

**HARDEMAN' S TABERNACLE
SERMONS**

VOLUME II

A Series of Twenty-three Sermons Delivered in the
Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tenn.,

April 1 to April 22, 1923

By

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HENDERSON, TENN.

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GOSPEL ADVOCATE

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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.

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

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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 Creek 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 most 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 depart-

ment 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 baptistry 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 note, 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 sold 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 seek 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 as 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 dowry 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 suc-

cessful 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 finally 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 find 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 sides 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 say 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 he 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.

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 of Christ."

L. L. BRIGANCE.

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-

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 be 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 he 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

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---viz: 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.

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 taken 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.

HARDEMAN'S TABERNACLE SERMONS

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 Archbishop 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 num-

ber 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 Beersheba; 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) Beerlahai-roi, (2) Gerar, (3) Rehoboth, and (4) Beersheba, 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.

BIBLE HISTORY

(Concluded)

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 ascendancy over them until they might come to recognize their dependence 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 Epiphanies, 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." (1 Mace. 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 par

allel 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, lionlike 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 protec-

tion 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.

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 Gen. 18 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 (Heb. 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 Heb. II: 4, where he said, "By faith [and be it re-

membered 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 fact 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 Rom. 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 Heb. 10, 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 Heb. 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 Gal. 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 prom-

ise was made." God's word being true, therefore, the law of Moses was 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, verse 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, verse 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 (Matt. 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 fact 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 Col. 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 Eph. 2, discussing the very same thing, commencing with verse 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 Gal. 3: 28, 29 after this fash-

ion: "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 Heb. 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 Eph. 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 Heb. 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 (Matt. 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--verse 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 good-by, 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 fact 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?

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 Thess. 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 Lie: 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; 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 scene" " 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 lie 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 lie.

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 lie, rather than the young prophet, who believed the lie? I think the answer lies here. There are other passages in the Bible that have to deal with the teller of the lie. 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 lie.

I want to ask this just now: Is every lie 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." O, 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 ad-

vertise 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 (Gal. 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.

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 Rom. 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 Gal. 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 verse 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 verse 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 do?" 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?

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 Jeru-

salem 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 Cor. 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 Thess. I: 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 sober-minded 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 Cor. 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 Nash-

ville: 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 new-born 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 "sensitivity," 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 foot-steps 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?

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 corn, 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, Ala., 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--that 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 cross-ties, 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 fire box of the engine, steam gotten up, and the train of cars 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 Eph. 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."

Verses 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 (Gen. 12) 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 (Gal. 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 (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 on 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?

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 the first seven verses of 2 Cor. 4: "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."

That last verse 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 Matt. 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 Cor. 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, 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 he is a chosen vessel." I under-

stand 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 (Matt. 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-bye. 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 do?" 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.

THE LOST CHRIST

I bid you listen this noon to a reading from Luke 2: 40-52: "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 chapter 15 of this same boob. 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 ap-

preciate 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 another 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 eter-

nal 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 de-

nomination 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. O, 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 Chron. 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 gener-

ally 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 spirituality 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.

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 (Gal. 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 (Col. 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 Tim. 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 Eph. 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 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 fine 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.

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, He 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 Ex. 7: 3, 13 that God Almighty hardened Pharaoh's heart, and I must accept that as seen 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 (Ex. 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 132 Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons 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. He 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. O, 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 (Heb. 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 Tim. 4: 2 of certain characters having their con-

sciences 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 Cor. 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.

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 God 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 Deut. 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 Deut. 32 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. O, 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 Matt. 21:22: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" 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 Pet. 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 Matt. 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 (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 Cor. 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 earthen 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.

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 off 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 won-

der 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 of 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.

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 Tennesseans 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 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."

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 (Matt. 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 therefore.

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 per-

feet 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 some-

thing to be done because of his matchless love that might overcome the thorns, the briars, 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 service. 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 (Heb. 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 Heb. 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 Heb. 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 Heb. 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 five 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 he 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 most 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.

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 Heb. 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 (Heb. 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 (Eph. 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 chest 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 Matt. 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.

THE CHURCH--ITS UNITY

In Eph. 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 speak-

ing 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 kindness 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 there is a story of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee, entitled by birth and by rela-

tionship 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 firstborn. 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 speak 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 (Eph. 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 Cor. 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 (Eph. 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 Rom. 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 Cor. 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 Eph. I: 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 (Eph. 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 on-rushing 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 learned 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." "O, 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? "O," 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 dis-

turbed. 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 of God never said that, but he said: "You are all branches; abide in me" 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 (Eph. 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 great 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 all 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

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.

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 Matt. 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 (Eph. 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 unkind-

ness, 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 all 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 his-

tory 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 as 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 Campbellites. 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.

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 well 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

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 Pet.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 you 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, you can lie 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 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

(Phil. 2: 12.) "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 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 Cor. 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 Cor. 5: 10.)

Paul says (Rom. 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 Lord 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 help-

less. 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 them 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 well.

Now, God has the same 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 us 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 spir-

itual 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 Cor. 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 pahson 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 (Eph. 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 (Gal. 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. O, 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 enhances 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 (Eph. 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 need

eth" "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 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." (Matt. 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 (Rom 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 Cross. I have nothing unkind to say of the Red Cross 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 reli-

gion; 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 Tim. 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 (Eph. 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 under heaven; for Paul said (Col. 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 characterized 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 therefore? 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 sublime 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 support 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 dis-

couragement; but yet, in order for them to accomplish these things, 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 speak the English language so that your friends will not be ashamed of you. There would be hundreds of capable, efficient young men to-night who would gladly enter the service of God Almighty 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?

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 Rev. 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 made 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 Matt. 15, 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, unwashed-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 Plato, 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 act 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 may 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 supergod; 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? O, 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.

Wed, 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? O, 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. I 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 week 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 be 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 Sewanee 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 be 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 reproofing 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."

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Allow me to read to you from Eph. 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 Gen. 2. 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

a 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 Rom. 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 will, 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.

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 Pet. 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 evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

Verse 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 speak 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 Christ. 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 Matt. 16: 18, just after Peter had announced, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: 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 (Eph. 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 Cor. 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 as the Son of God. The foundation upon which the church of Christ rests has been tested and tried, for 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 Tim. 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 hus-

band 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 man 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 be 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?" "O," 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.

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 Heb. 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 Testa-

ment 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 acknowl-

edged 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? O, 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 coving 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 sowing 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 sole 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 hu-

man 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.

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 speak 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 pop-

ular--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 wor-

ship 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 (Heb. 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 Deut. 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 transfiguration 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 say it on the way home, say it after you lie 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 serv-

ice 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 peo-

ple 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 Matt. 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 (Rom. 15: 9), by way of fulfilling a prophetic declaration, that they shall sing in the midst of the Gentiles.

Again, Paul declares (1 Cor. 14: 15): "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding."

Again (Eph. 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 (Col. 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 endorsement. 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 Cor. 5: 7): "We "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 (Rom. 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 (Rom. 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 ren-

dering 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? O, 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 Tim. 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 Pet. I: 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 versa? 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 teach-

ing 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 teach

ing, 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 one 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.