. The Bible does not say just how they went about making the appointment and I do not know. But I know as much about it as anybody living, and that simply means that no man knows the precise act employed in the selection of these seven men. In view of this, I cannot see why brethren will cause trouble and demand that a certain procedure must be followed in order that such may be scriptural. The qualifications of a deacon are exactly the same as that demanded of every other Christian except that he must be the husband of one wife. Another class of officials is called elders, bishops, overseers, pastors, or shepherds and teachers. These various names all designate the same class of officers. The word elder refers to age, not necessarily in time lived upon the earth, but rather his age in the church. The terms overseer and bishop have reference to one’s being a guardian or a superintendent. Pastor means a feeder, and is the same as the word shepherd. They differ only in origin. Teacher, of course, implies an instructor. The qualifications of this class are plainly given to Timothy and Titus. Except their being married and not novices, their qualifications should apply to all Christians.

In the Bible every congregation had a plurality of elders. No one ever read about the elder of a certain church. In Titus 1:5, Paul said: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." Now that might be construed to mean that they had several congregations in Crete and possibly one elder in each, but in the island there would be a plurality of elders. But such is not the fact. Luke gives a report of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, and he has this to say: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church." In Acts 20:17 the elders of the church were called. That settles the question as to how many elders each church should have. Instead of having a plurality of elders for each church as the Bible teaches, some denominations have a plurality of churches under one elder. Why cannot sensible people see the glaring contrast between God's demand and man's polity? I have been asked time and again how are elders to be appointed? The Bible does not say. Maybe I could wish that it had. I am quite sure that there are certain principles, three in number, that ought to govern every congregation in the selection of elders. First, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Second, let all things be done unselfishly and with love for the welfare of the congregation. Third, let every act be done with a view of maintaining and preserving the unity of the congregation. Now, if brethren will follow those three fundamentals, they will not make a mistake nor will they violate any principle of His Word. While the Bible demands a plurality of elders for each congregation, it nowhere tells just how many any church should have. Good judgment alone must determine the number. I am calling attention to the work required of the elders. In Acts 20:28, Paul said to the Ephesian elders: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." From this passage it is obvious that certain duties were imposed upon the elders at Ephesus. 1. It was their obligation to oversee the flock. No greater responsibility was ever committed to man. Elders are shepherds, and, if need be, they must lay down their lives for the church which the Lord has so dearly purchased. They are to guard and to protect the flock from grievous wolves without and from those who speak perverse things from within. There is great danger along this line. Many times some oily-tongued preacher will dash into the assembly on Sunday morning and ask the elders to let him speak. He will give a glowing report of himself and tell of his acquaintance with some brethren of prominence. Too many elders fall for such impressions. Let me warn you against all tramp preachers. The right kind never tries such an approach and the wrong kind ought always to be rejected. Furthermore, those within should be carefully watched. Do not allow some fellow on the inside to have much to say if he evidences a selfish end. Many a man seeks to gain the confidence of the weaker members, and when he feels that he has sufficient strength, he will lead them into his own schemes, hoping thereby to be galvanized into prominence. 2. Their duty is to be feeders of the church of God. They should, therefore, be "apt to teach." They must study the condition of every member and give him food according to his needs. If babies, give them the sincere milk of the word and, if more advanced, give them strong meat. 3. To the elders the discipline of the congregation has been committed. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." Again, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Once more, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" Mow, let it be understood that elders should never be dogmatic nor arbitrary. Neither should they be so formal that the humblest may not dare come into their August presence. Peter urged the elders not to be "lords over God's heritage'" but to be an example to the flock. Many church troubles arise and sometimes division

occurs, because of the attitude of the elders. Their opinion cannot be forced on a congregation without harm resulting. While it is the duty of the elders to rule, it is also the duty of the members to obey. Paul said. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."' Three fundamental principles, announced by the pioneers, should apply to both the elders and the members—viz., in matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; and, in all things, charity. Such principles accepted in the right spirit will preserve the peace and happiness of any church. Let no member bring an accusation against an elder unless it is well founded before two or three witnesses. Let it be understood that they have a hard place to fill. Every inactive and disgruntled member will try to cover his own sins and his own delinquency by finding fault with the elders. In the work of every church there are many matters that come up concerning which the Bible has nothing to say. In such cases the greatest possible diplomacy should be exercised. The ultimate decision in all matters of expediency must be left to the elders, but they are unwise if they do not learn what the wish of the congregation is and then they should respect its wishes. Sometimes the question comes up as to whether or not the church shall have a new building. If so, what kind, where to build it, and when to begin? In such matters, the elders should not be arbitrary. Then again, who shall be our preacher? When shall we have our protracted meeting, etc.? If there is opposition of any moment, it will again show a lack of good judgment on the part of the elders to employ some preacher regardless. It always means that they are inviting trouble, and may I say in this connection that no preacher who loves the cause more than his own selfish interest will allow a church to divide over him. In Freed-Hardeman College we have a faculty of sixteen. I have been serving as its president for a number of years. I am glad to say that it has never occurred to me to be arrogant or arbitrary in the management of its affairs. In any matter that arises, if it be at all important, I have always consulted the faculty, and time and again I have discussed such with the students. Many times I have yielded my opinion and have carried out the judgment of others. As a result, we have never had any trouble and the school runs on with all in perfect accord. Such, I believe, is possible with every congregation in disposing of almost all of its problems. This much for matters of expediency. If a question of doctrine or polity arises, the elders should settle it in harmony with New Testament teaching regardless of results. In matters of faith, there is no place for any man’s opinion. Much trouble can be avoided if churches are exceedingly careful in the selection of their elders. Brother Tant used to say that when he was a boy they made popguns out of elders, but in more modern times they make elders out of popguns. There is much truth in such a statement. I am next calling attention to another class of officials— viz., the evangelists. This term simply means "a proclaimer of good news." The title is first given to Philip in Acts 21:8. It next occurs in 2 Timothy 4:5, in Paul’s charge: "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." Titus was commanded to set things in order on the island of Crete. He was told to speak things that became sound doctrine, and in all things to show himself a pattern of good works. Likewise, he must teach and exhort. An evangelist must follow after righteousness, godliness, fidelity, love, patience, and meekness, also to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Every church should develop special teachers and preachers, both for itself and for fields abroad. In modern times a man who preaches around home is never called an evangelist, but when he begins to go places he becomes one overnight. I have wondered how many miles a preacher has to go in order to be an evangelist and how much territory he has to cover to become a big evangelist. Let it be understood that a man who proclaims great tidings to the people at home is as much an evangelist as if he traveled thousands of miles. His qualifications are simple

and few. Paul said to Timothy: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Thus we have it: fidelity and ability. And now I must close. Are there any here who understand God's will and who are disposed to accept it? Won't you come now while you may!

Chapter 119

5.16 - THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES The word Scripture simply means a writing regardless of the kind or character. The Nashville Tennessean, The Nashville Banner, and other publications fulfill the demands of that word in its primary sense. That is why the apostle said: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable." (2 Timothy 3:16) There is not an idle word nor an empty phrase connected with any of the writings inspired of God. Now every Scripture is profitable for four things. Note how comprehensive and inclusive they are: (1) for doctrine or teaching; (2) for reproof; (3) for correction; (4) for instruction in righteousness. You cannot imagine any condition or need of mankind but one or the other of these statements will adequately apply. Their completeness is in the fact that the man of God may be perfect—not perfect in morals, not perfect in character, but perfect in this respect, namely, that he is thoroughly, completely, furnished unto every good work. I wish that text would register with all who may chance to hear or read what Paul said. The all-sufficiency, the absolute adequacy, and adaptability of the Bible to meet all the demands of the human family are here emphasized. Christians believe that passage. They also believe that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." We need once again to announce with all the power we can command that "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is our sole rule of faith and practice." We need to readopt the statement that "where it speaks, we ought to speak," and then we ought to respect its silence as well. Let us also remember that "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." When I claim, therefore, to believe the Bible, I endorse all the statements as therein found. I mean to subscribe to all of its requirements, and to try to be governed by its teaching. Now for me to accept any such booklet as a ritual, handbook, manual, catechism, prayer book, confession of faith, discipline, or whatnot, would deny my faith in these Scriptures which I have read. If the Bible thoroughly furnishes a man unto every good work, why have a supplementary book? The very fact of their acceptance argues that those who do so recognize the Bible as not quite sufficient. It suggests that it is just a little bit lacking. Hence, they must have their supplementary books in order that their church work may be carried on. Do you know, friends, it is next to impossible for a denomination to exist without the adoption of a booklet of human origin, which is far from perfection, and which has to be amended and revised time and again? The idea is that "we must revise our rules and our regulations in harmony with the progress of mankind." Let me tell you one thing. Sin is the same now as it was forty long centuries gone by. Man’s need is precisely the same today as it was in the long, long distant past. The same cure is as necessary as it was for our fathers, regardless of the progress of the world in social, political, financial, scientific, or other affairs. God anticipated the requirements of man throughout all ages and his every need in His revelation to man. Therefore, the adoption of any other book contradicts any man’s saying: “I accept the Bible as a complete guide into all truth." But I have been told by some who have thus gone aside that churches must write out their articles of faith. I think- it well that such be written, but I just wonder if anyone means to say that he has articles of faith not written in the Bible. And if they are written in the Bible, why the necessity of having them in another book? Others say: "We must have rules and regulations governing our church." I certainly think there ought to be such in every church. If any man has a church, I will

agree that it ought to be regulated. I would, however, be ashamed of myself if I had some rules and regulations unknown to the Bible. That would destroy all of my claims that I accept God's Word as a complete lamp to my feet and a complete light unto my path. Now, let me ask any sane, sober man. If your creed contains more than this Bible, won't you admit that it might contain too much? Let me reverse it. If the creed you have adopted, and to which you have sworn allegiance, contains less than the Bible, won't you admit that it might contain too little? If, therefore, any creed adopted by any organization contains neither more nor less than does the Bible, then it is exactly like God's book, and, since we have no need of two precisely alike, I am urging that you leave off that which is of human origin and simply take the Bible as your sole creed. People misunderstand the church of Christ many times. They ask: "Don't you folks have a creed?" We answer: "Yes." "Don't you have a discipline?" "Sure." "Have you not a confession of faith?" "Certainly so." They next ask to see it and we gladly hand them the New Testament. To it I have subscribed one hundred per cent. I have pledged myself to be nothing, to accept nothing, nor do nothing other than what my creed has authorized. Christ prayed that all might be one. Paul pleaded that we speak the same thing and be of the same mind. All who really love the Lord would like to have such a unity prevail. If it is ever brought about, we must reject all human creeds and subscribe to the statement: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." By such a standard all matters that come up for consideration can be tested. If something is presented, we can ask, is it a good work? If so, we are to engage in it. If not, of course, we pass it by. But how can we determine whether or not it is good? Bear in mind that the word "good" is a relative term. A thing may be good as determined by one standard and bad as measured by another. In all matters religious the Bible is our standard, and by it all items of faith must be determined. The Bible "furnishes us unto every good work." God "hash given unto us al! things that pertain unto life and godliness." "The Spirit. . . will guide you into all truth." If the Bible is absolutely silent regarding any matter, proper respect for God's Word demands that it be not in the worship or work of the church. It follows that no question can present itself, but its standing may be determined by comparison with the word of God. Many things are right within themselves, but they are wrong when brought into the worship and service of God. Illustrative of this, let me say that Christ ate bread in the home of Lazarus. Upon it he feasted, but for him to have turned the stones into bread would have been wrong. You may ask why. Simply because of the fact that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In other words, Christ was not his own. He belonged to Him whose will he came to do. He was subject to God's authority. He knew that when God wanted him to have bread, the command would be given. The acceptance of such a principle will solve all problems that may arise among us. When the great infidel, Robert Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, came to this country and challenged the clergy in our Southern Crescent City of New Orleans, they paid no attention to him. He waxed bolder and extended that challenge throughout America. And then it was that news of such came over the hills and across the vales to a young man teaching school at Bethany, West Virginia. He at once asked, "Who is this uncircumcised infidel that he should challenge the word of the living God?" I presume that you know the sequel. Alexander Campbell accepted the challenge and a great debate was on. It was held in Cincinnati in April, 1829. Since that time infidelity has been on the defense and it never has been able to uproot and destroy the word of the Lord. Let me now ask, Why was it that the clergy, with all of their grand titles and much

learning, refused to meet in public discussion the great infidel? The truth is they were conscious of the fact that Mr. Owen would say to them first of all: "You don't accept the Bible yourself, because you have a human creed that evidences your lack of faith in the all-sufficiency of God's Word." Campbell had no creed to defend and, hence, he was not creed-bound. The whole religious world owes a debt of gratitude to him whom some despise. Small sectarian preachers will try to belittle Alexander Campbell when the truth is that if the least thought Campbell ever had were to enter the little fellow's head, it would explode like a bomb. We are debtors to such men as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and Campbell. No selfrespecting man will ever make fun of what they did. Let us try to impress upon every person the all-sufficiency of God's Word. If we need teaching, the Bible is the source whence it comes. If we go astray, as, doubtless, some of us will, we need reproof. But it is not enough simply to reprove. We will need correction and instruction in righteousness. In all that we need, the Bible is sufficient. If we love it to the extent that we are willing to be governed by it, there never can be discord in the body of Christ. When we walk by faith, not by sight; when we hold our opinions as private property and do not seek to force them upon others, it is no trouble whatever to maintain the unity and peace of the church. We are not divided over what is in that Book, over what it specifically says. But the body is torn asunder and the devil rejoices at the division among his professed followers. All of this because of the fact that we let our opinions, our ideas, and our pet notions become paramount. Instead of holding them in subjection and keeping them to ourselves to meditate upon in the quietude of our own company as we wish, we sometimes become so enthusiastic over our ideas that we begin to promulgate them and to insist that God's Word clearly states them. Our time is out. Come today and let us all stand upon His Word.

Chapter 120

5.17 - LECTURE ON EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

LECTURE ON EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Ladies and gentlemen, through a kind Providence that ever watches us, we are permitted to assemble tonight under conditions quite favorable, to enter into that which I trust may prove both interesting and profitable to everyone in this audience. There is no place that I have ever gone where I appreciate the privilege of a return more than to our capital city of Nashville. I never have been greeted by an audience so large as that which you have furnished, nor one before whom I would rather stand. Almost a hundred times I have appeared in your midst, and every time you have expressed such an interest that I have received the greatest encouragement and inspiration. I come to you tonight to try to tell some things regarding a recent trip I made across the great Atlantic, through the land of Europe, over the Mediterranean, into the country of the pyramids, and finally into the land of Palestine. I am not a professed lecturer, nor have I engaged in efforts of this kind, but in a very plain, simple way, I hope to interest you in some of the things observed and in some things experienced. I have been about quite a bit in life, but mostly about home, and those things that I did not know regarding this kind of a trip would, if written, make a volume so large, I presume, the world would hardly contain it. In the first part of the month of last June, preparations definite were made for the final departure from our own sacred land. I secured, first a passport from the Secretary of State, and next a ticket for the Steamship George Washington, which was to sail from Hobo ken, New Jersey, on June 23. I went in company with quite a large party, one that measured five feet and six inches in height and, if I am not mistaken, about six feet and five inches in circumference. He weighed on leaving home 284 pounds, but considerably less after we had been at sea a couple of days. I refer to Brother I. A. Douthitt, an old student and a fellow preacher, who lives in the town of Sedalia, Kentucky.

Through the assistance of Brother and Sister E. E. Shoulders of New York City, we were shown how to get around through the metropolis of our own land and finally through the big tube to the pier, from which we entered the great steamer. This steamship was quite a wonder within itself. The George Washington is one of our large American liners, being six hundred ninety-two feet long and ninety feet wide. She has eleven stories and three promenade decks. I had learned already by correspondence that there were three classes of passengers, but I did not know just what the difference was. I never did want to be on the extremes of life either way, and from that statement you can judge quite correctly that we secured second-class passage, for I was told by those who knew that it was good enough for a king, and I thought, therefore, good enough for us. I found it even as some had said and enjoyed every minute of the voyage. We had a splendid two-passenger cabin, in which there were all the conveniences necessary for our comfort. On Saturday, June 23, at exactly twelve o’clock, I felt the great boat ease out from the pier and saw her turn her bow down the river and toward the bay. Hundreds stood on deck with their faces bathed in tears, while thousands of handkerchiefs and flags from the pier waved them a farewell to parts unknown. I stepped to the stern of the ship and watched, as long as I possibly could, those whom we had left behind. In the course of time, we rounded the great statue and there gazed

upon "Liberty" enlightening the world, but I am frank to say to you that I did not receive that especial thrill for which I had made abundant preparation. I do not know, and have never known, whether it was due to the very calm and quiet disposition that I may have been able to possess, or whether it was a lack of patriotism on my part. I watched the tall buildings as they began to fade away, until by and by all was lost in the distance. The ships, sailboats, and gasoline launches grew fewer and fewer, and finally we passed the lighthouse of St. Ambrose, at which place a number of guns were fired, indicative of the fact that we were indeed off to sea and fully committed to the dangers thereof. The afternoon passed and I was anxious to see the setting of the sun, but a cloud overcast the sky and hid his face from view. After the splendid dinner, which was served in the spacious dining had, where we were at liberty to take whatever chair we chose, there was an interesting program by the ship's orchestra to the delight of all the passengers. This being over, we passed into our cabin, read some selections of Scripture, offered a fervent prayer, and committed ourselves to the care of him who rules both land and sea. I must say to you that I felt just a little bit peculiar while preparing to retire out upon an ocean which, so far as I could see, was without a shore. We passed the night in splendid sleep and awoke to look out upon a boundless sea. I might suggest just at this point that a ship has two kinds of motion—viz., that of a seesaw, up and down. As Mark Twain has well said at one moment the bow of the ship is taking deadly aim at the sun in the midst of the heaven, while the next moment it is trying to harpoon a shark at the bottom of the sea. In addition to that, there is a motion from side to side. Sometimes you can sit on deck with the rail as your guide and behold the water not more than twenty feet from the ship; and then it rocks to the other side until the sky greets your eye and all the water is invisible. It is these motions that cause seasickness. I expected such to be mine, but fortunately I missed it altogether and felt not the slightest symptom. I can say to you confidently, if there ever is a time when a man feels conceited and justly proud of himself, it is perhaps when his stomach behaves itself decorously for the first twenty-four hours out at sea. I was able to walk about with an air of triumph and dignity, and look with amusement upon my less fortunate fellows as they were belching forth like old Mount Vesuvius the various things that had been devoured. I remember that Brother Douthitt came to me on the afternoon of the second day, and said: "Brother Hardeman, how do you feel?" I said "I am all right" and passed it by thoughtlessly. In just a short while he came back and said: "You say you are feeling all right?" I said: "Why, certainly, feeling fine." "Well," he said, "I have thrown up everything I have eaten since I left Kentucky." I saw splendidly adorned women leaning over the railing, who looked as if they did not care whether they went forward, backward, or downward—any way that they might get relief seemed to be their choice. Perhaps those who experience no seasickness miss some of the most impressive memories of a voyage. Those who were accustomed to travel said that our passing was quite smooth and that the sea behaved itself well. A large ship like the George Washington draws a big volume of water, sends out immense waves that finally break and portray a thousand sparkles as they burst into the sunlight. Down underneath there is the color of a deep blue, over that a cover of light green, and then on top a white veil overspreads the whole. It was exceedingly interesting to me to stand on the deck and gaze out upon the bosom of an ocean surrounded by cloudless sky and see not a thing under the heaven except the waves and the whitecaps as they burst in the far distance. We had quite a number of amusements on board the ship. First of all a splendid German band gave entertainments three times a day, morning, afternoon, and night. At three o'clock in the afternoon, coffee, tea' and cakes were served. Shuffleboard, hopscotch, and other simple games were on the

decks, while inside of the smoking and the lounging rooms all kinds of card playing and various kinds of games entertained those interested. At night we had the usual picture show and at the same time a big dance going on in another part of the ship. Enchanting strains of the sweetest music poured forth from the splendid orchestra. I was on this journey to see and to learn all possible, so I took in both the pictures and the dance. I am not so very old and still am quite active, so I was invited by several welldressed and good-looking ladies to dance with them. Of course, they did not know I was a preacher and I never make it a point to let people know that I am. I knew I was among strangers and away from home. I have often wondered what some of my dear brethren would have done under circumstances similar. After the first day or two, a trip across the ocean grows somewhat monotonous, especially if the weather be calm and the sea smooth. Every day at twelve there is posted a bulletin that suggests these things. It gives the latitude and the longitude of the ship, the distance traveled from New York harbor, the distance traveled for the last twenty-four hours, and the rate per hour. The average liner goes about four hundred miles a day, at a rate of about eighteen or nineteen knots per hour. That bulletin also gives the character of the weather, the strength of the wind, and the condition of the sea. This entertained us day by day, for every passenger seemed anxious to know just where we were. A week passed with nothing unusual having happened, but on the morning of the eighth day—it being Sunday—we arose and looked out upon the land to our north which proved to be the great old country of England. We sailed along her shores and up the English Channel from early morning until something like nine o’clock. We passed the stately lighthouse, and were joined by sea gulls hundreds in number. These are beautiful white-winged birds with golden bills. They are quite tame and followed us all that day to the interest and delight of every passenger. They could dive underneath the water, sail upon its bosom, and then rise on their pinions and fly with ease. About nine o’clock, one week and a day after we had started, we were ready to stop in old Plymouth Rock harbor. The ship cast anchor and very soon a couple of smaller boats pulled up by the side, one to receive the mail, and the other to receive the baggage and the passengers, and thus we stood for more than an hour and watched hundreds and hundreds of bags of mail, and likewise hundreds of grips and trunks as they were transferred. I was interested, especially, while the ship there lay, to gaze upon old Plymouth Rock which stands out something like three hundred yards from the land, towering far above the water. I called to mind the incidents of the long ago. I thought of the old Mayflower which, in 1620, brought those characters who made their landing at our Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts, and became the great colony from which numbers and numbers have sprung throughout this broad land of ours. Governor Winthrop, Miles Standish, Priscilla Mullins, John Alden, et al., demanded a thought. We sailed on up and across the channel all during the day, until about four o’clock in the afternoon we passed to our right the Guernsey Islands, and then skirted the beautiful coast of France. Toward the setting of the sun our good ship pulled into the harbor of Cherbourg, at which we were to land. Having cast anchor again, smaller boats came to transport the passengers and baggage to the pier. French officers came and inspected our passports. We had purchased our railroad tickets to Paris from the ship’s purser. Our car and compartment were assigned and all was ready for the landing. With anxious eyes and with eager steps we moved down the stairway, boarded the smaller vessel, and were soon standing upon the sacred soil of France. I could not help but think of the wonderful contrast of our entrance with the boys who had preceded us during the world-wide war. They were there to stay the hand of German invasion, and we, to enjoy the beauties, the grandeurs and the historic scenes of a land now made sacred to us

more than ever before, because beneath her bloodstained soil there sleeps hundreds and thousands of our own kindred and of our country’s contribution to the cause of liberty Passing through the customs was merely a matter of custom. Into the long, large building we went, threw our grips upon the counters, opened them wide, and were ready to answer any point. Only two or three questions were asked by those in charge. They asked us about liquor, firearms, tobacco, and cigarettes. Having none of these we were soon through and ordered on down the line to our waiting train. On board the ship, we had met a French lady, a very intelligent woman, who also was bound for Paris. She was very pleasant and assisted us in passing through the customs, entering the right car, and in such matters as were necessary. We started out from Cherbourg at Paris about ten o’clock at night. The moon was at the very zenith of its existence, and during the entire night we gazed upon the beautiful buildings, made of stone and of brick, with their tiled roofs and their peculiar style. We observed the large orchards of apples, the fields of wheat, oats and barley, the patches of various vegetables characteristic of that land. Their beautiful roads lined with trees on either side attracted our attention. The next morning at five o’clock we stepped off the train in the proud city of Paris, the fourth city of the world in size, but, perhaps, the first in artistic beauty. Very soon we had our place assigned at the Atlantic Hotel and were ready to tour the city, of which we had heard and read 90 much. I had, indeed, heard of this city. I had given some special time to its study, but after I had spent a period of five days in the capital city of France and had walked and traveled up and down its splendid boulevards, had gone amidst the palaces and viewed it from the various angles and points of interest, I am ready to announce that the half to me had scarcely been told. Even now, I am quite certain that I only gathered a smattering of that which really characterizes that historic city. The best view of the city is to be had from the Arch of Triumph; which stands in the northwestern part. This is an arch built by Napoleon 1, 1806-1836, commemorating the victories from 1792 to 1815. It stands in the midst of a circle about one-quarter of a mile in diameter, and is one hundred forty-seven feet long, seventy-three feet wide, one hundred sixty-two feet high. There is a driveway through the middle of it ninety feet high and forty-five feet wide. On each side there are fine bas-relief works, illustrating in sculpture the most prominent incidents and affairs in the life of Napoleon. On the walls are inscribed the names of three hundred eighty-four generals and ninety-sis victories by them achieved. At the base is the grave of the French unknown soldier, which grave, at the time of our visit was covered in beautiful flowers. A sentinel stood guard in acknowledgment of the reverence and the respect that France was paying to this unknown soldier. From the summit of the Arch of Triumph, you can get your finest view of the city of Paris. Some years ago all the crooked, narrow streets, emanating from it were converted into splendid boulevards and now there are twelve that radiate therefrom as spokes from a wheel. Those avenues are from one hundred to three hundred feet wide. There is a sidewalk from twenty-five to thirty feet wide and then a row of trees. In the center there is the splendid driveway. Numbers of those boulevards have a double row of trees on either side, with grass plats between them. The whole is kept absolutely clean. You can gaze far down the distant avenues and have pointed out to you the various places of interest, the magnificent palaces that decorate this, one of the finest cities of the world. Another great structure of interest stands just across the River Seine and is known as "the Eiffel Tower." The base of this tower covers a space of six acres. It is nine hundred eighty-five feet high and, therefore, towers above the Woolworth Building in New York City, two hundred feet. It is composed of twelve thousand pieces of metal, screwed together by two and one-half million screws. From its lofty summit, almost the whole of

France seems spread out in full view. On the bank of the Seine is the beautiful tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte, the one time idol of France. On May 6,1821, he died in the midst of a severe storm on the island of St. Helena. He was buried near his favorite resort a fountain shaded by weeping willows. In his will he requested that his body be taken from the island and carried back that it might rest along the Seine in the city he loved so well. After nineteen years of undisturbed silence, his body was brought to its present place of rest. It was so well preserved that the features were as yet unchanged, and many old French soldiers once more gazed upon him whom they had followed through rivers of blood in the darkest and yet brightest days of French glory. I visited the old Madeline Cathedral and other similar structures and was impressed with the old Ionic form of architecture. But the most interesting place to me was the magnificent palace and gardens of Versailles, seven miles west of the city. Perhaps a more beautiful or more historic spot cannot be found in all the world. Louis XIV, who reigned at the latter part of the seventeenth century and who was the whole soul of French affairs for a period of a half century, undertook to build a palace and beautify grounds which would surpass anything that ever had been designed or undertaken before. He bought a section of country sixty miles in circumference and commenced the stupendous work which has perpetuated his memory. The palace itself cost eighty million dollars and the total expense was about two hundred million dollars. Thirty-seven thousand men were engaged, and the work was of such a hazardous nature that night after night great cartloads of those who had fallen under the burden of the day were dragged away, while their places were filled by others at his command. As you approach you look upon a great palace, frescoed and ornamented, stretching for blocks and blocks away, in front of which there is ample room for the parade of all the armies that France ever has had at any one time. Down to the left as you enter, there is quite an historic old building, in which Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams, members of the Peace Commission that concluded the Revolutionary War, signed the treaty on September 3,1783, that guaranteed our independence from the mother country. In the palace, stone and marble became an endless series of compliment and homage to the royal person. There are acres of elaborate ceiling painted by the artist Lebrun, representing as they do all that beauty and all that art could conceive. The garden, with its sixty and two long avenues bordered by alternating trees and statues; its colossal fountains, where bronze and marble nymphs and tritons play with water brought at immense cost from afar; its flowery beds, arranged with stately regularity—all seem an indefinite prolongation of an endless palace. Down one of the great walkways we passed and saw the splendid apartment in which President Wilson and the other members of the "Big Four" held their conference during the World War. We stood upon the very spot where, it is said, General Foch assumed command of all the allied forces. We saw also the buildings where representatives of other nations stayed, and their place of meeting for discussion with the great powers. The armistice was at last signed in this great palace, and the respective soldiers now turned their faces toward the land they loved. I visited two of Paris' great theatres, not only because of the entertainment, but because of the anxiety to see the society and the attractions furnished. I need not tell you that I listened with delight to the rapturous strains of music that came forth from their finest orchestras. I gazed with admiration upon the splendid young men as they appeared upon the stage, and when those beauties rare and damsels fair appeared almost in their original attire, I was forced to glance upon them out of a corner of one eye. The city of Paris is visited by hundreds and thousands of tourists. I take it that the management of the theatrical performances gives to the world that which it delights to see. But I leave this splendid

city with reluctance and pass on. Our journey then was eastward, across this great country. We were bound for Strasbourg, which lies just three miles this side of the German border. In passing through the country of France, we paralleled a number of canals on which boats were plying, some drawn by horses, some pushed by poles, and some propelled by gasoline. They were transporting the commerce of the great republic. France is a country cultivated to the very highest point. Its splendid lawns look as though they had been kept by an efficient barber. Forests of trees, set in the form of a checkerboard, are attractive. Plats of ground, hand-tilled and carefully tended, greet you on every side and add beauty to both hills and plains. The soil responds to their labors with a bountiful harvest, and by continuous rotation, they have been able to maintain its original fertility and even to enrich it as the years go by. Men and women, boys and girls, work with their hands and endure the hardships of the day. We passed over the southern section of the district of Verdun and saw evidences of battles on every hand. Monuments and tablets on the hillsides told the silent and yet sad story that thousands had fallen by the wayside. Old buildings with holes in their sides, in their gables, and in their roofs, evidenced the fact that wonderful warfare had raged over that part of the country. But we soon entered into the city of Strasbourg, and there spent a pleasant night at the Grand National Hotel. We were there on July 4, and appreciated the fact that, from some of their prominent buildings, the Stars and Stripes were proudly flying. I learned, while in foreign lands, to appreciate our country as never before. From there we journeyed southward along the German boundary until we came to the town of Basel on the border of France and Switzerland. We must go through customs again. When the officer saw that we were Americans, without examining our grips at all, he bade us a hearty welcome into the land of Switzerland. It was just about twelve o’clock when we boarded the train for Zurich, and I recognized full well we were in a land wonderful by nature. I soon found it beautifully kept by the artistic hand of man. We hadn’t passed out very far until I noticed the cuts along the railroad and the embankments were perfectly smooth, and roses of the sweetest fragrance were blooming upon their sides. As you pass over that part of the country, you behold the smiling valleys in which various and luscious fruits are growing, beautiful hills on whose sides brown Swiss cattle are feeding, and a land of such attractions as to verify your former impressions regarding it. At fourteen o’clock we entered the city of Zurich which has a population of about 200,000. It lies at the head of a beautiful valley and reaches far up into the hills on the east and south. On the west side is the Zurich Sea, a large body of water on which boats of various types seem busy in carrying on their trade. The appearance of their buildings, stores, dress, and bearings of the people are not especially unlike the city of Nashville. Their speech, however, betrayeth them and we found it difficult to communicate with them. By miracles, wonders, and signs, we managed to exchange some money, buy the few things needed, and purchase our tickets for Milan, Italy, whither we were bound.

I may here say that in these countries, they count the time a little different from us. Such a thing as "A.M. and P.M." is unknown. They begin at midnight, and run straight through for twenty-four hours. There is, therefore, no confusion. The schedule at the station will suggest, for instance, that a certain train is due at "15 :30." In a short time you become accustomed to such and really like it. Our next stop was to be at Milan. I knew full well that south of Zurich we would be amid the towering Alps. We hadn’t gone far until our engine of steam was exchanged for one of electricity, and then we dashed through the country at the rate of, perhaps, thirty or thirty-five miles an hour. Very soon we beheld the snow-clad mountains and gazed upon their lofty summits. We dived through tunnels long and dark and emerged only to behold again those scenes sublime. This was

about the first really great thrill I had experienced thus far on the journey. From one side of the train we could see the top of those mountains kiss the skies, and from the other we could look upon great gorges far below, down which the wild splashing waters were hurrying on toward the sea. If anything had happened, our destiny would have been determined by the way we had been living and the respect we had shown to Jehovah. It is, indeed, a scene sublime to gaze upon those towering mountains whose summits are baptized in the very clouds of heaven, and perpetually clad in snow, and down whose sides volumes of raging waters come leaping and tumbling to depths below. Beautiful mirror lakes, whose waters are as still as a summer's pond, He at the foot of these mountains. Perhaps Switzerland is the most scenic land in all the world. Late in the afternoon we stepped off the train into the city of Milan, Italy, and soon were in the Palace Hotel, which is true in every way to the name it bears. A fine night's rest prepared us for the next day. There are many cars, trolley lines, etc., but the most prominent way of travel in these cities is the old-time carriage drawn by high-stepping horses. The driver, richly clad, assumes an air which makes common Americans realize their inferiority. Milan is a beautiful city, but has no special attractions. We visited their finest cathedral. Of course, it is magnificent. Hundreds of statues are around about it. There are one hundred thirtythree spirea towering high, and on the top of each there is a statue representing some conception of their fancy. We left the city of Milan and journeyed on southward, observing the fields of flowing grain. The silk tree, which here abounds, attracted special attention. Primitive means of cultivation, transportation, and of life itself still prevail in the country districts. For the first time we saw the ox and the ass treading out the grain. Late in the afternoon we emerged from a great tunnel and found ourselves in Genoa on the Mediterranean. We passed that night at the Royal Aquilla Hotel. Splendid accommodations at reasonable costs can be found in all these cities. Just in front of our hotel, there is a fine statue of him who braved the dangers of an unknown sea and gave to humanity a new world. This statue represents the great discoverer under the varied circumstances through which he had to pass. It is an everlasting regret to all Italians that their country refused Columbus the necessary equipment and allowed Spain to share a glory through her illustrious son. Genoa has some interesting places and, having secured a most excellent guide and a splendid means of travel, we toured the old city and tried to live in days forever gone. We were shown the palaces where President Wilson, Lloyd George, the Kaiser, et al., notables had been entertained. The old building where Napoleon one time imprisoned the pope was pointed out. We went into Genoa's university, her magnificent post office, her leading bank, and other prominent and historic buildings. Then we went to the old home of Columbus. This is a small building, about twelve feet wide, something like fifteen feet high, and thirty feet long. It is built of stone, of course, and has but two entrances, one at the front and one at the back. It is now surrounded by a wall on top of which there is an iron picket fence. It is just inside the old wall of the city and close to the gate that leads down to the wharf on the great Mediterranean. I am certain that Columbus slipped away from his father on many occasions and gazed upon those mighty waters with the hope that someday he would sail upon them to distant lands. We then visited the old church of San Lorenzo, one of the most interesting of any seen. It was a pagan temple before the Christian era. There are columns out at the front said to have been brought back from Jerusalem by the Crusaders, and the columns on the interior still have their same old base on which are carved snake heads, bull heads, and various other animals by them worshiped in the days previous to the advent of the Christ upon the earth. We were shown a sacred box in this old chapel, in which are the remains of John the Baptist. This is the church to

which Columbus used to go, and close by was the very spot at which he was baptized. Passing from this, the guide suggested that we must go amid the catacombs of Genoa, the greatest of the world. These are all above the ground and hence the fine view. For more than two and one-half hours we marched along and observed the most wonderful sculptures on earth. These are arranged in long rows, about :.. .', feet wide, arched over at the top and made of the finest marble, in which recesses are made for the burial of those who were able to purchase a place therein. The likeness of the various members of the family is here chiseled out of solid marble, together with some angel representing a peculiar fancy. For instance, if a child in a home dies and is here buried, the father, if able, has the image of the entire family made in one great group. There is the picture of the father and of the mother, the brother and the sister, and of the infant whose body lies just inside the walls. These are so delicately finished and so artistically dressed that, unless you were aware of the fact, you would think that they were clad in the very finest of white silk. Three hundred thousand are here buried. The catacombs form a large square and in the open space, those unable to buy a special vault, He buried. But I must leave Genoa. We boarded a train bound for Rome and down the coast of the Mediterranean; for. more than two hours we passed through ninety-seven tunnels until finally we came out into a great open space where the smiling fields of Italy greeted us on every side. Here we beheld hundreds, yea thousands of acres of the finest wheat that I ever have seen. It looked as if it would yield fifty or seventy-five bushels per acre. The culture of the vine likewise has a prominent part. The people live in splendid houses, so far as their stability is concerned, but they are very simple in structure. In one end lives the family, in another department, separated only by a partition, is the place for the cow, in another close by, the donkey, and then the chickens, and then the place for the wagon. The Italian farmer seems to be well fixed if he has a two-wheel cart and a couple of heifers. Primitive customs prevail. Here, for the first time, we saw the old flail pole in use. Men, with shovel in hand, were separating the wheat from the chaff. People work hard. They have no machinery and, therefore, eke out a miserable existence in the hot sunshine that characterizes that cloudless land. On and on we journeyed, until by and by, toward the setting of the sun, we came to the proud city of Rome. We soon found a good hotel with all necessary conveniences and were located for our four days' stay in this historic city. We had been to no place so interesting and sacred, for here we were to meet with Paul for the first time. I knew the story of Rome's founding in 753 B.C. I reviewed in memory her early struggles, her victories, and her defeats. I called to mind the efforts of old Hannibal and his unsuccessful attempts. The story of Marius, Sulla, Cataline, Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar demanded attention. I thought of the establishment of the empire and its wonderful history for more than four hundred years. During this time the Christ was born and Christianity had a formal recognition. We were really on historic grounds. We were anxious to see Rome as she is and to fancy her as in days of old. We reached there on Saturday night and Sunday morning we decided to attend the services of St. Peter's, the largest and the greatest church in all the wide world. For more than two hours we sat and watched their peculiar service in which, perhaps, fifty or more priests had a part. These were clad in their richest garments of various colors, and attended by servants who do their bidding. The services consisted of singing, praying, reading selections in Latin, burning incense, counting their beads, and eating of the body and drinking of the blood of Christ. After all wee over, they formed in line and marched to the chamber where the bread and fruit of the vine are sacredly kept. In this march boys in front held up a life-size picture of Jesus on the cross. We passed the afternoon at our hotel and wrote a number of letters and cards

to our loved ones and friends back at home. Monday morning we engaged a taxi and a guide and started out to see what we might see. Our first visit was to St. Peter's, not to worship, but to gain a definite idea of this great structure. It occupies the largest square in Rome on the west side of the Tiber. As you enter that square you behold an obelisk one hundred thirty-four feet high, stolen from the dead empire of ancient Egypt. Two walkways, one to the right and the other to the left, circle this square. They are covered galleries supported by immense columns of Ionic style and lead to each end of the great portico of the building. To give you an idea of St. Peter's, it is seven hundred thirty feet long and three hundred eighty-four feet wide. After entering through immense doors, you observe the great porphyry stone, made particularly sacred to them because of the fact that there is where the emperors used to stand when the pope placed upon their brow the crown and thus inducted them into office. Passing on a little bit farther to the right, there is the great big bronze statue of Peter, whom they consider the first pope. There Peter sits with his right foot extended. He holds some keys in his hand, and the crown is upon his head. I looked especially and saw that every sign of the toes from the right foot had been literally kissed away. But when you remember that hundreds and thousands, yea, millions, go annually to visit St. Peter's, and those of that faith think they have missed the trip unless they kiss his foot, you can appreciate the wearing away, even of this great bronze statue. Going on toward the center of that great building, you behold four great square columns, upon which the roof of the building is suspended. That you may have an idea of these big supports, I give you their dimensions. These columns form a square of sixty-six feet, and are more than three stories high. The cross on the top of the dome is four hundred thirty-two feet from the ground—almost as high as the great Washington monument at our national capital. Directly underneath the dome is the sacred sarcophagus of St. Peter, whom the Catholics especially worship. A flight of fine marble steps lead down to it, and you gaze upon this sacred tomb covered with gold and lined with silver. This building is big enough to contain eighty thousand people. There is a life-size statue, yea, more than life size, of every pope and of every emperor that Rome ever has had. There is the burial place in the walls of this great cathedral of all the popes of Rome, and yet half of the space has not been taken. It is said that a general once gave privilege to ten thousand of his men to go and hear mass in St. Peter's. After they had gone, he soon entered and looked round about, but failed to find them. They were in one of its transcripts. I cannot begin to tell you of the immensity, of the grandeur, and of the glory from a worldly point of view of this, the greatest of all church buildings There is a column that is said to have been brought by Titus from the temple of Herod upon the destruction of Jerusalem. There are also columns which, they claim, had formerly been in the temple of Solomon. St. Peter's is big in every respect. But from this I must pass on to another of old Rome's historic buildings. I refer to the Pantheon, which was a pagan temple before the Christian era. It is a vast circular structure whose walls are twenty feet thick. It is entered by a door fourteen feet wide and thirty-two feet high, closed by shutters twelve inches thick. It has not a single opening except the door, and upon the dome. Here is an opening in the form of a circle, thirty-seven feet in diameter. Down through this comes the light, and likewise the rain, but the floor is so arranged that a sewer pipe takes care of the same. Underneath the floor the bones of Raphael, the sculptor and artist repose. In a niche of the wall there He the remains of Italy's great character, Victor Immanuel. But the various decorations have been taken away and now adorn St. Peter's. From the Pantheon we went to climb the sacred stairway. This stairway, according to tradition, was brought from Jerusalem and is the one up which the Savior last walked into the presence of Pontius Pilate. It contains

twenty-eight steps. They had been so worn away that, at present, boards from the cedars of Lebanon cover them. No one is allowed to ascend them only upon bended knees, and as you go up, you are supposed to pray unto the pope of Rome and to kiss the steps that you may receive the greatest blessings. I had learned that "when in Rome we ought to do as the Romans do," and so with my Brother Douthitt, and our guide, a devout Catholic, we bowed down and made ready. Up we went three abreast. Our guide was praying. I could but smile while Douthitt was puffing and sweating. Someone asked: "What kind of a blessing did you receive?" When I reached the top, the only experience I had was an exceedingly silly feeling and a pair of sore knees. Our next visit was to the great Forum Romanum. It lies in the valley between Capitoline and Palatine hills. Here was the great civil and legislative heart of the city in days of old. Here was the palace of the chief pontiff, with its adjoining basilicas; the temple of Vesta, on whose altar burned the sacred flame; the Senate House fronted by the old Rostra, which was about forty feet long, twenty feet wide, and eight feet high. Various temples, among which was the famous one of Castor and Pollus, together with many beautiful marble arches, columns' and statues, once adorned this spot. It now lies in ruins and only a few columns, here and there, tell of the grandeur and glory of the historic past. I stood about where the great Caesar was slain, and where Mark Anthony preached his funeral and read his will in which every citizen had been given ten dollars. At the eastern side or entrance to the Forum stands the Arch of Titus in memory of his destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Underneath this arch, there is a beautiful carving representing the Levites bearing the table of shewbread. It tells in cold marble just the story as told in Exodus. The accuracy of sacred history is confirmed. A gradual incline leads from the Forum up to Palatine hill, from which a fine view of the hills and the entire city may be had. The once famous gardens can still be seen, but the fragrant odor of roses and violets no longer greet you. Interspersed among the ruins on Palatine hill are a number of ruins of isolated mansions, one time surrounded by beautiful gardens. Enough of the palace proper remains to give an idea of its bigness and its beauty. A peculiar feeling came over me as I thought that here once dwelt the old emperors of Rome. From this we went to the prison at the foot of the Capitoline hill, in which tradition says Paul was kept. This prison was built about 4 B.C. I see no reason to doubt its being as tradition suggests. It is a short distance from the Forum, in which courts were held and decisions rendered. It is a prison cut out of the solid stone, circular in form, and originally had only one opening in the center of the floor about two feet in diameter. Through this opening prisoners were let down to a room below, which is also circular in form, the diameter being about twelve feet. Here is a large stone to which the prisoners were chained. A spring comes up through the floor and a sewer carries the water to the Tiber. We entered the upper prison and passed down a stairway into the lower cell. This stairway is more recent. I drank of the spring and imagined the great apostle as there chained. It took more faith than I fear some of us have to say: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." It was here that he said: "The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Otherwise, Paul would have been sent to the arena of the Colosseum. In his hired house, which house was close by, but of which the guide seemed to know nothing, were penned the letters to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Ephesians, and others.

We were quite anxious to follow Paul in his last days, and so, getting in our taxi, we drove out the Ostium Way, a distance of some six or seven miles to another prison, said to be the one in which he was kept the night previous to his execution. Down in the basement of that was a dark dungeon

not big enough for more than one or two men to be kept. About one hundred yards away, we followed with serious thoughts, the path which, tradition says, led to the block of execution. Here we beheld a stone' something like two feet square and possibly a foot high. On top of this was a cylindrical stone about two feet above, making it about three feet from the ground. The top of that was oval, just so as to fit the neck of a human being. Just to the right of this stone or block is a statue of Paul, kneeling. His hands are tied behind him; his head is turned to the left; and his neck is on the block. A soldier stands behind with his left hand on Paul's head, while in his right hand is an immense knife. All is ready to strike the fatal blow. Other soldiers stand guard to see that the atrocious deed is done. As Paul's head was severed and dropped to the ground, it is said by tradition to have bounced twice, and from the very spot where it hit and bounced, three fountains have sprung up. One of them gives forth hot water, another tepid, and the last cold. These had been stopped at the time of our visit, and, upon asking about them, the guide said that by analysis the water was found to be impure, that Christian tourists persisted in drinking of it, and hence, as a matter of protection to health, the fountains were closed. But now, my friends, I have talked to you as long as I should tonight. I must leave you in the city of Rome. From here we will start tomorrow evening, go on down to Naples, visit old Vesuvius, walk amid the ruins of Pompeii, cross the Mediterranean, and tour the land of the Pharaohs, the home of Joseph, and the birthplace of Moses. I hope to be able to entertain you and to give you something worth your while. I thank you indeed, very, very kindly tonight for your attention and for the inspiration your presence gives.

5.18 - LECTURE ON ITALY AND EGYPT

LECTURE ON ITALY AND EGYPT

Ladies and gentlemen, I count myself happy again tonight to be greeted by your presence, indicative as it is, of the interest that you have in these talks that have been promised to be delivered. I am quite mindful of the difficult task that is before me in trying to picture to you in any definite way and attractive manner a subject purely geographical in nature, unaided by any kind of pictures, maps, or views that you may look upon while I thus speak. To the very best of my ability and stripped of all formality, I want, in just as simple a manner as I may be able, to have you accompany me through the remainder of Italy, thence across the Mediterranean, into a discussion of those things observed in the great country of Egypt, and then in the next lecture, as the concluding one, I want you to enter with me the Sinitic Peninsula, go through the land of Palestine and the country of Syria, and then bring these three lectures to a close with profit, I trust, and pleasure to all who heard them. We closed the first lecture while describing things in the great seven-hilled city of Rome, and I told you several things that I witnessed and observed therein. I just want to give you a word or two further about the city of Rome in a brief discussion of one of the greatest relics that is therein left. I refer, of course, to the great Colosseum, which stands out slightly from other parts of the city and thus is more conspicuous to all tourists and passers-by than perhaps any other one thing of the remains of bygone days in this wonderful historic city. The old Colosseum is the greatest structure in the form of an amphitheater and place of entertainment which, so far as I know, ever had been conceived by mortal man. It is an immense structure of arches upon arches, built of brick towering upward to the height of one hundred sixty-five feet. It is in the form of an ellipse, one thousand eight hundred twenty-eight feet in circumference. It has a seating capacity of eighty and seven thousand people, and the arena wherein the public exhibitions and the attractions took place is two hundred eighty-eight feet long and one hundred eighty-three feet wide, and as you stand and gaze upon it you see weeds and flowers growing upon the walls and upon the seats where once a throng of people used to assemble. Vines are hanging from the walls and instead of the fashions characteristic of queens and the first ladies of the land in days gone by, butterflies now fly over the desolation and even the lizard crawls up in the seat of the Roman emperor and there suns himself lazily during the passing of the day. It was in this arena where the greatest brutality and slaughter, in the form of entertainment, was carried on that the world has ever known. In Tennessee and other states of America, when we have prisoners committed to the care of the state, we try to utilize their service and their labors and at the same time inflict upon them the penalty and the punishment for the deeds done, but it was the ambition and glory of Rome when a man committed an offense or was charged with a crime and convicted to punish him by compelling him to play a part out in the public arena in combat with the skilled gladiator or to be turned in upon raging wild beasts lions, tigers, etc., and then fight it out to a finish. I have seen in some book—possibly Mark Twain’s "Innocents Abroad"—a program announcing the attraction of the coming season at the great Colosseum. Some of the most startling events are there pictured that you ever read in all your days, where some twenty wild

African lions are loosed from their respective cages to fight it out unto death with some great prisoner who has been conducted to Rome. And Christians who were charged with various offenses were given only a form of trial and then committed to the great field of the gladiators—the Colosseum of old Rome. It is said by some that not less than seventy thousand followers of the Lord Jesus Christ died on this fatal plot of ground; that just as soon as one dropped dead his body was let down through a trap door into a sewer that led into the Tiber and then out into the great Mediterranean. As we were shown these things, we were filled with a spirit, the like of which rarely ever comes. On one side of the arena was the den where the lions and wild beasts were kept and just opposite it, across the diameter, was the place where Christians breathed forth their last prayer and then marched out to the delight of the audience and to the satisfaction of a bloodthirsty crowd. Sometimes water was poured into this Colosseum and naval battles were fought for amusement of the people. Leaving Rome we took the train southward through the splendid land of smiling Italy and at last came to the great city of Naples which fronts on what is usually thought and declared to be the most beautiful bay in all the wide, wide world. And so far as I know, having seen but very few, I am not ready to deny the claim made for the Bay of Naples. It is bounded on the east and west by towering mountains, while a beautiful valley extends far to the north. Close by is Mount Vesuvius, ever pouring forth an immense volume of smoke. We were very soon conducted to the Metropolitan Hotel and assigned a room just across a broad street from the bay. Having reached there about the middle of the afternoon, we did our best to become somewhat acquainted with our surroundings. We watched the swell dressers, the very best of the city, as they took their afternoon drives along the principal boulevards. They came out, not as you might think, in their fine cars or in their limousines or great sedans, but with the fine coach and high-stepping horses, with the driver perched on a high seat in front. This is the ideal outfit still in Southern Italy as well as other places that we visited. After having spent the night very pleasantly, we arose early the next morning with our plans to visit some of the places most interesting. Having had our breakfast rather early, we got down on the street just in time to see the dairyman coming. As we gazed upon him he had no wagons, no cans of any kind, no bottles, or jugs or any receptacle whatever and not a cow anywhere around, but he was driving about twenty goats. I had read of a thing of that kind, but had never seen it. Filled with curiosity we followed him up the street. After going a block or two the goats turned in at the places where they were accustomed to stand and very soon the dairyman gave a shrill whistle and down from the stories, four and five above, buckets and cans and receptacles of all kinds were lowered to the street. He took his seat upon the wall of the walkway and called by name the respective goats. In perfect harmony with his desire they came to him and instead of milking them on the side, as we do our cows, he backed them up to him and milked them from the rear. The thing that especially attracted my attention was his expertness in the performance of the job. He could take a long-necked bottle and without a single time missing the mark, he would never lose a drop. When all was over, the signal was given and up the line they went again. I could testify that it was not diluted and that they had real genuine milk for their morning meal. Thus it was all through the city. Sometimes you would find small boys or sometimes women, bareheaded, driving a flock of these goats round over the city and delivering the milk right fresh from the fountain head—or rather from the fountain rear. After that, having had arrangements made through Thomas Cook & Son, our bus soon came which we entered and drove to the railway station and took a train out for seven or eight miles. We got off the train and on an electric car at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Up the heights thereof for twenty-five hundred feet

we went on a grade that was about twenty-five degrees. When twenty-five hundred feet had been reached, we changed our electric car for another that was drawn by great steel cables, and then for fifteen hundred feet farther, making four thousand feet in all, we made an ascent of fiftyfive degrees to the top. We were met by guides sufficient for each passenger to have an individual one, and they bade us hold on to them as we started around toward the opening of one of the greatest mountains and volcanoes of all the earth today. We walked up to the margin of the same and gazed over the yawning chasm and I am certain that I cannot picture to you in any appreciable manner just the scenes characteristic of the same. I presume that from where we stood here at the margin of the crater, the cone in the center was something like from three hundred to five hundred feet. I know that the eye is deceptive in measuring distances of that kind. The overflow that has come from the crater and covered the ground was of such a character that I do not know just how to describe it. It seems to be in folds or layers of black lava. The diameter of the opening in the cone is about fifty feet as it appeared. From this there is a constant stream of smoke and ashes pouring forth. Every two or three minutes there is a terrible rumbling which is followed by a blaze rising high above. This continues both day and night and has for hundreds and thousands of years. I failed to learn anything about the fuel supply. We passed down the mountain fifteen hundred feet and had lunch at a good cafe kept for the benefit of tourists. We then descended another twenty-five hundred feet to the base and entered a train for the ruins of old Pompeii which is but a few miles away. This was a city of about twenty-five thousand, as judged by the evidences brought to light. In the year sixty-three of the Christian era it was largely destroyed by an earthquake, but was immediately rebuilt by the Roman emperor. Then on August 23 at the dead hour of midnight, in the year seventy-nine, Pompeii was buried thirty feet by an eruption from old Mount Vesuvius. Thus it lay in seclusion until 1748, at which time it was discovered. Excavations began and have continued until today the whole city can be seen. The old buildings are being strengthened and the pictures on the walls are being retouched. It is wonderfully preserved unto this good day. You enter through one of its ancient gates and walk along the streets and through the deserted houses. You can go through its heathen temples and stand in the old theatre, the outlines of which can be seen. Its magnificent amphitheater reminds you of the great Colosseum of Rome. The wine jars are still in evidence in the numerous wineshops. Deep grooves are worn in the stone-paved streets by the chariot wheels. Evidences of sin and idolatry are visible. The stone-carved signs in front of houses of shame impress you with the exceeding wickedness of the old city. Josephus says that on the night of Pompeii’s destruction Drusilla, who sat beside Felix when he trembled at Paul’s preaching, was there and perished together with her only son by the governor. Most of the relics that were therein found have been brought to the city of Naples and placed in her great museum. There you may study the type and the civilization of days gone by. This museum contains the petrified bodies of men, women, and children. Also a dog with his collar on and the skeletons of horses, cats, and chickens. Many of the relics are not unlike those articles of the present day. Their bracelets, necklaces, and jewelry would adorn some maid of our own age. We had secured passage from Naples on the very best of the Italian liners, the "Esperia," which is a ship about five hundred twenty-five feet long and something like sixty-. three feet wide, well-fitted out in every way. It being a rather dull season of the year, there were only about thirty passengers on board bound for the land of Egypt. There was not much amusement to be had. I remember to have stood on the stern of the vessel and watched the buildings of Naples fade from view and then for a couple of hours or more I gazed upon smoking Vesuvius until it was lost in the

distance. The blue waters of the Mediterranean presented a scene that excelled anything I had ever beheld. I saw the sun weary from his journey across the arched sky rest his huge disc upon the edge of the level ocean, then pillow his head upon her bosom and fall asleep in her tender embrace. I was then reminded of an old, old song and sang it with new understanding—viz., "Twilight Is Stealing Over the Sea." Night fell upon us and we soon retired with gratitude to our God and an earnest prayer for his protection. The next morning we passed the Strait of Messina, on by old Rhegium, and along the shore of Sicily. On our right stood old Mount Etna, eleven thousand feet high, from which a stream of smoke was pouring. A recent eruption had occurred, but quiet had been restored. The east coast of Sicily is bordered with a range of mountains for quite a distance, then it gradually declines until it is about the level of the ocean. We landed at Syracuse a wonderful city of about fifty thousand population. Here Paul once landed and remained for three days. The old site is also the new. To our right lay the island of Melita, at which Paul's company had landed in the long ago and where he remained for three months. Here he kindled the fire and had the venomous beast hang on his hand; the father of Publius was healed and divers miracles were wrought. Farther on and to our left lay the island of Crete, where the apostle wanted to spend the winter, but was forbidden. To Crete he sent Titus to set in order the things wanting and to ordain elders in every city. This island stretched away to the south and east. We next passed Clauda, where the company of Paul undergirded the ship and entered upon their dreadful journey for the next fourteen days, during which time neither the sun nor stars appeared. Our good ship sailed on, and on Monday morning, July 16, 1923, we were in sight of Alexandria. Before landing, Egyptian officers came on board our ship to examine our passports. Very soon we passed out and found ourselves in a new world. As I gazed upon the wonderful throng of people I was certain I never had seen anything to equal it. They clambered round about us in great numbers and almost forced us to give up our baggage. Pandemonium reigned on every hand, but finally we shoved them aside and were able to march into the customhouse. The government officials were clad in tan. The police in the city of Alexandria were in spotless white, while the common people were hardly clad at all. Some had on a loose flowing garment with a girdle around the loins; others a peculiar kind of trousers exceptionally long in the seat, but short in the legs. The stride was therefore quite limited. The women wear the finest gowns their ability will permit. Over this there is a long black cape with bonnet attached. This came across their forehead and in front of their shoulders. A veil of either black or white hangs over the face from about the middle of the nose. This is fastened to the bonnet by means of a clasp of brass about three and one-half inches long. They wear neither stockings nor shoes, but have anklets of brass or silver with bells attached. The Egyptian girl of the best class is neatly dressed and her attire differs not much from our schoolgirls of some years ago. In the country and among the poorer classes their dress is very common and scanty. But for their olive color, many of these Egyptian women brought to America and properly clad would be attractive. The city of Alexandria lies on the beautiful harbor of the Mediterranean. It was builded by Alexander the Great more than three hundred years before Christ. It does not have, so far as I know, much history connected with the Bible, but there you find the old catacombs and in the older parts of the city a monument to old Pompey that is possibly seventy-five or eighty feet high. It was in this city 287 B.C. that the Old Testament was translated out of the original Hebrew into the Greek language that then prevailed, and hence the version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. Tradition says that John Mark wee murdered in the city of Alexandria and his body buried therein, but the people of Venice, Italy, longed to get

possession of his remains. A priest had dreamed that an angel told him until these remains were brought to Venice the city could never rise to high distinction among the nations. Many efforts failed, but finally in the ninth century they succeeded. The historic interest of Venice is therefore largely connected with St. Mark. But just here let me call your attention to the country of Egypt as a whole. It has various names. On the monuments it is called "Kem." In the Old Testament the general name is Misraim. The poetical books of the Bible contain the name "Rohab" and the "Land of Ham." The name Egypt was given by the Greeks. This is a long stretch of country reaching from the Mediterranean on the north to the land of Nubia on the south, and from the Sahara and Libyan deserts on the west to the Red Sea on the east. Its area is one hundred fifteen thousand square miles, but of this more than nine-tenths is an uninhabitable desert. True Egypt, the home of its people, is purely the valley of the Nile, and the territory actually occupied is only about fifty-six hundred miles, or less than the area of Connecticut and Rhode Island. It has always been divided into two sections viz., upper and lower Egypt. These two sections have been regarded as separate and were represented in the double crown worn by their kings. The river Nile is the most important feature of the country. It rises in central Africa, flows north for more than three thousand miles and empties into the great sea. It has but one tributary and yet its current is that of a mighty river. It begins its annual rise about June 25 and continues to rise for three months. It attains a height of thirty-six feet at Old Thebes, twenty-five feet at Cairo, and four feet at its mouth. In about twelve days the waters recede and the country is left richer as a result. A system of canals now takes care of all overflows and the sediments are piled along the canals and from thence hauled into the fields by hundreds of camels and asses. Those people never see any sign of rain, and observing the regular annual overflow they were led to believe that some wonderful spirit must be back of it, and, therefore, bowed down to the river Nile and worshiped it as a very God and benefactor of that region. Primitive ways here prevail as much so as in the days of our Savior. We see them plowing still with their wooden plows, with their Egyptian cows and the long yoke. One man does the driving and another does the plowing. The Egyptian cow which is used as one of the prominent beasts of burden is rather interesting. It is a cross between our cow and the Egyptian buffalo, dark or rather dun color, a rawboned type, with prominent hipbones. The horns come out in the usual place, but instead of going in the usual direction, they run back along the neck right behind the ears for a distance of eight or ten inches and then turn up very prominently. These cows seem to be exceedingly gentle. Little children, girls, and women were handling them in every possible way. When not at work you would find them in the canal with their noses stuck out not unlike that of a hippopotamus. All along the places, as thus we passed for three and one-. half hours, and a distance of one hundred twenty-five miles, we observed their fields of rice, cotton, and wheat extending in distant directions. A large number of pumps force the water over the land and thus the country is made to blossom like the rose. These pumps consist of a large wheel about four feet in diameter to which a number of buckets are attached. The wheel is geared to a lever not unlike that used in our old sorghum mills and to this a cow is hitched. Round and round she goes while the water is conveyed to a thirsty soil. The people live in villages composed of mud houses and these are joined side by side. The houses are about eight feet high, have no floor save the earth, and only one small opening, the door. Cattle, camels, donkeys, sheep, and goats all stay close together and piles of manure are often seen against the house. My faith in the germ theory was almost destroyed. I do not see how it is possible for it to be possible for human beings to live in conditions like unto that. And upon talking to a doctor, I found that the life of the people was quite

short indeed. The Egyptian baby when born is not bathed for forty days, and two out of every three thus born die before they are a month old, and fifty per cent of the others die before they reach maturity. They are married at an early age—anywhere from ten to fourteen years. The girls have absolutely no voice in whom they are to have and they are passed out as a slave of their parents to become the slave of some other man— who, by the way, is at liberty to have as many as four wives, but no Egyptian woman can have more than one husband. Whether or not that be fair, I leave for you to decide. Cairo is the metropolis of all Egypt and of the Arabian world. It has a population of over seven hundred thousand. This was our headquarters during our stay in the land of the Pharaohs. Our first day in Cairo was devoted wholly to the Pyramids of Gizeh. We took an electric car and crossed the Nile on a magnificent bridge; turning to our left we rode up the river for about two miles and then faced the west for about six miles when we found ourselves at the foot of old Cheops, the largest of them all. The pyramids He along the limestone cliff that separates the valley from the desert. This cliff is about one hundred feet above the valley. Old Cheops is the largest and most important and its description, very brief, must suffice for all. Others He along the cliff for some twelve or fifteen miles. Cheops covers thirteen acres of ground and is a square, each side of which is seven hundred sixty-two feet. It is four hundred fifty feet high and has thirty feet gone from the top. It is built of stone from two to four feet thick. This is not of the hardest type as I had supposed, but the stone is of a perishable kind soft and porous in nature. Time was when this pyramid was smoothed over with a fine granite-like cover, but through the passing of the years, all of that outer cover has been removed, and instead of it being smooth still, it is now rough and jagged in its appearance. At the foot are the failings and crumblings of the rocks that have come from same. The great driveway from there to Cairo is said to be macadamized by the fragments that have fallen from the pyramids and enough to make a similar road for a distance of one hundred miles have worn off and yet it stands there in its magnificent grandeur and glory to this day. This is an exceedingly fine point from which to view the country. To the west, and stretching as far as human vision can reach, is the great Libyan Desert with its vast ocean of yellow sand and bare as the palm of your hand. To the east you behold the beautiful green valley of the Nile bounded by the rocky cliff that rises out of the desert and reaches on to the Red Sea. Far away to the north the valley spreads out and embraces the original granary of the world. To the south it becomes narrower until all fades out of sight. Many are the towns, villages, palaces, palm groves, and fields of ripening grain seen in this most fertile and historic section. The entrance to the pyramid is about midway the northern was. The opening is three feet nine inches wide, three feet eleven inches high, and forty-eight feet above the base. With a guide for each tourist and a candle in hand you begin to explore the interior. You may go down a depth of some seventy or eighty feet and be assured you are near the foundation. Then you can pass up narrow ways, and amid the dark scenes until you come to an opening called the queen’s chamber which is about eighteen feet square and has a ceiling practically twenty feet high. There is nothing found in this. From here you may climb still farther and at last come into the king’s department which is about eighteen by thirty-five feet. The guides take special pains to see which one can tell the biggest story regarding the history and use of these chambers and the whole pyramid. One really feels glad when he gets out to the light of day. Just south of old Cheops not more than one hundred yards away is the celebrated sphinx. This one of the marvels and mysteries of all the ages. Its object and purpose never has been determined. There is not the slightest reason for its existence and yet it stands gazing upon the rising sun. It is an image carved out of solid stone with the head of a man and the

body of a lion crouched upon its haunches. From the rock surface on which the forelegs of the lion are stretched out to the top of the man's head is sixty-six feet. Across the face of that image is thirteen feet eight inches. Its mouth is seven feet six inches wide and across the breast it is thirty-seven feet. Around the neck, which is not in proportion to the other, is a distance of sixty-seven feet. That image stands gazing toward the morning sunlight and the features of it form an interesting studio. The evidence is not lacking that once a smile played upon its countenance, which has been somewhat changed by the finger of time. From the back of its head to the tail of the lion is one hundred twenty-three feet. Across the body of the lion is twenty-seven feet, and across the rear haunches fifty-one feet. Just south of the sphinx are the ruins of an old temple unknown to history, or perhaps, to tradition. There are granite columns twelve feet high and four feet square, and as you walk amid the foundation ruins of it you are lost in wonder. It is called the Granite Temple. Here we engaged our camels and mounted them for our first experience along the desert section. Small villages lay along the cliff. Herds of camels were feeding along the valley and interesting places were pointed out. About eleven o'clock, having endured the burning sun of the morning, we came to a fertile spot, an oasis in the desert, and as we rode up to a rude house of mud something like eight or ten feet in diameter, possibly four or four and one-half feet high covered over with a few brushes, eight or ten men and women came out and kindly greeted us. Our camels gracefully knelt and we quite gracefully dismounted. We entered their rude hut and took our seats upon the ground. In the midst of us there was a pile of sun-cooked bread. The cakes were something like fifteen or twenty inches in diameter, but were exceedingly thin. They invited us to partake and, as an experience, I broke off a piece with the feeling that if they could eat it all the time, I can eat it one time. It had but little taste and was pronounced very good. They brought in some good cool watermelons and there we ate of them to our heart's content. After making a photo, we bade them farewell, got on our camels and continued south. By high noon we reached the most elevated spot in all that section of the country and there we came to an old building formerly used by excavating parties. Here we ate our lunch which had been well prepared by our hotel. After lunch, we were to visit the sepulchers of the sacred bulls. Students will recall that the Egyptian worshiped their God Apis under the image of a white bull and one of these was continually kept in the temple of that God. When each bull died, it was carefully embalmed and buried with all the honors of a king. You enter this underground enclosure with candle in hand and pass along an aisle cut out of the solid rock. This is perhaps ten feet wide and twelve feet high with arched ceiling. As you advance, there are chambers on the right and on the left, each about twelve feet wide and fifteen feet deep, with side next to passage entirely open and rock partitions of about three feet thick left between them. These chambers are occupied by the sarcophagi of the bulls, of which there are twenty-three remaining. These sarcophagi are of smoothlypolished granite, on many of which there are elaborate carvings. They are about twelve feet long, eight feet wide, and eight feet high. The walls are about ten inches thick, while the lid is about three feet in thickness. The bulls have been removed and some of them can be seen in the great museum of Cairo. At the end of this long passage there is another that turns square to the left and then another also to the left parallel with the first. In this there are a number of chambers. From this passage you again make a left turn and are back at the old wooden gate through which you entered. After viewing these scenes, we mounted our camels and were soon on our visit to the historic village of Sakkara. From here we hastened to the site of old Memphis. About the only thing found in the city of Memphis that bears the marks of the ancient civilization is the statue of Rameses II, which is

one of the most marvelous pieces of sculpture on the face of the earth. When it was found, it was in mud and water Lying on its face. The best that has been done for it is to lay it in a longitudinal manner, flat on its back, on an immense foundation of stone. This statue is forty feet long and big proportionate thereto. The right leg is cut off just below the knee. There are a number of sphinxes here carved out like the original, but upon a much smaller scale.

Here we bade good-by to our ships of the desert after a pleasant journey of sixteen miles. We took the train back another sixteen miles to the city of Cairo. The nightfall came upon us and found us hungry, weary, and prepared for dreamland. The next day we visited the museum, and in that found every sort of relic and every kind of animal worshiped by the Egyptians in a perfect state of preservation. Mummies of human beings and various animals are abundant. All of the curios of King Tut thus far found have been brought to this museum and one large room is set apart for same. In this collection there are various articles of furniture not so much unlike much of the present day, and other articles characteristic of the centuries gone by. Our last day was spent in visiting the city of Cairo. We went into the old churches and cathedrals and observed some features of their services. We came to an old Greek church and there by the priest were conducted through the reception room and down a flight of stairs, in behind which we were shown the very identical spot where Joseph and Mary brought the young child Jesus and hid him from the wrath of old Herod. Whether true or not, this is a most excellent place to hide. Our next place was the district of the Mosques, on the east side of the city. Here is a fine view not only of Cairo, but of the valley and the pyramids in the distance. We entered the inclosure of one of the finest buildings after having special sandals strapped over our shoes. There is a fountain filled with water, at which all the worshipers wash their faces, hands, and feet before entering the mosque for their regular prayer. The main building is one of the finest I have ever visited. The floor is covered with a beautiful rich carpet and the house is lighted with glittering chandeliers. The interior is finished with genuine alabaster and presents a delicate and variegated appearance. With their faces toward Mecca, Mohammedans repeat their prayers five times each and leave fully persuaded that all is well. I was impressed with their earnestness and sincerity, but know that such feelings are no guarantee of their being right. Our guide reported that there are five hundred fiftyfour mosques in Cairo alone. Leaving the cathedrals and mosques, we next went into the business districts and observed their peculiar ways and customs. The streets are narrow and many of them covered. The stores and shops are only about ten by twelve feet, and the merchant usually sits near the middle of the floor. He can thus reach most of his articles and hand them to the trade. All selling is done by bargaining. Nothing has a definite or fixed price. They usually sell for what they can get. If you do not want an article, it is dangerous to make an offer, however small it may be. We had some rich experiences in a few small deals. I was much amused in seeing them make a trade. Quite a bit of manufacturing goes on, but all is done by hand. Children of eight and ten years old become experts in their various lines. Having thus toured the city, we were ready to depart for the wilderness of wandering. This led us back by train northward and eastward through the land of Goshen—a vast level stretch of country—the richest and best of all Egypt. No special marks are left in this section, but Christians can never forget that here under the burning sun the Israelites served and toiled during their long stay under the iron hand of Pharaoh. From Rameses they at last went forth under the leadership of Moses and crossed the Red Sea, after which they sang the song of deliverance and started for the Promised Land. Our journey brought us to Kantara on the Suez Canal and there I must leave you for tonight. Your presence, patience, and encouragement

are duly appreciated. I thank you.

5.19 - LECTURE ON PALESTINE

LECTURE ON PALESTINE My brethren and friends, I am especially glad to be greeted by your presence at the last of this series of lectures. You have lent inspiration to me while I have tried to retrace the steps of my recent trip and mention to you some of the things observed. I left you last night at the city of Kantara on the Suez Canal. Let us now board the train and travel north and east up the coast of the Mediterranean, by the way of Gaza, and Lydda, and on to Jerusalem, where headquarters will be made at the Grand New Hotel. I recognize the difficulty in presenting the geography of any country without the aid of either map or picture, but, with your patience, I shall do my best. The Promised Land, in the fullest sense, embraced that territory between the "Entrance at Hamath" on the north to the river of Egypt and Mount Hor on the south, and from the Mediterranean on the west to the Euphrates on the east. This included a vast section of country which was never occupied by the children of Israel except a brief time under David and Solomon. That land wherein they dwelt, and which is properly called the Holy Land, extended from Dan to Beer-sheba and from the Mediterranean on the west to the great Syrian Desert on the east. It lies between latitudes thirty-one and one-half degrees to thirty-three and one-half degrees north and from north to south is about one hundred forty miles, while from west to east it is about seventy-five miles. Palestine proper embraces only that part of the country west of the river Jordan and a narrow strip on the east, loosely called Gilead. It contains only about sixty-five hundred square miles. This land has six natural or physical divisions, and, to a student, each demands special mention and description. Let us imagine ourselves standing on the southern border and fancy the whole of Palestine spread out before us. The first division to our bit is the Maritime Plain. This lies along the coast of the Mediterranean for the entire length of the country, and is broken only by Mount Carmel, north of which it is quite narrow. South of Mount Carmel, it varies in width from about four to sixteen miles, and is ninety miles long. It has two main divisions—viz., the Plain of Sharon stretching from Mount Carmel south a distance of fifty miles, and then, still farther south, is the Plain of the Philistines, about forty miles in length. The whole has an undulating surface, of low hillocks of sandy soil, from one hundred to two hundred feet above the sea level, and very fertile. The cities of Joppa and Lydda, and the five principal ones of Philistia—viz., Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath He in this maritime plain. The second division of the country is called the Shefelah or the foothills. These extend along the east margin of the plain, and form a terrace about five hundred feet above the sea level. Passing on eastward, we reach the third division known as the mountain section or backbone of the land. In the extreme south there appears the Negeb or "South Country." This is a gradual slope from the Arabian Desert and consists of a series of hills south of Hebron. North of here sets in the "Hill Country" of Judea and Samaria with an elevation of about twenty-five hundred feet. The highest point in Palestine is three miles north of Hebron and is three thousand two hundred twenty-five feet. Bethlehem is two thousand nine hundred feet, Jerusalem is twenty-five hundred feet, and north of here is a gentle decline until you reach Mount Gerazim and Mount Ebal, which tower almost three thousand feet above the Mediterranean. The mountains in Galilee are about eighteen hundred feet high. They increase toward the north until the country of Syria is entered. The fourth physical feature is the

Plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, Lying between Samaria and Galilee. This is triangular in shape and stretches from Mount Carmel to the southeast about twenty-five miles to Engannim or Jenin; thence it runs by Mount Gilboa northwest of Mount Tabor, about fourteen miles; and from there back to Mount Carmel, a distance of six-teen miles. This is one of the richest plains in all the world. It is watered by the river Kishon. The next division is the valley of the Jordan. This is a great depression from the foot of Mount Hermon, southward to the Dead Sea. The valley at the north is narrow, but down about the Sea of Galilee it widens to a distance of from two to eight miles, and at the ruins of old Jericho, it is about fourteen miles wide. The eastern tableland is a lofty plateau east of the Jordan. The mountains here rise higher than those on the west, and from their summits a plain stretches away toward the great Syrian desert. Thus have I gone over the physical features of the land, and I hope you may have in mind a fair picture of this most wonderful and sacred country. The climate of Palestine is about like that of our own Southern Dixie land. A line running west from Jerusalem would go through Savannah, Georgia; Montgomery, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; and on to San Diego, California. The average temperature is seventy-six degrees. It has but two seasons— viz., a wet, lasting from November to April, and a dry, from April to November. The annual rainfall is about forty-eight inches. The principal trees observed are the Syrian oak, the sycamore, and the carob tree, from which a large pod or bean grows. These were fed to the swine and on them the prodigal son was feasting when he first came to himself. The country abounds in olive trees, which grow on the hillsides, in the valleys, and upon the plains. Luxuriant grapes, figs, pomegranates, etc., are seen most everywhere, while oranges, lemons, and bananas flourish around Joppa and in the plain of Jericho. The camel, ass, and ox are the main beasts of burden. Occasionally you see a horse or a mule doing service. The sheep are of the Syrian type and are characterized by their exceeding large tails. The goats must be direct descendants of the kind owned by Jacob. They are black, spotted, and striped. But few wild animals now are found. Most excellent roads have been built over the main parts of this country. From Hebron on the south, a splendid highway leads north through the mountain region via Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Bethel, Schechem, Jenin, Nazareth, Tiberias, and on to Damascus. Another leads from here on over the Anti-Lebanon and Lebanon Mountains to Beyrout; thence down the Mediterranean to Haifa or Mount Carmel, and back east to Nazareth. There is also a fine road from Joppa east by the way of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, Jericho, and the Jordan valley. A railroad runs from Kantara on the Suez Canal to old Lydda, and on north to Haifa, thence to Tiberias. Another goes to Damascus. From Lydda a branch line runs south and east and terminates at Jerusalem. A modern automobile can be found in most any town and hence travel is easy and rapid. The general characteristics are before you and I now want you to go with me and retrace the ground over which I passed. Jerusalem is our first study. I pause a moment to review its history because the history of Jerusalem is the history of Palestine and its people. The first mention of the city is in connection with the story of Melchisedek, who was king of Salem. It was afterwards known as Jerusalem because inhabited by the old Jebusites. In about 1045 B.C. it was occupied by David, the b was changed to r and hence the present name "Jerusalem." The city was rebuilt by David and became the capital of the land. It was beautified by Solomon, and during his reign was the most attractive spot on earth. From the death of Solomon, its history was varied according to the character of the king in power. In 587 B.C. Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the temple was torn down, and the best of the people carried to Babylon. Palestine was therefore under this eastern monarchy until 536, when it passed under the control of

the Medo-Persian government. In 330 Alexander the Great gained dominion over all the world and Palestine became subject to the southern division of his government. Under old Antiochus Epiphanes, in 174 B.C., the Maccabean princes rebelled and carried on war for their independence for more than one hundred years, when at last, Jerusalem passed under the control of the city of Rome. Again the Jews rebelled in the year A.D. 65, and their temple, rebuilt first by Zerubbabel and Ezra, and later enlarged by Herod the Great, together with all the city, was destroyed by Titus in the year A.D. 70. Under the emperor Hadrian, a temple, dedicated to Jupiter, was built on the very spot where once stood the Solomonic. He changed the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina. During the reign of Constantine the old name was restored and believers in Christ held possession until 637, when old Caliph Omar entered the city and made it surrender to Mohammedan authority. Thus it continued unmolested until 1099, when the crusaders made seven unsuccessful attempts to gain and hold Jerusalem as their own. In 1517 Palestine passed under the control of the Ottomans and so remained until during the World War, when General Allenby entered and took possession for the United Kingdom. That country is, therefore, today under the protectorate of Great Britain. Jerusalem is situated on four hills. On the south and west is Mount Zion and just north is the hill of Acra. Passing over a valley, there is Mount Moriah on the south and east and Bezetha to the north. It stands in north latitude thirtyone degrees, forty-six minutes, forty-five seconds, and longitude thirty-five degrees, thirteen minutes, twenty-five seconds. The general elevation is about twenty-five hundred feet above the sea level. I next call attention to some important valleys. Let us imagine ourselves standing west of the city about a mile. We are at the head of the valley of Hinnom. It runs east until it gets within about one hundred yards of the Joppa gate. It then turns south and east again around the south wall of the city and passes on to the southeast. Now just north of the city another valley starts and runs south. It enters the wall at the Damascus gate, and passes between the hills of the city joining the Hinnom or Gishon at the southeast. This is the Tyropeon valley. Starting again, a little farther north of the city, a valley leads toward the east, and then curves around the northeast part of the wall; thence turns south and joins the other two at En Rogel in the southeast. These form a large valley leading on toward the Jordan. Thus Jerusalem is situated upon the hills and surrounded by valleys. It, therefore, has a natural defense against the enemy. This city is surrounded also by a rock wall about nine feet thick and, on an average, about forty feet high. It is two and one-half miles around. There are four or five principal gates—viz., Joppa on the west; Damascus and Herod’s on the north; St. Stephen’s and the Beautiful (now closed) on the east; and the Dung gate and David’s on the south and southwest. The two main streets of the city are David and Temple running through the city from west to east, and Damascus from north to south. These divide the city into four quarters as follows: The Armenians occupy the southwest; the Catholics and other believers in Christ, the northwest; the Jews in the southeast; and the Mohammedans, the northeast. The streets can hardly be said to be paved at all; yet they are covered with stones and rocks of all sizes and shapes imbedded in the earth. They may be well described by saying they are short, narrow, crooked, dark, and filthy. They were intended only for footmen and beasts of burden, hence no vehicles are allowed to enter farther than the Grand New Hotel just east of the Joppa gate. A number of the streets are arched overhead and have somewhat the appearance of a gloomy tunnel. They are so narrow that when a caravan of loaded camels are passing, one man must go in advance and prepare the way. In the shops along the way, the merchant usually sits on the floor, from which place he can reach most of his goods. The prices vary for all articles

according to the buyer and his knowledge. Among the articles carried are: assortments of spices, incense, gum, sacred relics in ivory, pearl and olivewood, besides pictures of saints, angels, and devils. There are many places of interest within the city, but only a few will I mention, lest too much time is here consumed. Just inside the Joppa gate stands the Tower of David. This is a group of five towers from which observations may be made and within which there is reasonable safety. A moat, about thirty feet wide, serves as a defense to these towers. Just south of this tower, also on Mount Zion, is the chapel of St. James, because here is the traditional place of his beheading and of Peter's imprisonment. On farther south, just outside the wall, is the palace of old Caiphas and the upper room in which the last supper was prepared. The old building answers every demand of the Scriptures, and as you enter, a strange and sacred feeling comes through your soul. The palace of Governor Pilate, his judgment had, and the tower of Antonia are in the upper eastern part of the city. The ruins are visible and the evidence is not lacking to identify this spot as the original. Here the Catholics assemble every Friday afternoon at three o'clock and begin their sacred march along the street via Dolorosa to the place of the crucifixion. Brother Douthitt and I joined them and followed a procession, the most serious in all my experience. In fancy I saw the Savior condemned by Pilate and then led away. We were moving along the path in which he was forced to go. Our procession stopped at the traditional stations—fourteen in number—and finally we entered the church of the Holy Sepulcher, wherein he was crucified and buried. This church was first erected, at the command of Constantine, by his aged mother Helena, in the year 325. It was destroyed by the Persians in 614 and rebuilt sixteen years later on the original foundation. It was again destroyed in 1048 and, during the period of the crusades, was rebuilt and changed by several additions. The present structure dates from 1810, and is a collection of chapels about three hundred fifty feet long by two hundred eighty feet wide. We entered this magnificent building and turned to the right up a few steps and there beheld a stone with a socket lined with silver. Here the cross rested. About five feet on either side are the sockets for the crosses on which the thieves were crucified. From here we passed into the rotunda and under the dome of the big building and entered the sepulcher proper. This is a small structure about twentyseven feet long, sixteen feet wide, and twelve feet high. It is built of white marble and is handsomely carved and beautifully decorated. It is surmounted by a crown-shaped cupola. A number of silver candlesticks adorn the front. This has two small chambers—the first called the "chapel of the angels," and said to be the place where the angel sat after he had rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher. Through this we pass by a very low door and enter the real burying place of our Lord. The vault is about seven feet square. The tomb—a raised couch, covered with a slab of white marble occupies the whole of the right side. Over it hang about forty lamps of gold and silver kept constantly burning. The weekly pilgrims here come in succession, crawling on bended knees, and put their lips, forehead, and cheek on this cold marble, bathe it with their tears, and then drag themselves away backwards until the threshold is again crossed. The vault is said to be hewn out of the rock, but not a vestige of rock is now visible. The floor, tomb, and walls are of marble. From the church, we passed through narrow crooked streets and came to the west wall of the Haram, the Jews' place of wailing. Every Friday from four-thirty to six o'clock P.M. men, women, and children of all ages, and from all nations come to weep, wail, and mourn over their fallen temple, whose very dust is dear to them, and in whose stones they take pleasure. In all my days I have never evidenced such a sight. Old men, pale, haggard, and careworn were there. Old women, young women, boys, and girls had gathered from every quarter. Some were on their knees chanting

mournfully from a book of Hebrew prayers, swaying their bodies to and fro; some were prostrate on the ground, with foreheads and lips pressed to the earth; some were against the walls burying their faces in the cracks of the stones; some were kissing them and bathing them with tears that freely flowed. Nineteen centuries have passed, but their affections have not been dulled nor their national devotion deadened. They are weeping over the destruction of their temple, the falling and passing of their kings, and are begging for the return of national glory. In the southeast section of the city the temple once stood as the pride of the Jew. This was on Mount Moriah and occupied the field David once bought from Oman. It is surrounded by walls and embraces about thirty-five acres. Mount Moriah was a very long, narrow, sharp ridge, but Solomon made it level and a fit place for the greatest of all buildings. To do this he erected a number of large columns of thirteen rows and arched over their tops with masonry. He then had to fill only a few feet of earth on top. This great space underneath the southeast corner was once thought to be Solomon’s stables their true purpose being unknown. The mosque of Omar now occupies the temple site. This is an octagonal building, each side of which is sixty-seven feet. The sides are forty-six feet high, and are encased with marble, on top of which there are rich porcelain tiles. On this there is the base of the dome, also octagonal, each side of which is twenty-six feet high. Then comes the dome itself, sixty-five feet in diameter and ninety-eight feet high. From the golden crescent at the apex to the ground is, therefore, one hundred seventy feet. This mosque surrounds the sacred rock which, according to the Jews, is where Abram offered Isaac, and where the brazen altar of the temple stood. The rock is about forty-five feet long and thirty feet wide, and about six feet high. It is surrounded by a picket fence, and no one is allowed to stand upon it or do more than simply view it. Underneath is the "Noble Cave," into which you can pass and observe an opening from above and discover that a hollow space is below. In the southeast corner of the temple inclosure is the mosque El Arsa, which I pass without an effort to describe. I must leave Jerusalem and call attention to near-by places of interest. Passing east out of St. Stephen’s gate we rapidly descend the Kedron valley, cross it on a stone bridge and enter the Garden of Gethsemane, which is a small plot of ground now surrounded by a wall. A few old olive trees still stand and a guide points out the exact spot where our Savior prayed, where Peter, James, and John were heavy with sleep, and where that cowardly crowd, led by Judas, arrested him. Here we rested and reviewed the sacred scenes of bygone days. Just north of the garden and down a series of steps is the traditional burial place of Mary, the mother of Christ. From here we began our ascent of the Mount of Olives and tried to remember the various incidents connected with it.

Over this the Savior had passed so many times. It was from the summit at Bethphage that he rode into the city on the colt of an ass. From here he looked over the doomed city and wept, saying: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." From here he kissed his disciples good-by and was received out of their sight. Truly the Mount of Olives is sacred. We went on over its crest and descended upon the village of Bethany at its foot. This is a small town shut out from the rest of the world. The wilderness appears in front and the Mount of Olives rises close behind The road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho passes, and this is the way Jesus often went. Of course, we wanted to see the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and soon found ourselves amid the old ruins of a two-room building. I could see no reason why this should not be the real place. At least every purpose is here served. We next went to the tomb from which Jesus called

Lazarus from the dead. We descended into the cave by twenty-six steps cut in the solid rock. There is nothing special about the tomb. It is a simple vault with rough hewn walls, and is about six feet square and six feet high. This is Bethany's interesting spot; I thought of the story told in John 11:1-57 and the wonderful faith as expressed by Martha and Mary. The power of God's word was here demonstrated, and Lazarus, though dead four days, heard that word and came forth. The hope of the great resurrection depends upon that same word. By it the worlds were framed; by the word of God, the tempest was stilled and the sea was calmed; by it all things are upheld; and by it all that are in their graves shall come forth. God's word is quick and full of power, and by it we shall one day cry out: "O grave, where is thy victory, O death, where is thy sting?"

Leaving Bethany, we came back to the valley of Kedron and observed the tombs of Absalom, Zachariah, and James, and then farther down the valley the pool of Siloam. We engaged a guide and a Buick car and started early one morning to the Dead Sea, the Jordan, Gilgal, and Jericho. These places are about twenty miles from Jerusalem and the road leads via the Apostles' Fount, the Samaritan Inn, and on down to the valley. We escaped the experience of the man who fell among thieves, and having crossed the wilderness of Judea were soon on the shore of the Dead Sea. The valley here is about eight miles wide. There are a few thorn bushes and other shrubs and the soil, of a rather soapstone nature, was covered with salt, making it appear like a white frost in our October. We had often read of the Dead Sea and now saw it from its northern shore. It is forty-seven miles long, ten miles wide, and thirteen hundred feet deep in some places. It is the lowest lying body of water in the world. It is perfectly clear, colorless, and odorless, but has a bitter taste. Its specific gravity is about one and twenty-five hundredths and the surface is therefore undisturbed by the ordinary winds. We went in bathing and found it easy to He or to sit upon its surface. The only difficulty in swimming is that your feet are opposed to staying under the water. From here we ascended the Jordan and stopped to take a boat ride on its waters, to go in bathing, and to reflect upon its sacred associations. Here D. L. Ennis, a Methodist preacher of Frostburg, Maryland, immersed Jonathan Sleeman, one of his members, also of the same town. On up the valley we went, passing the site of old Gilgal, now marked by an evergreen tree, and came to old Jericho. We stood amid the ruins and saw evidences of the walls, around which Joshua walked, and on which Rahab lived. Near by is Elisha's Fountain, from which a good stream flows, watering a section of the valley and turning it into a beautiful garden of finest fruits. Back of Jericho is the traditional mountain, where the scene of the first temptation occurred. From Jericho we turned toward Jerusalem, crossed the brook Cherith and viewed the cave where Elijah was fed by the ravens. Time forbids a rehearsal of the many things that are associated with these historic places. Our next drive was from Jerusalem south to Hebron. This led us along the way traveled by Abraham and Lot, Jacob and his family, and later, by Joseph and Mary, and the wise men from the east. The city of David is six miles from Jerusalem and just before you enter, you observe to the right of the road the tomb of Rachel and call to mind the birth of Benjamin and Jacob's return to Canaan. To this the Jews make annual pilgrimages and pray over the remains of this mother of Israel. From the tomb we soon enter Bethlehem. The streets are narrow and rough. The houses are low and poorly kept. Most all the population are employed in making olive wood relics, pearl beads, crosses, buckles, and almost anything a tourist might buy as a souvenir. It is a Catholic town and the cross is everywhere prominent. After visiting some of the shops, we entered the church of the nativity built by Helena in 327. It was partially destroyed by the Moslems in 1236 and rebuilt by the Crusaders. The church is in the form of a cross, and is supported by fortyeight

beautiful Corinthian columns of solid granite, three feet in diameter, and seventeen feet high. The main chapel claims to be the original stable of the nativity. It is about thirty-five feet long, ten feet wide, and six feet high. The whole building is handsomely decorated according to Catholic conception and, on the marble floor, is a large star at the exact spot where Jesus was born. The manger is about five feet long, two feet wide, and ten inches deep. In this a large doll lies, representing the infant of Mary. In another room you are shown the tomb of St. Jerome, the Roman matron, Paula, and the vault into which the children slaughtered by the order of Herod were deposited. Other sacred scenes cluster around Bethlehem. Here David was born and spent his youth as a shepherd. Here he remained until called to be king over Israel. Just east of the village is the beautiful valley owned by Boaz, in which Naomi and Ruth gleaned the fields and where one of the sweetest love stories has its setting. From Bethlehem one mile south, we stopped at Solomon’s Pools, three in number. These He in a valley and are fed by perennial springs. They cover an aggregate of about six acres and average about thirty-five feet deep. The water is pumped to Jerusalem and hence that city’s principal supply. These pools are among the best authenticated remains of antiquity in the Holy Land, and are remarkable for their construction and durability, having been in use about three thousand years, and yet, with but few breaks in the wall, they are in fine condition. Solomon said: “I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." On our way south we went passing through a country rich in the production of wheat and grapes. No houses are seen for some distance. Isolated farm houses are never seen in Palestine. The people live in towns and villages, which are enclosed by stone walls. Just north of Hebron, we entered the valley of Eschol, where the Hebrew spies carried away, upon a staff between two men, a branch with one cluster of grapes. Of this land they said: "Surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." The entire country is rich, and the hillsides are terraced and covered with vineyards, olive, figs, and other kinds of fruit. We were in this section just as the grapes were getting ripe and it is not an exaggeration to say we saw many bunches from fifteen to twenty inches long. They are of the very finest flavor. Before entering Hebron, you look out to the right and observe the plain of Mamre and the great Syrian tree called Abraham’s oak. This is a stately old tree with branches stretching in every direction about forty or forty-five feet. Tradition claims it to be the original, but no one can accept that idea. It doubtless stands near the same spot where Abraham entertained his angel friends and where the divine promise was received. On entering Hebron twenty miles south of Jerusalem we were reminded that we were in one of the oldest towns in the world. It was originally called Kirjeth-Arba, then Mamre, and still later Hebron. The Arabs call it El Khulil, the friend of God. This is due to Abraham having lived here and being recognized as the friend of Jehovah. It is now a town of about ten thousand, composed of Arabs, Turks, and Jews. Scarcely a family which believes in Christ there dwells. It lies in a valley and has narrow, crooked, dirty streets. The homes are about as poor as you will find in any part of the country. The men and women dress very much alike. The women paint and tattoo their faces, eyebrows, teeth, hands, and nails of both fingers and toes. They are fond of jewelry and wear rings, bracelets, and anklets. They go barefooted, but cover their faces. The chief industry is the manufacture of coarse goods made of wool and camel’s hair, and the dressing of the skins to be used as bags for water, wine, churning, and other liquids. The most interesting place in this old city is the "cave of Machpelah," which Abraham bought from the Hittites for a burial ground. Sacred are the memories that cluster here. Abraham and Sarah had

traveled together for about sixty years since they left their old home in Ur of Chaldea. Their trials had been many. Strangers in a strange land they had wandered and yet they had grown "rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." The child of promise was now about forty years old, and, in their own land, they were peacefully dwelling when death called the mother and faithful wife to the other shore. At the age of one hundred twenty-seven, Sarah died, and Abraham wanted to bury her out of his sight, hence the purchase of this cave. Here also He the remains of Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. The cave is surrounded by a Mohammedan harem, one hundred twelve feet by one hundred ninety-eight feet, erected in the name of God, yet its keepers rejected the Christ and accept Mohammed, the impostor, in his stead. The mosque is about seventy-five feet long and fifty feet wide. It is reached by a broad stone stairway, going up a gentle incline. Christians and Jews may go only to the entrance. What a shame that those places most sacred to the followers of Christ are kept and guarded by the enemies of our Christian religion! We longed to gaze upon the tombs of the old patriarchs, but the Moslem forbids. Hebron is also to be remembered from the fact that here Abraham looked toward the east and saw the smoke rise from Sodom and Gomorrah at the time of their destruction. Here Isaac died at the age of one hundred eighty. From here Joseph was sent to visit his brethren in Shechem, sixty miles north. From here Jacob sent his sons into Egypt to buy corn. Here David reigned over Judah seven and one-half years. Many other things here occurred, but I must leave and return to Jerusalem for a visit to other sections. With ample arrangements made, we left the capital and started north on an extended journey. We had a good Buick car, a fine driver, and an experienced guide, Mr. A. M. Shammas. Our first stop was at old Nob, whose history I pass. We then came to Bethel and finally on to Shechem, a distance of forty miles from Jerusalem. Our trip was along the backbone of the mountains, and beautiful valleys covered in grapes, olives, and figs met our vision on every side. Many small villages He along the road and scenes both sacred and interesting are observed. Just before Shechem is reached we come to old Mount Gerazim and Mount Ebal, east of which lies the beautiful valley which Jacob "bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph." Here we stopped and found fifteen or sixteen flocks of sheep and goats. We asked our guide to have the shepherds come together and thoroughly mix their flocks and then each lead off in verification of our Savior’s statement in John 10. This was done to our complete satisfaction. Jacob’s well is here, and to it we went. A Catholic chapel now covers it and, of course, a fee must be paid to enjoy the privilege of seeing it. This old well is still covered by a stone about five feet long, three feet wide, and two feet high. Upon this stone I was glad to sit and think of Jesus who one time, tired and weary, here sat. The well is one hundred feet deep and, after a few feet from the top, it is about nine feet in diameter. An old-fashioned windlass and bucket is used. We drank of its waters and then lowered some candles to view it from top to bottom. I only mention the fact that here Jesus taught the woman of Samaria regarding the living water and the true worship of God. Just about four hundred yards to the north, at the foot of Mount Ebal, is Joseph’s tomb. According to a pledge, taken from his brethren in Egypt, his bones were brought and here buried. At Shechem, now Nablus, we saw an old, old scroll of the Decalogue and a few other ancient scenes. Our next stop was at Jenin. This is the last village of Samaria, and we now enter the beautiful and historic valley or plain of Esdraelon already described. This is, perhaps, the greatest battleground in a]] the world. The armies from the north observed the invading hosts from Mount Tabor, while those from the south could behold the enemy from Mount Gilboa. It was here that the forces of Deborah and Barak met

the armies of Jabin, under Sisera, and defeated them. "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." A tremendous storm of rain, hail, and thunder from the east burst upon the battlefield. The plain became a marsh; the Kishon rose rapidly and that ancient river swept the enemy away. It was here that Josiah, king of Judah, opposed PharaohNecho, who was marching against Assyria. He warned Josiah in a friendly way, saying: "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not." Josiah neglected the warning and rushed into battle. An archer gave him the fatal blow, and thus the good king of Judah fell, the only one that ever died in battle. Leading off toward the east from this plain is the scene of Gideon's victory over the Midianites. The vineyard of Naboth and the story of Ahab and Jezebel are here brought to mind. On Mount Gilboa, Saul, his three sons and armor-bearer fell. Such are some of the things of interest that here transpired. In this plain and at the foot of the mountains are the villages of Endor, where Saul had an interview with the witch; Nain, where the widow's son was raised; Shunem, where the woman whose son was also raised dwelt. This plain is crossed and we enter the hills of Galilee with Nazareth, built upon the mountainside in full view. We lunched at the Hotel Galilee, and, of course, visited the old home of Mary and Joseph, the carpenter's shop, and the virgin's fount. On we passed by Cana, where the first miracle was wrought, by Kurin Hattin, the mount on which the great sermon was preached, the plain wherein the multitude was fed, and came down to Tiberias on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Here we spent the night at a hotel, kept by a German widow. After a good dinner, we walked down to the water and watched the women carrying their night's supply. This they do with bottles and jars after the original custom. We entered a small boat and rode out upon those waters made sacred by our Lord. The moon was high in the heavens, and it was a fine time for reflections. I thought of the call of the disciples, the walking upon the waters, the draught of fishes, and the many parables, and miracles here spoken and performed. The night there spent will not be forgotten. From here we went on our journey to old Damascus. This led us by the ruins of Chorazim, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and on up the valley to the waters of Merom, just below which we crossed the Jordan. We had beheld this historic stream at four different points and now I pause to say more about it. It is the most interesting river in all the world; not because it is the longest, widest, or deepest, but because of its association with such wonderful events. It has three sources—viz., at Hasbeiya on Mount Hermon, at Dan, and at Banias near Caesarea Philippi. For convenience, it is divided into three sections—from Hasbeiya to Lake Merom, about forty miles; from entrance into Merom to the Sea of Galilee, fifteen miles; from the northern end of that lake to the Dead Sea, seventy-nine miles—making the direct length one hundred thirty-four miles. It runs in its course to every point of the compass and its channel is two hundred miles. It rises seventeen hundred feet above the sea level and empties into the Dead Sea thirteen hundred feet below. Thus it falls three thousand feet or an average of twenty-two feet to the mile. Sometimes it runs on very slight decline and is, therefore, quiet and fordable. Between the waters of Merom and the Sea of Galilee it falls, for about eight miles, eighty-five feet to the mile. It varies in width from eighty to one hundred eighty feet and in depth from five to twelve feet. The Jordan has been more or less connected with the events of sacred history from the patriarchs to the apostles. Its banks have been the scene of the most stupendous miracles, judgment, power, and love ever witnessed on earth. When the fire of heaven had burned up Sodom's guilty cities and polluted plain, the waters of the Jordan rolled over them and buried them forever from the face

of man. Thrice was the swollen torrent stayed and its channel divided to let God's people and prophets pass over dry shod. Once, at the bidding of the man of God, the iron ax rose buoyant and floated upon its surface. Here the captain of the host of Syria was cleansed. Greater than these are the miracles wrought by our Savior round about the Jordan. In it he was baptized, and on its stormy banks, God acknowledged him as his beloved San. The storm-tossed billows on Galilee heard his voice, and upon the bosom of the water, he quietly walked. Sacred are the scenes and memories of this historic stream. From Jordan, we entered the great Syrian plain. Our road led us by the ruins of old Caesarea Philippi and along the side of Mount Hermon capped in snow. On and on we journeyed, passing flocks and herds of sheep, goats, and camels, in which there were thousands. Villages were observed and Syrian soldiers were beheld. About three P.M. we looked into the far distance and saw Damascus, the oldest city in the world. It is standing on the banks of the Abana and was in existence when Abraham crossed the desert on his long journey from Ur to Canaan. It has passed through many hands. Not less than twelve times has it been pillaged and burned; yet it has always risen with new beauty and greater glory. We remained in this city two nights and a day and walked along its streets, into its industries, and reviewed the sacred stories connected with its history. We had traveled over the same road as did Paul in the long ago. In fancy, we saw the great light and heard the voice of the Son of God directing him into this city where "it shall be told thee what thou must do." We entered into the street called Straight and heard Ananias at God's command bid him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." We saw the very spot where he was let down in a basket over the wall. From here he went into Arabia and preached the faith he had determined to destroy. Leaving Damascus, we crossed the Anti-Lebanon Mountain and visited the town of old Baalbek. Here we walked amid the ruins of the greatest temples of earth, dedicated to the gods and goddesses of ancient Rome. Our way thence led across the Lebanon Mountain, beyond which lay the city of Beyrout on the Mediterranean. The scenery all along was beautiful and rich in its relation to Bible history. From Beyrout, we passed down the coast by old Tyre and Sidon and on to Mount Carmel so prominently connected with the history of Elijah. We entered the cave where he was wont to dwell and observed the places where many incidents occurred. The way now leads east to Nazareth and here we began to retrace our journey on to Jerusalem. The half has hardly been told, but we must come home. Bidding farewell to the hills of Zion and Moriah, we came again to Alexandria, boarded the steamship "Famaka" and hastened to Piraeus, the seaport at Athens. Quite soon we were in that classic and historic city. Here we climbed the Acropolis, walked amid the ruins of the Parthenon, and ascended the old steps that lead to Mar's Hill. Here we lingered for a time with Paul, reasoned with the ancient philosophers, heard addresses by old Demosthenes and preached Paul's sermon in Acts 17:1-34. We secured passage on the old steamer "Katarina" and began our voyage to Marseilles, France. This led us through the Gulf of Corinth, the Straits of Messina and Bonifacio which last separates Corsica and Sardina. We boarded the train at Marseilles and traveled north through France to Calais; thence across the English Channel to Dover and to London. After tarrying one day here, Brother Douthitt took passage on the steamship "President Polk" and came home. It is hardly necessary to try to tell you how I felt when left beyond the Atlantic, where not a soul was known. I made the best of the situation, visited the scenes of London and southern England for ten days, recrossed the channel and went to Belgium; thence through Holland to Amsterdam, and from there to Berlin. Time forbids an account of these tours. I returned to Southampton and crossed the Atlantic on the Holland-American ship, the

Veendam. I spent Sunday in New York, where I met with the brethren and spoke at eleven o’clock. In the afternoon I came to Washington and spoke for Brother Larimore at the night service. I reached home two days later and found that those nearest and dearest had been well and blessed by him who ever careth for us. I must thank you again and again for your presence and for your encouragement and interest in these reviews.

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