THE KING’S BUSINESS
—And Other Sermons

By
PERRY D.
WILMETH

GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
Nashville, Tennessee
To
The Elect Lady
and
Our Children
Elizabeth Ann
and
Don Burton

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INTRODUCTION

I was very glad to hear that the author of these sermons was bringing forth this publication, for it represents a continuous and successful ministry of over twenty years in preaching the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Therefore, here is a compilation of some of his best work.

Next to the Bible, one of the greatest helps to a young preacher in search for sermon material, is the great array of gospel literature now being made available. As he comes week after week to find suggestive material for sermon building, in this book of sermons he will find valuable and helpful material.

These sermons, and others of equal importance by the author, have been preached by my good friend and faithful brother in Christ, Brother Perry D. Wilmeth, whose name is dear to thousands of Christians throughout the nation. His work in both evangelistic meetings and local work has been blessed with abundant success. He not only has an excellent academic education, but since his graduation from Abilene Christian College and Columbia University, he has continued to be a student of the Bible and related subjects. These sermons, loyal to the word of God, have been crowned with fruitfulness in the many conversions they have produced through the power of the gospel of Christ. In my humble judgment the single sermon on "If I'm Lost," is well worth the price of the book.

It is with very sincere gratitude to me personally that this worth-while book of sermons is being published, and this joy is greatly enhanced when I realize that these sermons came from the heart of a personal friend of mine. It is my fervent prayer that they will do untold good, and that they will continue to lead countless souls to Christ.

Melvin J. Wise

Dallas, Texas
July 10, 1953
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THE KING'S BUSINESS
Sometimes songs and song-titles are very suggestive. Among others, I am thinking of that title we call "The King's Business." Perhaps we are familiar with the words which go something like this:

"I am a stranger here, within a foreign land;
My home is far away, upon a golden strand;
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King."

With that as an introduction we now call your attention to a reading from I Tim. 6:11-16 which reads: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge thee in the sight of God who giveth life to all things, and of Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in its own times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords: who only hath immortality dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen!" This passage raises some very pertinent questions which we want to look at before passing to other matters.

**Some Pertinent Questions**

1. *Who Is This King?* Our first question is who is the King? There are a number of passages which reveal that to us. That which we have just read plainly declares such of Christ. He said to His disciples after His resurrection and just prior to his ascension, "... all authority hath been given unto Me in Heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:18-20). In the Ephesian letter the apostle Paul informs us that he was raised from the dead and made to sit at his right hand (that is God's right hand), in the heavenly places,
far above all rule, and authority, and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:21-23). From these passages and many others we learn that Jesus is now King, that He is exalted at the right hand of the Father, given dominion and authority, and headship over His church. Now we ask:

2. What Is His Business? What is His business? In the commission He told the disciples to “Go” “Preach” (or teach), and “Make Disciples,” to “Baptize,” and then teach them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them. In Luke 19:10 we read that Jesus came “To seek and to save that which was lost.” Now that is the chief business of Jesus, our King. Whatever else the church might do, the saving of souls must be the constant and prevailing objective. Every meeting, every gathering, every sermon, every act of kindness, every benevolent deed will have this ideal at the center of it. That is the core of His business. And now we ask how does this concern us?

3. How Does It Concern Us? How are we connected with this affair? We go back once more to the great commission and learn that our responsibility is “To go and preach.” We are under the charge and commission. Paul said in II Cor. 5:20 that “We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.” Granting that this primarily applied to the apostles; in a secondary sense, it applies to all Christians in every age. Our King works through us to accomplish His great purpose in this world. We are His hands to work, his mouth to speak, His ears to hear the cries of the needy. His shoulders to carry the burdens of life; his heart to supply compassion. No man can know the gospel and learn the truth in any other way except through the instrumentality of man. And those who make up the body, the church, are the only men who are under divine obligation to accomplish this work. We come at this time to a consideration of what the King’s business actually requires of us.

What the King’s Business Requires of Us?

1. Loyalty: Jesus said without equivocation, “No man can
serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Satan may be satisfied with divided service, but Jesus, NEVER! Imagine an earthly King willing for his subjects to be for him part of the time, and against him a part of the time. Why such is beyond our imagination. Jesus will brook no rivals. He will not even tolerate our first devotions being attached to our Loved ones. “He that loveth Father or Mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his own cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me.” (Matt. 10:27f). Not only does the King demand loyalty, but subordination.

2. Subordination: To this King we owe subordination. Jesus prayed in the garden, “Not my will be done, but thine be done.” Emmanuel Kant said, “There is nothing wrong in this world but wrong will.” Anarchy and rebellion exists unless the King’s will is supreme. Jesus concluded his sermon on the Mount by saying, “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in Heaven.” (Matt. 7:21). We are to attend to the Lord’s business first, and give it first consideration in our thinking. But we more often attend to it when everything else is out of the way, when it is convenient. And then we go at His business too apologetically. We ought never to apologize for asking a Christian’s time or money. When Jesus dispatched two disciples to get the ass and colt for Him, their only explanation was to be: “The Lord hath need of them.” (Matt. 21:3).

3. Haste: Another thing demanded of us is haste. David said to Abimeleck, “The King’s business required haste.” (I Sam. 21:8). Haste is required in saving a drowning man. We cannot wait very long else our victim will lose his life. The same is true of a man in a burning building. There are thousands of people dying this very moment without God and Christ in this world. Their salvation demands haste. O, no, not haste that makes waste, but, haste that loves the lost; haste that is the very opposite of procrastination. My friends, the Bible is replete with that thought. But even if inspiration had never informed us, we out of our own experience of life know such to be true. And now we turn to another demand upon us.
4. **Endurance:** The King's business demands endurance. "Rome wasn't built in a day" is a trite phrase, but it has a wealth of meaning. Oaks do not spring up over night. Babes in Christ do not reach maturity all at once. They must "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18). The Bible abounds with exhortations to persevere and to be steadfast. Paul strikes a note of encouragement to the weary when he says: "Let us not grow weary in well doing for we shall reap if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9). To Timothy he wrote: "Suffer hardships with me as a Good soldier of Christ Jesus." (II Tim. 2:3). In verses 11 and 12 he says: "faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we shall deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." Paul reached a grand climax in the Corinthian letter whom he wrote: "Finally brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:58). This leads us to consider another demand.

5. **Thought, Planning:** The principle of planning, of thought and orderliness is suggested in I Cor. 14:40 when Paul wrote saying, "But let all things be done decently and in order." In the 16th chapter he suggests order again, when he tells the saints to lay by in store upon the first day of the week so that there'd be no collections when he came. There is order and plan in that kind of arrangement. The first ripple that ever occurred in the New Testament church was overcome in an orderly manner. The apostles told the church to select some men from among themselves with the qualifications necessary to a discharge of this duty or work, and then they'd appoint them over this business." Titus was left in Crete "to set in order the things which were wanting or lacking and to ordain elders in every church." (Titus 1:5). One of the qualifications of a Bishop or Elder in the church of our Lord is that he "Be orderly." (I Tim. 3:2): All of this adds up to say that great churches don't just happen. Great meetings don't just happen. There is thought and plan and prayer behind them. It takes that to put over anything worthwhile. And that suggests our last and final demand.

6. **Co-operation and Unity:** The King's business demands of us that we co-operate and be united in our efforts. Let us grant
that every soldier in a King's army is brave, and that he loves the
cause he represents, and is absolutely loyal, yet if he works alone,
his work would likely prove ineffective. Paul says, "We are
workers together with God." Since this is true, we must work
together with a common purpose and goal in mind. Paul exhorted
the "church of God at Corinth" to be united when he said: "Now
I beseech you, Brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no di­
visions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same
mind and in the same judgment." Jesus prayed for unity. Every­
body agrees that this is the fundamental need of the hour to meet
the demands and urgencies of the present crises. A return to the
Bible and Bible ways is demanded of all who would serve Jesus
as their King.

When the time comes for the settling of all accounts we shall
be held accountable in proportion to our fidelity. "It is required
of a steward that he be faithful." Are you attending to the King's
business?
WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

I am happy to come to speak to you upon the theme of why I am a member of the Church of Christ. The question "why" is always an important one, and no sooner does the child begin to reason than he wants to know "why" and "where." And those questions persist in the field of religion. It was the great apostle Peter who admonished Christians in the long ago to "sanctify the Lord in your hearts; being ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear." And we propose to do that very thing now. Too many of us have never asked why we are what we are religiously. And some of us would be greatly surprised and no doubt shocked to discover that some of the things we've always cherished and believed are without foundation in the Scriptures. There are many reasons that men may have for being what they are religiously. And it will not be amiss to look at a few of these before I give some of the reasons as to why I am what I am religiously.

I. SOME REASONS GIVEN

1. Social Reasons: Many people are what they are religiously for purely social reasons. It may be that it is an ambitious mother with her beautiful daughter of marriageable age, and there is a young man that this mother feels would make a splendid husband for her daughter, and he is a very devout member of some church. So in order to meet him upon his own ground, the mother and daughter, with apparently the best intentions become a member of the same religious group. Or it may be the father, son or daughter who conceives the idea. But irrespective of who conceives the thought, the fact remains that such a relationship will never be pleasing to the Lord. And that because there is no real serious conviction. And conviction is something by which we live and for which we'd die.

2. Commercial Reasons: Some use religion as a cloak for unrighteousness. Some feel that their business interests would be best served and enhanced by being members of some particular religious group. And this is the basis upon which membership is obtained. I once knew a Doctor in a distant city who became a
member of no less than three large religious bodies in order to increase his range of acquaintance and thus his practice. Such is beneath the ethics of the Medical Profession and surely below the ethics of Jesus. The world expects a man to be religiously inclined: a man must make a living for his family; then why not become a member of that group that will make it easier for a man's business to prosper is the reasoning of some.

3. Those Who Follow a Leader: There are a host of people who will follow a leader because of some characteristic or personality that he may possess, actual or imaginary, that appeals to them. He may be fluent in his quotation of Scriptures—he may be humble in spirit, prayerful and meditative in mind, pious and godly in general deportment, or he may be oratorical and scholarly. He may be possessed of good looks, stately bearing, attractive manners, and withal compelling in his presence. His use of psychology may be perfect. His knowledge of the Scripture may be profound. Many of these are noble qualities and for one to become a member of any church or any system or religion merely because of characteristics possessed by a leader such as we've described, is far from the realm of Christianity in its New Testament conception and application. That we should like or dislike certain things is surely true, but no man should make his decisions in matters religious solely because of the characteristics of some religious leader, and yet, some great congregations and denominations are built upon this principle.

4. The Reason of Inheritance: By and far the largest group make their choices on the basis of generation. There are literally millions of people who have inherited their religion just as they have inherited their physical characteristics. They are what they are for precisely no other reason than mother and dad were that before them. They were born a Jew, a Gentile, or a Mohammedan. It was good enough for the parents, it will do for the child. But Jesus dealt that a death blow when he said: “Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” (Matt. 3:8f). When Jesus gave his immortal address to Nicodemus on the New birth, he once more taught us all the necessity of the New Birth, hence one cannot by physical birth come into the
church but must experience a birth of the water and the spirit. So that brings me to give you some reasons why I am a member of the Church of Christ.

II. Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ

1. I Wanted To Be: My first reason is that I wanted to be; it was a matter of choice. Of course that of itself is not too substantial a reason. But the point involved in it is that I might have been a member of one of over two hundred religious bodies, for our Federal Statistics reveal that we have more than that many. Such is enough to confuse any ordinary man. I lived in a community where there were several denominational bodies, and I could have become identified with any one of them. As a matter of fact I was solicited, urged and exhorted to thus become identified, but refused upon what to me, were good grounds. So that leads me to suggest my second reason for being a member of the Church of Christ.

2. The Only One in New Testament: It is the one and only one that I read about in the New Testament. I have always tried to be a student of my Bible and to grow day by day in a further understanding of it. I find, and you will have to accept this on my word, until you have made the survey for yourself, that the word church is used 110 times in the New Testament. It is never used in the Old Testament. Stephen in Acts 7:38 refers to the congregation of Israel as "the Church in the wilderness." The word in and of itself as used by the Greeks could refer to a political group and is so used in the 19th chapter of Acts where the town clerk addresses such a group. The word "church" is used 18 times in referring to the church in a universal sense including all the saved; all the redeemed as when Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18). Here we have Jesus as he envisions the church everywhere in the world. Or again when he addresses the Bishops of the church at Ephesus in these words: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28). Or, once more, "Jesus loved the church and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:23). And then the word is used 92 times in a local sense which includes all the saved in a given community as in such expressions as these. "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and
Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth.” (I Cor. 1:1f). “And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved.” (Acts 2:47). “And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem . . .” (Acts 8:1). Once more we read of Paul sending greetings to the church at home from various local congregations in Asia Minor and he uses this expression: “The churches of Christ salute you . . .” (Rom. 16:16). No man possesses the courage before God to call the church any thing other than what God has named it in the New Testament. No one should presume to want to call it by any other name. Hence, as I read my New Testament, and as I continue to read it, I find this only named in the confines of its pages. It is therefore reassuring to know that this is safe and universally conceded to be right by everyone. I am now ready to present my third reason.

3. My Own Salvation Depends on It: My own salvation depended on my being a member of the Church of Christ. Now that may sound strange to many of this audience, but I bid you think through with me for a moment. Jesus is addressing a group of first century people and gives us that beautiful story of the shepherd and the sheep. In relating it he said, “I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.” And moving on in the story he finally says: “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.” (Jno. 10:9, 16). Now Jesus says “there will be one fold or flock” and “one shepherd.” Now if I had not entered into that one fold of his, I would not, could not be one of his sheep. And if I am not one of his sheep, then he is not my shepherd, and if he is not my shepherd, I’ll never be able to reach heaven. Salvation is only in the fold, the flock, and this is called “the Church” in Acts 20:28. But the church in and of itself does not save one. The saved make up the church and it is in connection with Christ that we are saved for we read, “And the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Once more we read: “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the savior of the body.” (Eph. 5:23). Hence we see that Christ saves the church which is his body. But who are the saved? Jesus in the great commission by Mark said: “Go ye into all the world
and preach the gospel to the whole creation, He that believeth and
is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be con­
demned.” (Mk. 16:15, 16). Those who are saved as we obviously
see are those who have believed and been baptized. These are
added by the Lord to the church which is his body. Moreover,
Paul said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). And again, “I suffer all
things for the elect’s sake that I may obtain the salvation which
is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:10). From these passages and many
others we can see that my salvation was predicated upon my obed­i­
ience to the Lord. When that was done, I was in turn added to
the Lord’s church. The Lord added me. This was inevitable.
And so is everyone that renders acceptable obedience unto him.
He will be added to the church of our Lord. It cannot be other­
wise. My final reason is—

4. It Accepts the Bible as Sole Rule of Faith and Practice:
The church with which I am identified accepts the Bible as its sole
rule of faith and practice. We believe that “Every Scripture in­
spired of God is also profitable for teaching, for correction, for
instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be
complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” (2 Tim.
3:16, 17), and that “God hath given us all things that pertain
unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). And therefore we reject
all human and man-made creeds as inadequate and superfluous.
THE MILITANT CHURCH

One of the most striking characteristics of the church as set forth in the scriptures is its militancy. It is not one of feebleness, but one of towering strength. It is militant, formidable, and its mission is to illumine the earth with brightness, but also to fill the earth with righteousness. Two of the most significant metaphors in the Sermon on the Mount set these truths forth. Hear it. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thence forth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:13-16). So in spite of resistance, violence, corruption, sophistry, errors, vices and iniquities, it is ever victorious. In the midst of sin, shame, and entrenched evil it is still invulnerable. The picture is a picture of conflict. Take the church out of the world, and the world will famish and perish with a lost, broken heart. The militant church is God-given.

I. THE MILITANT CHURCH IS GOD-GIVEN

1. Magnifies God’s Word: The militant church magnifies God’s word as “living and active” (Heb. 4:12). It magnifies the Word as God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21; I Pet. 1:22-25). The word of God is ever up to date (2 Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:3). No changes in society can put it out of date, no belief can outmode it. It has met the changing civilizations and has proved equal to all circumstances. This book meets every condition and need of man. Open its pages and you stand in the library of the greatest subjects; in the laboratory of the greatest and most meaningful discoveries; here is the art gallery of the greatest heroes and heroines; the flower garden of the greatest florist; the observatory of the most discerning astronomer; the ages of the profoundest philosophy, and the archives of the most treasured documents. The Christian’s Magna Charta, the world’s supreme personality, the message of the farthest reach, and subjects of the profoundest moment are found within the pages of this volume.
In this book you see the first dawn of time; the light of the first day, the first sunrise and first sunset. Here you see the first mother’s smile; the first ray of hope; the first emigrant and you hear the first footsteps made in the overland march of the empires; and here is the first mention of the church; the only authentic promise of salvation; the one source of consolation. It points the way out and up for man, dispels his darkness, dissolves his doubts, and drives away his fears, and gives him the deepest sense of security. Moreover, the militant church builds upon Christ.

2. Builds Upon Christ: We hear the Apostle Paul as he writes the Corinthian church on this wise: “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The church is militant because it does center in Christ. He is the one life-giver; the one hope bringer; the sin-forgiver. He regenerates, transforms and revolutionizes. He is not only sublime, but he is irresistible. No wonder Paul said, “For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (I Cor. 2:2). It is no marvel that Saul became Paul; Cephas became Peter; and weaklings became giants. John could write that “he came into his own and his own received him not, but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (Jno. 1:12). Not only was He willing to come into the world to live; but to die. He did not remain dead, but arose triumphant over death, hell and the grave (Rev. 1:18). One who thus lived, suffered, preached, prayed, died, and arose again is immortal. “Hallelujah he arose—up from the grave he arose, and he lives forever more. We can sing with the poet.

“On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

But the militant church—

3. Majors in Soul-Winning: The church, ever alert in winning the lost, like the Master, is powerful beyond all computation. This is her first, and last objective—her reason for existence in the world. It brings new gleams of hope, new sense of victory, and a new inspiration for service. It is said of Christ almost the middle of the gospels, “he came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lu. 19:10). Jesus won Zacchaeus; Mary Magdalene; Saul of Tarsus—and made him one of his most powerful and militant exponents of Christianity. The most incorrigible, wicked men and
women have been won by the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. For such a work of liberation the church was founded. In turn it is opposed by entrenched evils, human nature on all sides, by counsels, public opinion, wars, and prejudice.

Now let us look at what a militant church is for the closing moments together.

II. A MILITANT CHURCH IS

1. Alive and Aggressive: A morbid church is lifeless, tepid, powerless in its efforts—in fact there are no real efforts. Such a church's requirements are not high, rigid, and its purposes are not all consuming. The church in Paul's day was as militant as an army on the offensive side of a battle. It was not cold, shrinking, lifeless, and insipid. What a travesty on the cause of Christ to see some churches today self-satisfied, self-complacent and lethargic. Our task is not so much to preserve the church, as it is to liven it. We need to put the emphasis on the militancy of the church. A careless, pleasure-loving church, worldly minded, and indifferent membership will convert a militant, victorious church into a morbid and defeated church. But a militant church is more than this.

2. It Will Do Its Best: As we make a casual survey of the pages of Divine Writ, we are at once impressed with the fact that God's people used what they had. Moses had a shepherd's staff in his hand but he used it (Ex. 4:2). It is the using of what we have in our hands which accomplishes the tasks of God's purposes. Joshua used a ram's horn and surrounded the walled city of Jericho, whose walls he overthrew. David used a sling and his five smooth stones to slay the giant, Goliath. Many are the passages which give this truth sanction. You will remember the story of the lame man laid at the gate Beautiful begging alms. Peter and John came along on their way to the Temple. The beggar upon seeing them, and expecting to receive something from them, received what they had. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6). Jesus commended the woman who broke the alabaster box of ointment by saying of her, "She hath done what she could" (Mk. 14:8). "It is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). Again "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,
which your spiritual service, (reasonable is the Common version). (Rom. 12:1). Many other passages could be cited, but these will suffice.

When the church launched in the first century, it was without learning, caste, wealth, or a particle of influence in society so far as the world is concerned. The overwhelming majority of people who have done things in society were not geniuses, but men and women who resolutely developed their average ability with extraordinary application accomplished marvels. The live, aggressive church likewise undertakes the impossible.

3. Undertakes the Impossible: This was true of God’s people in Old Testament days; it was true in the Apostolic days. We cast our eyes backward to the days of Moses, we see him taking on a seemingly impossible task, the task of leading the hordes of Israel out of Egypt. An audacious adventure indeed. The Israelites were slaves, abject, cowed, broken—no star of hope had shone in the heavens for them. Before them was the wilderness, the uncrossable Red Sea, no prospect for food except what they carried with them. To lead them out seemed the impossible. To such souls as Moses, opposition constituted opportunity.

The early Christians took the impossible. The people of that day were in constant wonder at what would happen next. God shook open prison doors, the center of wickedness was converted, empires felt the impact of their influence; iniquity retreated and Christianity advanced. Today some of us believe so little and undertake so much less that not only would the world be surprised, but God’s people would be surprised as well, if anything out of the ordinary should happen. Where are those who are expecting anything to happen today? We are too complacent and comfortable. We need a militancy today that will change the dull routine of our program into a real crusade for Christ. We need a crusade that is throbbing with life and burning with compassion. The power of the church can be irresistible; her influence is limitless; her forces are formidable; The world will deny it, but the world cannot defy a militant church. Let the church of the Lord Jesus Christ be more than an average church in attacking the impossible. Let us rise in the power and might of Israel’s God and go forth to battle; go forth to conquer and to win. We have a great age in which to live—the “Atomic Age.” The need for moral power and
moral resources was never greater than today. The church must supply spiritual undergirding for the days which are ahead. Crime was never more rampant, never was there a day in which people held "aloof from the church" so much as in this day. And the sad thing is that these same people congratulate themselves on being "Broad-minded" and possess a false sense of pride. God pity such. Let the church make her influence felt to such an extent and so deeply that the masses of humanity will be constrained to fall into the overtures of God's mercy and join the ranks of a militant church. Let me plead with those of you who have all these days and years held aloof, to give the church serious consideration, look at the need and the challenge that presents itself today for the best in every man, woman and child.

Yes, my friends, if the church would distinguish herself, it must extinguish itself from any desire of the world. Through this procedure the church will be more than a mere society; it will be militant, blazing, a soul-winning institution. It will be the symbol of inaugurated, organized opposition to all the forces of hell." It will go from victory to victory and ultimately triumph over all her foes. "These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings (Rev. 17:14).
WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

One of the greatest blessings bestowed upon man is the necessity of, and ability to work. It is all but impossible to be completely happy in the absence of work. It takes work to be a Christian, to build character, and to follow Christ. It takes work, hard work and much of it to build the church, to read the Bible, to pray effectually. One of the chief reasons why the kingdom of God languishes, and many churches do not grow, is that men and women do not work—they are not willing to pay the price of hard work. The church is often cursed with spiritual lethargy. For a long time I have had the conviction that churches can be about what they want to be, can be as big and as effective as the people want them to be. The same is true of a live, wide awake, active Bible school. This brings us to the introduction of our text for study this morning. Paul wrote the church at Corinth, saying: “For we are God’s fellow-workers.” The Common Version reads: “For we are laborers together with God.” Let us look—

I. AT THE WORK OF GOD

1. It Is an Important Work: The words “work” and “labor” were favorite words with Paul. We hear him saying to the Thessalonians: “For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God” (I Thess. 2:9). Moving on to the next letter we hear him saying: “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, ‘If any will not work, neither let him eat’ ” (2 Thess. 3:10). He said of himself that he was “in labors more abundantly” (2 Cor. 11:23). There are many passages which emphasize the importance of work, Jesus in parabolic language taught the importance of work. Hear him when he says: “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard” (Matt. 20:1). Note the word “early” implying that it was important. There is nothing more important than the Lord’s work. Nothing should eclipse it in our exertions. Jesus said: “Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Someone has said that you spell “success” with four letters, “W O R K.” If someone should ask you how many members in the congregation
where you worship, it would not be very difficult to announce the approximate number. But if someone should ask, “how many workers,” I dare say we’d be put to a difficult task to name them.

It was Brudder Zeke, the colored preacher, who once said, “One church member plus good intentions, minus action figgers zero with nothin’ to carry ‘cordin’ to my ’rithmetic’. ” Moreover—

2. It Is a Co-operative Work: Some people know how to work and are quite willing to work. But they have failed to learn how to work with other people. They are failures from the standpoint of “team work.” Paul was able and willing to work with others. He had a whole corps of fellow-workers. One of the most significant glimpses of Paul’s co-workers is found in the Philippian letter when he writes: “Yea, I beseech thee also true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.” (Phil. 4:3).

It is pretty difficult to work alone. It is difficult to do most anything in this life alone. Try, if you will, getting into the world alone. Try building a hospital or a college alone. Why the car, the train, the aeroplane, all testify to co-operation. The very food on our tables all bear eloquent testimony to the united efforts of several people. How far can one go in saving the world alone, or even the community where we live? We read an interesting story in the second chapter of Mark in which we hear of four men bearing one person to Jesus. Very often it takes several people to bring one person to Christ. It certainly takes more than it should. What apathy! What complacency! What tragedy in a day of unparalleled needs!

How sweet it is to work together! Those who love the church most are the ones who are willing to go the farthest to keep it together. The Psalmist sang of its beauty, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious oil upon the head, That ran down upon the beard, Even Aaron’s beard; That came down upon the skirt of his garments; Like the dew of Hermon, That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion: For there Jehovah commanded the blessing, Even life for evermore” (Ps. 133). There are some things which are good for us, but certainly not very pleasant. It is good to see our Dentist, but likely not very pleasant. Some things are pleasant
but not good for us. All sin is “a pleasure” (Heb. 11:25), but it certainly is not good. But this thing called “unity” is both good and pleasant.

The hands of our bodies are not rivals, but helpers and teammates. So in the Lord’s work, we are helpers, and members of the same team. Sometimes in baseball someone has to make a sacrifice hit in order to help advance his teammates. May God help us to “strive together,” not alone, not workers against each other, but for and in behalf of each other as we advance the cause of Christ. Paul writing to the church at Philippi admonished them saying: “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.” We have a common cause, a common interest, a common goal, a common Lord. Thus in unity there is strength.

Many of us remember the lesson of unity taught in one of the old school readers. A wise father was teaching his sons the importance of unity. He took a bundle of sticks asking the boys to break the bundle. They could not be broken. Then the father untied the bundle, breaking the sticks one by one, thus showing his boys that while they worked together they could not be broken. So it is with members of the Lord’s church. We can really accomplish something when we work together. A needy world such as we live in demands that we give of our best. But one more observation.

3. It Is a Work in God’s Service: We are to be workers together “with God.” Sometimes we hear a man say, “I am in business for myself” or “I am going into business for myself.” If you had asked Paul about such a matter, he would have said: “I am in business for and with God—he and I are partners.” We hear him saying: “What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” (I Cor. 3:5, 6). In the parable of the vineyard we learn that those employed “Agreed to service in the vineyard.” Many people know how to work, how to work together, but have failed because they have not dedicated their talents and consecrated their lives to the work of God. In laboring for God in His service means, First,
to do it for his glory, and not for ours. "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17). In the second place, we will follow His instructions; not our own. And in the third place, we will emphasize the eternal rather than the temporal.

What an exalted, glorious privilege it is for God to use us in His service. He offers us a partnership in his firm, humble though our task may be. It is an honor of the highest to be thus associated with God in His work. From such working together with God emerge two important effects here and now for both individual and the church.

II. A TWO-FOLD EFFECT

1. Work Strengthens Our Faith: The more we work in the vineyard of our Lord, the stronger our faith becomes. The real workers are the ones with real faith. "Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. Thou believest that God is one; thou dost well; the demons also believe and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Why Jesus worked hard while on earth. He knew what it was to get tired, and said: "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, for night cometh when no man can work." (Jno. 9:4). He knew the night of death would soon overtake him. So it will be with us. Those golden days for work will soon be over, gone forever. We cannot afford to waste one day—they are far too valuable.

The congregation at Philippi worked. It seems that they worked all the time, and even better in the absence of the preacher. What a commendation he pays them when he wrote them saying: "So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but so much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13). Thus we can see that work strengthens our spiritual life. The workers are the really spiritual ones among us. Now the second effect.

2. Work Purifies the Church: The old adage is still true, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." Someone has said: "Grumblers
never work, and workers never grumble." And that is right. A mule cannot kick and work at the same time. If he is working he is not kicking and if he is kicking it is certain that he is not working. We can observe those traits among those who call themselves Christians. Work gives enjoyment and makes rest sweet. In fact, one cannot rest until he is tired. We ought to work sufficiently to be really tired. The wise man said: "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." (Eccles. 5:12). We hear John on the far flung Isle of Patmos saying: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (Rev. 14:13).

The story is told that when the Titanic went down, four men found themselves in a lifeboat. All about them were men and women struggling in the water. One of the men in the boat, in his excitement, exclaimed, "And now what shall we do?" "Do," another replied, "There is only one thing to do. Grab these oars and get every man and woman we can into this boat." And that my friends, is the work and program of the church . . . to get everyone we can into the ark of safety. All about us are men and women struggling in the whirlpool of sin. We need to lend them a helping hand—bring them to Christ.

May we arise in the strength of Israel's God and go forth to the great work of saving souls. May God help us to work; to be workers together; to work together with God. Let us arouse ourselves from our lethargy, unite our forces, and go into action against the foe.
THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

The record of the birth of Christ is very fragmentary. Most of his infancy is shrouded in darkness. Only three or four times is the silence broken and the darkness penetrated with some word to give us a glimpse of him. There are just two brief fragments at the beginning of our gospels. One is the story of shepherds and the other of wise men. Two stories touching opposite areas of life; one the message to humble workingmen and the other to scholars; one a message revealed by the angels of heaven; the other by their own studious habits.

The birth of every babe brings about important changes in the world into which it comes. Mary becomes "mother," and John becomes "father." Someone becomes "grandfather," and someone else becomes "grandmother." The world is never just the same as it was before the birth of that babe. But the birth of the babe of Bethlehem shakes the very firmament. When that babe was born, shepherds left their flocks untended. Wise men traveled countless miles across burning deserts led by a star that might well have proved to have been a mirage. Monarchs trembled on their thrones, and the very world behaved itself in an unseemly manner, and many in the world rejoiced. From the birth of that babe all history is now dated. Let us read the record of that star and follow its gleam.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea; for thus it is written through the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, Art in nowise least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come forth a governor, who shall be shepherd of my people Israel. Then Herod privily called the Wise men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went
before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." (Matt. 2:1-12).

Now from this reading let us learn something of the—

I. THE STRENGTH OF THE STAR

1. It Compelled the Attention of the Wise Men: As to who these Wise Men were, and what country they came from, we do not know. Where they got their knowledge that Christ was to be born is not revealed to us. Some scholars have thought it was from the literature of the times, that gave hints of a world King to be born. It is claimed that Vespasian predicted that a world King would rise out of Judea. This knowledge was more probably gained from the prophets who had written concerning him. Micah had declared: “But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

But what the Wise Men did is more important than who they were. They did not philosophize about the star. They did not try to explain it away. They did not close their eyes to it, and then claim it did not exist. That has been the course of those who have thought themselves wise in the rejection of the supernatural. Wisdom is seen in its magnificence in the case of these men. It reached its height in its search for him who is the wisdom of God revealed to a sin-darkened, groping world. Wise men seek after Jesus. Jesus emphasized the importance of being wise. He said: Everyone therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock.” Again he commended the unrighteous steward because he had “done wisely” (Lu. 16:8). The story of the wise and foolish virgins impresses upon our minds this same significant truth.

2. The Star Led Them to Jesus: They saw “his star” and “it came and stood over where the child lay.” That was the purpose for which the star appeared. The nature of the star we do not know. Some have thought it was a conjunction of planets; some,
that it was an uncharted meteor; others, that it was one of the variable stars spoken of by astronomers; still others, that it was a luminous orb bearing the likeness of a star that God specially prepared to guide these wise men.

These were men who considered "the heavens" (Psa. 8:3). The "influence of the Pleidas," the "Bands of Orion," "Arcturus" and his sons were no strangers to them. For years they had sought to understand the mysteries of the heavens; and in so doing they gained not wisdom that closed their minds to God, but that opened vast and grander visions of him. One night a strange star appeared; and to them it bore tidings of the birth in another country of the long expected King whose empire should be universal, and whose kingdom should have no end.

At the Christmas season of the year, (although this is not the date of Christ's birth, yet the spirit behind it), ought to lead us a little closer to Him. When we see on every hand the manifestation of joy, peace, and happiness, we should feel a little closer to Him. It is not without significance that they came to the only place where they could find Him. They came to Jerusalem, and then on to Bethlehem. That leads us to a third observation.

3. It Led Them to Sacrifice: They offered unto him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. They brought real gifts, real treasures. This was an oriental custom. These three gifts have been vested with many fanciful meanings. Whatever else can be said, there are three things which can be said without doing violence to the narrative. Gold is typical of that which has value—the best we have to offer. Frankincense can truly represent worship. Whereas myrrh stands for service. The greatest gift that one can bring to Christ is his own life. It is foolish to give anything less. They followed the star worshipfully. They said: "We are come to worship him." They worshipped with their faith, their love, their devotion and their gifts. True worship not only adores Christ; it pours out its treasures at his feet. The deeper significance of this narrative is the blessedness of giving of our substance for the furtherance of his cause throughout the year. God so loved that he gave. If we love him, we'll give and find joy in doing it.

4. They Were Led to Rejoice: "When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They rejoiced not at the birth
of a Jewish king, but of a world savior. The angel's announcement was one of "great joy." The religion of Jesus Christ is not a doleful thing. It is a jubilation. The Christian has something to rejoice over; a Saviour is born, the sacrifice for sin is offered, Satan is conquered, the grave is robbed of its victory, and a crown of glory is waiting which Christ the righteous Judge shall give him at that day (2 Tim. 4:8). From this narrative let us learn three things.

II. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. They Came a Long Way: They came from the east. They traveled countless miles over a trackless waste. We are reminded that the Eunuch came to Jerusalem several years after this incident to worship (Acts 8:27). It was nearly a thousand miles and that was a long way in those days. Many today do well to go one block or a mile to worship Christ. For them it is too far. There is in your community, no doubt, a congregation that is reproducing the pattern of the New Testament in worship and practice.

2. Only the Wise Men Saw the Star: Had it ever occurred to you why these were the only people who saw "His star"? Why did not others see it? Why the Wise Men saw the star because they were looking for it. They had searched diligently for it. Many fail to see the light of God's truth because they have not searched. The answer no doubt, for many, lies in these two passages. Jesus said to some in his day: "Search the scriptures, because in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me" (John 5:39). The companion passage is found in Acts 17:11 which reads: "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

These men were willing to follow the star when they saw it. Unwillingness to be convinced of the light that is in Christ leads to perpetual darkness. Let us therefore search that we may see and know the light and then have the courage to follow that light.

3. They Were Never the Same After This Visit: Of course the gospel narrative does not say so in just the words in which we have expressed it, but it is certainly implied. "They returned another way." But there must have lingered with them in their minds all the rest of their lives the memory of that visit to the
Babe in Bethlehem. And the memory of that babe must have sweetened and changed their lives. The Shepherds were never the same after that mid-night visit by the angels. The Galilean fishermen were never the same. Saul of Tarsus never was the same after he met the Christ on the Damascus hi-way. You will not be the same either after you meet Christ and yield your life to his service. He, under the guiding influence of the Bethlehem star, will make you a "new creature in Christ." You will have a new name; a new occupation; a new family relationship; a new work; a new hope and all things will be new.

The strength of that star is powerful; there is but one force that it cannot overcome; only one force more powerful, and that is your will. You must come voluntarily to the Lord. Will you not come giving yourself to Him, and accept him as your Saviour—His gift to you.
MY NEW YEAR'S WISH TO YOU

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2).

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR" is my sincere wish to you. And this in effect is exactly what John said to a friend of his when he said, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2). This scribe does not know where the custom of sending Christmas and New Year's cards arose, but we have in these words by John, a wish. It comes out of a private letter to Gaius. As you who read these lines, already know, the majority of the epistles of the New Testament were addressed to churches in this or that locality. But there are several private letters which bear the vivid stamp of a special occasion. Second and Third John are such letters. Now this little epistle of fourteen verses discusses three men. Diotrephes, who wanted to run everything, Demetrius, who was very popular with the church, and Gaius, who was especially commended for his hospitality to visiting brethren.

Now, this would be a sort of left-handed New Year's wish if addressed to some people. How does it sound to you? "I trust that during this coming year you will be just as successful as your soul is." Why, some folk would say, "don't poke fun at us." You might as well say, "I hope you will remain ill." Strange as it may seem this wish adopts just such an unusual standard. It takes heaven's point of view. It measures people not as the tailor does, from without, but as the doctor does, from within. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." May I wish my readers four good things of life.

1. I Want to Wish You Good Health: Why, right here on the pages of Holy Writ we actually have an inspired apostle wishing his friend, good health. Health is not beneath our notice, for the body is important. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Lu. 2:52). He kept his body. He was the world's model physically. We must look upon it as nothing less than a sacred duty upon us to make the most we can of these bodies of ours. One of the unique things in Christianity is its teaching concerning the human body. Said Paul more than once, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God
that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your spiritual service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:1). And again, “Glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:20). And once more he says, ‘‘I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, after I have preached the gospel to others, I myself should become a castaway.” (2 Cor. 9:20). It was not Paul’s duty to keep his body under and bring it into subjection to the will of Christ more than it is your duty or mine to do the same. Once more Paul said, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, and if any man defile this temple, him shall God destroy.” (I Cor. 3:16). These Scriptures reveal to us the importance that God places upon the human body.

In Old Testament days there were giants and the average life of those people, according to the Scriptures was 907 years of age. Methusaleh, the oldest of them, lived to the ripe old age of 969 years. Moses, at the age of 120 years, was well developed and possessed a very keen eyesight. Jesus carried one of the heaviest loads physically that ever mortal man stood under and yet did so because of his physical body which sustained him. And why not take care of our bodies? We take care of our automobiles, our watches, our radios, and other possessions of any importance. The care we take of these items was accentuated during the war years when we were warned, and even knew that there would be no more for “the duration.” So may I wish you good health through the coming year.

2. May I Wish You Mental Growth: No fact in all the realm of human nature can be more certain than our Father designed our minds for an ever increasing grasp on the facts of this universe in which we live. The fact that our Lord advanced in wisdom is an example to us to grow in knowledge. God has always selected men of wisdom for his purposes. Joseph was a man of wisdom. “And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.” (Acts 7:9, 10). In this same chapter we learn that Moses was
possessed of the same quality. (Acts 7:22). It was wisdom that characterized Solomon. The Apostles were taught for three years at the feet of the greatest teacher the world ever saw, Jesus of Nazareth. Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, called of the Jews, "The Great Teacher." Look at the great good he accomplished. James exhorts us to pray for wisdom (Jas. 1:5). Knowledge comes through an application of the laws of learning. But wisdom may be said to be the manner in which we apply knowledge to the problems of life as we work out their solution.

But how some people do starve their minds. They feed them such trash. I saw a man one Saturday afternoon, not too long ago, (and it might have been any Saturday afternoon) alight from a bus with a bag in one hand and a great bulky Sunday paper in the other; and I thought to myself: There is his Sunday food; physical food in the bag and mental food in the paper. God pity the ash-barrel mind that is constantly fed on the trash and garbage of cheap literature.

I entertain the wish that some of my readers would make a resolution to spend more time in the study of the Bible. Paul admonished us to "study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God." Why not attend a Bible class, yet, as many as you can, and see if you cannot learn more about the greatest book in the world, the most rewarding book for him who searches its sacred pages. I wish, too, that many of my readers would further place on that list of resolutions, a subscription to some worthwhile religious publication, and thus become more conversant with what churches of Christ in general are doing. It will make you a better member of the church. It will help to increase your knowledge and to bring you into more favor with the Lord.

3: Once more, I Would Wish You Progress in Spiritual Growth: "One of the surprises of the hereafter will be the strange way in which things are measured over there. They have a different edition of "Who's Who" over there. People are measured, not by the size of the pocket-book or the headband of the hat, or even the diameter of the heart. They are catalogued according to the dimensions of the soul. Lazarus is transported to Abraham's bosom while Dives lifts up his eyes being in torments. Why all this? The difference in measurement causes it.
If we are to follow the perfect man, we must give heed to the things of the spirit. Any knowledge of self that does not comprehend the self's relation to God, is tragically imperfect knowledge. For a comprehensive knowledge of the true self, we must look elsewhere than to earthly standards. We must think of him as related to other and higher destinies, and study him in those relationships.

We have to put our bodies and minds and souls through the proper gymnastic exercises in order to make them grow. Now what causes growth? Well, food and exercise for two things. How much food does your soul get? Does it get three meals a day like the body, or one meal a year, and that on some special occasion?

We are now learning that diet is a very important factor in health and growth of an individual. We begin with the infant in its mother's arms. The player on the gridiron recognizes its value. One cannot feed on improper diet and expect to grow spiritually. Neither can a Christian feed his mind upon trashy literature, his mind upon vulgar shows, and associate with immoral companions and expect to grow spiritually. A Christian's meat is the Word of God. By it he is brought into being, and by it he sustains his Christian life. Around it everything else should be built. Everything we read, see and the places we go, and the people with whom we associate should be such that our diet is not spoiled. The reason there are so many anemic, undernourished church members is largely due to their diet.

For years we have heard the motto: "A sound mind in a sound body." And it is a very fine motto as far as it goes. But a much better motto would be "a healthy soul in a healthy body." Bodily health is fine and it is our duty, as we have already pointed out, to keep our bodies for the Lord. But in spite of our best efforts this tabernacle of clay will eventually go back to dust. It is much more important to look after the health of the soul.

4. I Wish for You Growth in the Esteem of Men: This is the final fruitage of the qualifications which we've been viewing. There is an irresistible charm about a well-balanced life that compels the admiration of men. Show me a life of developed and poised intellect, of robust body and of virtuous conduct, and I will show you, as an inevitable result, a character highly esteemed of men. Here
is the glorious flowering of a symmetrical life. Jesus gained favor with men. He honored, graced, and beautified the holy estate of marriage by his presence and by performing his first miracle in Cana of Galilee. While still a boy, he gained the favored esteem of the lawyers and doctors of instruction in the Temple where he asked and answered questions.

Let us suppose that tomorrow were your last day on earth and all your friends knew about it. How many people would come to your funeral? I recall some in which there was almost nobody present but the family. Often I have thought if I believed I had made no greater impression on my acquaintances and friends than that, I would just as soon die right now. On the other hand, how it warms one's heart to see a great profusion of flowers and a chapel full of people, because it looks as though somebody cares. I wish you growth in all these areas of life.

And now as we step into a New Year let us take time to cultivate the soul by getting acquainted with Jesus Christ and enrolling in his school. For the hour is coming soon for us all when one touch of his hand in the darkness will mean more than all that is written in day-book, ledger or social register anywhere.

And in the words of that grand old hymn we close these words of exhortation to you, my dear friends.

"Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
 Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone;
 By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be;
 Thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see."
IF I'M LOST

Two of the most expressive words in the English language are the words “saved” and “lost.” It was never God’s intention that anyone should die and be lost for all eternity. “As I live saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11). Or, as we read in the New Testament, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9). And yet notwithstanding this fact our Lord himself said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:21-23). So we ask with profit today who will be lost.

I. WHO WILL BE LOST?

1. The Incorrigible: Everyone will agree that the incorrigible will be lost. In Rev. 22:15 we read: “Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie.” And in Gal. 5:19 we read these words: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Those who continue in sin, who rebel and refuse to do God’s will are surely going to be lost. And there are some in this category all over this fair land of ours. There is still another group who will be lost.

2. Those Who Disobey: Peter raised the question which is very important when he asked: “For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner
appear?" (1 Pet. 4:17f). Paul answers that question when he wrote to the church at Thessalonica and said: "... to you who 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: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1:7-10). From this passage we learn that those who do not know God—who are not interested and those who obey not the gospel will be lost. Nothing could be any plainer. Hence everyone who refused to obey the light which is shed upon his path by revelation from God will be lost. After all my friends there is only one way to please God, and that is to obey his will. There are many ways to disobey and displease him. We turn yet to one other group.

3. Those Who Neglect: The Hebrew writer said: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard: God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." (Heb. 2:1-4). From this passage we learn that all one has to do to be lost is naked "NOTHING." That will accomplish the point. And now if I'm lost, I need to be reminded of three very stubborn and irrefutable facts.

II. IF I'M LOST

1. I Will Not Be Alone: If I am lost I face the stern fact that I will not be alone. "For none of us liveth unto himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." (Rom. 14:7, 8). So just as no man lives or dies to himself, neither will he be lost alone. You remember the story of Adam and Eve. Eve was the first in the transgression, but she also caused her husband, Adam, to sin and both turned
from the garden. If Eve alone had died for her sin that would have been a sad and tragic story, but alas, she did not die alone. She took her husband whom she loved, no doubt, as devotedly as any wife could love a husband, along with her. Take the story of the rich man and Lazarus in the sixteenth chapter of Luke's gospel. Both men lived, and both died, but in the scope of eternity they are found in two different destinations. The poor beggar was wafted by an angelic band to Abraham's bosom. The rich man was buried and in Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torments. He cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, betwixt us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." And then he thought of his own brethren who were left behind and for the first time in his life became missionary minded. He prayed for his brethren. "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Many a person who never spent a dime to have the gospel preached to anyone while living, will in torment become mission minded. But, it will be too late then. "Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." (Lu. 16:19-31). But my friends we have more than Moses and the prophets. We have Christ and the Apostles. And if people will not hear these and do God's will, they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. We should remember therefore that if we carry someone else down with us, it will most likely be the very one we love most—the one over whom we have the most influence. And now we turn to another stubborn fact.

2. I Will Be Lost Forever: If I am lost, I will be lost forever. There is no second chance. There is no one who can pray me out of hell. Of course your speaker is not unmindful that there are those who think otherwise. To me it does violence to the finished
redemption wrought by our Lord. It is based upon passages, many of which are found in Books which were not regarded as canonical, and upon Scriptures which admit of other views. The passages upon which the fact we are discussing at this moment are based are not called in question by anyone. For example: “For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” It is universally conceded by all Bible scholars that there is a time of reckoning in which both good and bad will be assigned forever to their eternal destiny. Jesus is describing the end of his Messianic reign in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew when he said: “And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life.” The final destiny of the saved and the lost is the same length in duration. To this everyone who knows the truth and loves it will agree. If heaven is eternal in duration, so is hell. So we come back to the statement made earlier in this broadcast that if we are lost, that we will be lost forever. And my friends eternity is a long time in duration, yea, it is longer than we can well imagine. Someone has likened eternity to a dove which comes once every million years to this earth from another planet and carries a grain of sand back to that planet to deposit it there. When the last grain of this earth has been deposited on yonder’s planet, eternity will have just begun. But a third stubborn fact confronts us, namely:

3. \textit{I Will Sustain a Double Loss}: If I am lost, I will sustain a double loss. I will lose the joys of heaven and suffer punishment of eternal torment. If we are weary and want rest we will find that in heaven. We will find love and delight in the city that lies four-square. There will be the beautiful and the good, the pure and the blest. Nothing will be lacking in heaven. But all this I will lose if I am lost. I will go to an intolerable prison of madness. It is described as “a lake of fire,” a “bottomless pit,” a “horrible tempest,” and “everlasting punishment.” It is a place where victims, deceived by the devil and hemmed in forever pray, scream for mercy, wail, curse God; a place of weeping, sorrow, darkness, where the damned for all eternity gnaw their tongues; There “their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” and the breath of the wicked will be a burning flame. It is a place of damnation. There will be no light there, nor water. There will be no children
there and what is life without the prattle of our little ones. No love will be there, but hate, greed and avarice will take its toll. The only music for all eternity will be that of the weeping and the wailing and gnashing of teeth of the lost. The conscious loss of God will make it an unbearable place. What could constitute a greater hell than the thought of being forever alienated from God! No other one thing could make hell such a madhouse.

We bid you not be lost. While time and opportunity are yours, while you have life, why not make your calling and election sure? God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, your many friends, and even the lost in hell all plead for your salvation. You cannot afford to be lost. We bid you my friends, give this matter your most serious consideration for you just cannot afford to be lost.
SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

The words with which we close our letters are often quite meaningless. The formula "Very truly yours," or the usual words of "Sincerely yours," may be very cold and formal. On the other hand the closing words of a letter may be very significant. Think how much tenderness a love letter can convey in a single word or even a dash at the end. And sometimes a single sentence carries a load of meaning.

For example in that love letter, Paul's letter to the Philippians in next to the last line reads thus: "All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household." The word "saints" in the New Testament letters means the church members. So this line has a greeting from the church members in Rome to those in Philippi. But wait a moment. There is something about those saints. They were saints "in Caesar's household." Who was the Caesar at that time in Rome? The letter to the Philippians was likely written about 62 A.D. The ruling emperor then was Nero. What kind of a man was Nero, the Caesar of the period? Let me read a paragraph about him from an encyclopedia in my library:

"He... plunged into debauchery, extravagance and tyranny. He caused Brittanicus, the son of Claudius, to be poisoned at the age of fourteen because he dreaded him as a rival, and afterward (59 A.D.), procured the death of his own mother to please his mistress. She (the mistress), was the wife of his principal boon companion, Otho, ... and in order to marry her, he divorced and afterward put to death his wife Octavia (62 A.D.)."

This Caesar whose name was Nero had killed his rival, and then his own mother and then his wife in order to possess his mistress—rather a shady record, would you not say? His very name was synonymous for a hundred crimes. His latter days were days when he threw off all restraints and plunged madly into follies and excesses. When fire broke out in Rome, in order to divert attention from himself, he placed the blame on the Christians. During ensuing persecution, Christians were made to suffer every kind of cruel death. Multitudes died for their faith. Rome was illuminated with burning Christians. While they were suffering, Nero rode among them in mockery. The atmosphere provided by Nero's
castle was a strange and unfavorable field for Christians, yet there were “saints in that household.”

I. WHAT KIND OF SAINTS

1. They Were Unnamed Saints. We are not told whether these were Caesar’s immediate family, or servants—their names are unknown to us. They were not in the headlines as was he that sat on the throne, but better, they were enrolled in heaven. In this very letter, Paul speaks of those “whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:3). In verse 20 of the preceding chapter he says, “For our citizenship is in heaven.” There are other passages which tell us that names are enrolled in heaven (See Heb. 12:23; Lu. 10:9-20, esp. vs. 20; and Rev. 20:15). These were more than nominal members. Are there not those in the church today of whom it would be difficult to say more? Does not every congregation have members whose activity in the church can be summed up fairly accurately by the mere mention of their names as being on the membership roster? If these unnamed saints could be holy in Rome; we may be in our city and community. They were not controlled by environment nor fixed by circumstances. Character can still overcome the world.

2. They Were Saints of Faith. They matched the force of an empire with unseen forces. They came to martyrdom with eternal light in their eyes. They had a God, a Christ, and a Cross. They would not acknowledge that Nero was greater than Jesus. So they had a colony of heaven in that hard Roman world. They proved the worth of goodness against cheapness of sin. They obeyed the will of God rather than the will of man. They satisfied hunger and thirst after righteousness, while others made Gods of their bellies. The “glory that was Rome” faded. The glory of the saints has not. They had signed up for life with Christ, and were keepers of the faith. (See 2 Tim. 4:7).

3. They Were Saints of Courage. They were Christians at the risk of their lives. It was no easy thing to be a Christian in those days. They would neither surrender nor compromise their convictions. They had a reason for their convictions. They would have no more to do with sin. They were in the world, but not of the world (Jno. 17:15). They were not afraid of the enemies of Christ. They had never been conquered and would not be. They had one for whom they were living—their Christ. They had a cause to
which they had dedicated themselves. They withstood the flood of evil that was sweeping a nation to its doom. Cowards are not found in the marching ranks of saints. We need the courage to stand alone; to stand up; to stand firm, and to stand against some things in our generation. Moreover—

4. They Were Saints of Loyalty. Their high allegiance to the Christ made them the best citizens of the land. In putting first things first they were the most loyal to oncoming generations. The burning bodies that lighted Nero's imperial gardens became God's torches that would not be extinguished. Their ancient loyalty lights up the modern darkness. Whence came their loyalty? It came from Calvary—from looking "ever to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." (See Heb. 12:1f).

This story came out of the second century. Whether true or not, your speaker does not know. However it illustrates the fact of loyalty. Forty gladiators confessed to follow Christ. There came at once the emperor's command to recant, otherwise a Roman guard would take them to the lonely mountains to die. The gladiators chose loyalty to Christ. The order was executed and they were left to hunger and cold. They went forth singing:

"Forty wrestlers wrestling for Christ,
Ask for him the Victory and claim for him the Crown."

Soon one gladiator returned in trembling form. Said the Roman guard, "Art thou the only one that durst do this?" His answer was "Yes."

The Roman guard said, "By the gods I'll take thy place."

And so into the night and into the cold, he went singing as did the others. And now we ask—

II. WHERE Do WE FIND SAINTS?

1. We Find Them in Homes. Not all homes are good places for growing children. When a home is poisoned by the character of a bad parent, or is pervaded by a materialistic atmosphere concerned only about worldly things, or is weakened by deceit and distrust—then that home is a bad place in which to "be a saint." There are those who grow up in non-Christian homes, obey the gospel and have to live the Christian life under most adverse circumstances. I have even known young people to become Christians in spite of the threats of parents. These have in many instances
continued faithfully even though there was continual opposition and persecution from friends and relatives. All of us have known those who have married out of the church (which is always a dangerous thing to do), who have remained faithful despite a non-Christian companion. Peter goes so far as to suggest the possibility of a Christian wife winning her husband to Christ when he admonishes them on this wise: "In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives . . ." (I Pet. 3:1ff).

2. *We Find Saints in Business.* There are those in the business world who continue to serve God in the midst of ridicule. It goes, of course, without saying, that a Christian should try to get out of a business which is a perpetual rebuke to his conscience. It is often necessary that a Christian disassociate himself from a group or a business that lowers his ideals and bemeans his conduct. Many of these saints hear God's name taken in vain and blasphemed. They see gambling, drinking and all sorts of revelry, and are constantly urged to take part. Christianity is not mentioned except to be ridiculed. But there are saints in the midst of all of this.

3. *Again, We Find Saints in Government.* Those of our text were under the surveillance of a governmental head who was one of the world's worst tyrants, yet they were faithful "saints." Their companions were heathen, steeped in superstition and foul with sin. Their occupations within the government were of such nature as to run counter to and with their convictions. One is made to think of Joseph. He was but a lad of a boy in the land of Egypt. He was a stranger there, away from home, and no one to tell him what to do. His Master's wife tempted him sorely, intensely, and repeatedly. But he retained his integrity. Joseph thought more of his virtue than he did of a few moments of sensual pleasure. He was faithful to his earthly master, and also to his Heavenly Master. Daniel, a young Hebrew in Babylon was another saint. When an earthly power forbade his praying to God he said by his actions, "I must obey God rather than men." He and his three companions chose to die rather than yield to evil. The history of early Christianity tells the selfsame story. These ought to make us ashamed of ourselves when we complain of the small hardships we endure here for a season.
4. *We Find Saints Among Our Young People.* Many a young person faces at school and college some of the fiercest moral struggles of his life. To be a saint, to maintain one's purity, to adjust the principles of Christ to contemporary social practices is no easy achievement. While there are thousands who throw caution to the winds, sow to the wind to reap the whirlwind, there are those who withstand the ostracism, the social pressures, and remain "saints" in hard places. My young friends, let me tell you straight from the shoulder that if you would have Jesus with you all the time, there will be some places you won't go, and some things you won't do, because Jesus will just not be there, nor being doing those things. Every time I see a young person in the midst of our social scene, I am made to think of our text.

5. *Last of All, We Find Saints in New Fields.* When I see some splendid young couple with their little family go to a field of labor far removed from family, home and friends, I think of this text. These go where living conditions are different, where dangers imperil their health, where the languages, customs and the whole background is so different to what they've always known. It takes courage to do a thing of this sort.

Let us all resolve to be Christians in all places and at all times. It will be difficult sometimes. It will require sacrifices. If there were saints in Caesar's household, there can be saints today where you are. And God could write no greater commendation of you than the postscript in this letter—"Saints in Caesar's Household."
THE HOME AS GOD WOULD HAVE IT

The loveliest word in all the myriad languages of the world is the word "Home." It is a magic word. The very sound of it carries us in swift flight to whispering pines, green hills, rolling plains, babbling brooks, across rivers and valleys, perhaps oceans to the place of all places—the place we call home. Literature, songs and paintings of all ages and races, combine to attest to this fact. In the words of the poet:

"Be it ever so humble
There is no place like home."

The home as God designed it is of divine origin. It is God's first institution on earth. It is the bulwark and foundation of every enduring civilization. It is in the world to save the church and the church is to save the world. These two institutions have reciprocal positions. It is a trite expression; nevertheless, true, that as the home goes so goes the church, the state and the world. The best security any nation can have is an abundance of good homes. It takes no exceptional wisdom to see this. Let us observe some shadows which overcast our homes.

I. SOME SHADOWS

1. The Boarding House Shadow: Too many homes are just places to park and fill up, a place where we sleep, eat, and get ready to go out again—a boarding house. It is this sort of thing which our larger cities have produced in the apartment and hotel living quarters for families. Apartment, hotel and boarding house types of homes are destructive influences on the home because they tend to destroy the privacy of the home. Such is a home in name only. Fathers are strangers to the children. The father works all day, spends some time at lodge, on the streets, or in amusements. The mother spends her time at clubs, socials, or on the streets. There is no fellowship in such homes, no foundation of love—all come and go—truly, a product of our day—our generation. Homes which degenerate to such a level are overcast with a shadow which must be dispelled if that home is to endure. One of its pillars is gone. But let us look at another shadow.

2. The Shadow of Disobedience: It takes no particular wisdom to see that American life is in a bad way and sadly in need of some
tonic for its moral and spiritual invigoration. Today's mothers, in too many instances, prefer night clubs and cabarets to the nursery. The old-fashioned mothers, bless their hearts, are fast dying out—passing away. The modern parenthood is too much one that listens to the weird tooting of saxophones instead of singing lullabies; one that enjoys the glitter of the footlights instead of the fireside glow. Social immorality is holding high carnival; marriage is a plaything; atheism in a practical form stalks freely in the land; communism threatens to turn our country red; the Lord's day is a holiday rather than a Holy Day, and lawlessness increases. Demoralization and destruction of the home and of family life is the great modern plague and virtually the only really "new evil" in history. If ever there was a day when America needed moral and spiritual reinforcement from some quarter surely that day is with us now. What shall we do about it?

"Enforce the Law," says one. Yes, that ought to be done, but law enforcement and reformation of society would be about as enduring as a permanent wave. While there are other influences threatening us and other influences which are constructive, we should face the facts squarely and recognize that we will never save our youth nor our nation from the mighty onslaught of evils until we push the battle across the threshold of the American Home. Proper exercise of parental authority and the exaction of perfect obedience from children are sound "antidotes" for the modern "disease." Let us all pray for wisdom, strength and grace to make our homes sanctuaries where obedience reigns through love. Let us glance at one other shadow.

3. The Shadow of Extravagance: This shadow is characteristic of many a home. Your speaker has been made to wonder as he has driven down thoroughfares in some of our large cities and observed the palatial dwelling places, if some of the saddest hearts on earth do not reside there in the midst of luxury and beauty. Some of these, if creditors could be consulted, live far beyond their means. What is true in one city is true of every other American city and small communities. And wherever the shadow of extravagance is cast, it is born of a number of causes. One very common one is the refusal of one or both companions to the marriage to give up their pre-nuptial social activities. There is a failure to recognize that a new relationship maintains now and with it comes renewed obliga-
tions of a financial color which must be met. "The craze to keep apace with the Jones" has played its role in producing this shadow. But thank God the home as God would have it is characterized by some illuminating lights to which we now call your attention.

II. SOME LIGHTS

1. A Home Dedicated to God: We should explain as old Joshua of old did, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). The curse of God rests upon those who have not acknowledged Him as God. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate" (Jer. 10:25). The first order of worship was that of family worship; the Patriarchal, the father was the priest. We observe Cornelius in the New Testament praying to God with all his house. A home with Jesus in it is a wealthy home, without which it would be one of poverty, however finely furnished with beautiful furniture and accessories. This little story illustrates the lesson.

A little child was in the habit of visiting the home of a very wealthy family. The child looked at the magnificent paintings and the many beautiful toys, and said to its little playmate, "Me do not have any nice paintings and nice toys in my home, but me has Jesus in my home. Does you have Jesus in your home?" When evening came and the little child returned to its humble home of meager means, the child of the wealthy parents said to them, "Does we have Jesus in our home?"

One had rather live in a cabin by the side of the road with bare walls, bare floors, and sleep on the floor with only straw for a bed and have the consciousness of Jesus being in that home, than to live in a house of many mansions with all its modern comforts and be aware that Jesus is not there. Let us be reminded that neither wealth nor poverty commends us to Jesus. Character upon the part of those who dwell in a home determines the extent to which that home is dedicated to God. But another light.

2. It Is a Place of High Ideals and Exemplary Living: When our homes become more dedicated to high ideals and exemplary lives more time will be spent together in the family circle. There will be proper parental control and influence. None can over-
estimate this influence. Abe Lincoln said, "All that I am I owe to my mother." Thomas Paine said, "I was an infidel before I was five years old." This story emphasizes the power of influence in this connection.

A little fellow was asked by his Bible school teacher who made him. He gave at once a most practical and terse answer. "God made me and I grewed the rest." We may as well expect flowers to grow in an eruptive crater or beneath the snows of the Klondikes as to expect a holy character to grow in the midst of the atmosphere furnished, alas, by too many homes.

Homes are too often preceded by a "courtship composed of a seven-day week of night club rounds, movies, ball-rooms, etc. Homes go to pieces before they are established because of a flimsy foundation, a foundation built upon sand. The home must resist corruption if it is to stand the tests of storms which are inevitable. The great deterioration which has been eating at the vitals of the American home during the last two decades is due to many causes, but the principal one, it seems, is a misconception of the binding forces of the marriage bond. There is too much legalized adultery today known as divorce. But another light.

3. A Place Where Obedience Is Learned: God said to Abraham in the long ago, "... I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19). Paul said, "Wives submit yourselves to your husbands, as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife..." (Eph. 5:22, 23). Children must be trained: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6). "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). It is important that children respect parental authority: Honor thy father and mother—that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:2, 3). Jesus set the example of willing obedience to his parents when he returned to Nazareth with his family and was subject to them, that is, his mother and foster-father, Joseph. Fathers and mothers will teach the first lessons of obedience. They will set the examples in the home by manifesting love for each other, by reading the Bible and teaching it to their children. Why you know "a Jewish gate post in the days of Moses was a better teacher
than some parents today." Prayer, proper speech, Christian ideals of living will be set forth so that it will be seen and thus obedience flow naturally as water seeks her lowest level. Unselfishness, gratitude, hospitality, fidelity to the church, will exemplify themselves before the children of every Christian home. Bad examples which are destructive to the spirit of obedience are set when there is strife, envy, drinking, gambling, quarreling, gossiping, neglect of home for social functions.

CONCLUSION

Our homes will either make or break our nation, depending on what kind of homes we have. On this day when many are thinking of their mothers, let us resolve anew that our home, the home of which you, my friend, are a part, shall be the kind of a home that God would have it. A home that is God-fearing, where the Bible is read and studied, where prayer is wont to be made, where love and kindness characterize it, where thanks are expressed at every meal, where there are no revelings, brawls, envies, gossiping and strife, where everyone does his share of work—equal rights and equal responsibilities. This is the kind of home God would have, and this is the kind of home you want.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13), is a mighty good slogan for the home. If we follow this principle here our homes will be peaceful, happy and prosperous, and will be well prepared for that home of the soul over yonder.
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVIL

I am told that standing in one of the great limestone caves in Bermuda, you can hear the flow of an underground stream. Those waters, ceaselessly flowing, have eroded the cavernous depths with their vast, resounding chambers and fantastic decorations. The mind rebels as it tries to estimate how long that stream has been flowing. While empires have risen and fallen, while continents have been discovered and added to the map of the world, while generation after generation of men have come and gone, that stream which you hear far beneath you has been flowing on, never interrupted, never ceasing, never getting through with its work, a symbol of the tireless energy of these forces in the natural world which make and unmake the seas and continents.

So temptation flows like a river through the life of man. Old races die out, new ones take their places. New powers are discovered and new devices are invented. But through every generation of mankind flows this river of temptation. It is as new as birth, as old as death. It touches the life of the fool, philosopher, prince, pauper, savage, sage, Judas and the Lord himself. Wherever man has gone, temptation has gone. It is man's shadow, haunting him where he goes. It is the warfare from which there is no discharge. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:16). Here we come face to face with the most momentous interview in the history of the universe, the interview between Christ and the devil.

Let us first of all read it as recorded by Matthew in chapter four of his Gospel.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command these stones become bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and, on their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a
stone. Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God. Again the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered to him." Let us now look at Satan's appeal, and the response of Jesus to each of them.

I. SATAN'S APPEAL

It is significant to observe first of all that this interview took place immediately after Christ's baptism. Before he had opened the eyes of the blind, or unstopped the ears of the deaf, or healed the infirm, yea, before he had endeared himself to the hearts of the people. Satan knew the most likely time to defeat Christ was before he began his work. Perhaps more people fall away from Christ during the first few months after their conversion than during the next ten years. Before they are rooted and grounded in the faith, they are easily influenced and led astray. Preachers and church leaders should ever remember this and be on the alert, doing all they can to strengthen and help the new converts. The devil knows when and how to strike most effectively. Knowing this we can be on our guard.

1. A Dare to Misuse His Power: Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God ..." He knew that Christ was the Son of God and he knew that Jesus knew it also. It was as if he had said, "Inasmuch as you are God's Son ... you've won a victory, and God has acknowledged you as his son, and you've triumphed over your adversary, how thankful you ought to be and no doubt your father must be proud of you. But you are exhausted and greatly in need of food. Now that your struggle is over, your Father must certainly expect you to take care of your body. You have much work ahead of you and you'll need all of your strength. He surely wants you to satisfy your hunger." But this is a subtle, crafty appeal to use his power for selfish gratification. He is "hungry"—he has the "power" and here are the "stones." Why not use it? Apparently a harmless proposition. But Christ foiled him and refused to yield to his appeal to misuse his power for a selfish end. The wise
man said: "Thoughtfully I pondered what goes on in this world when men have power over their fellows" (Eccles. Moffatt's Translation). We shall return presently and see how Christ met this appeal.

2. *He Sought to Induce Him to Overconfidence:* Satan takes the Lord to Jerusalem and places him on a pinnacle of the temple, one of the turrets of the high structure built by Herod, rising six hundred feet above the valley of Jehoshaphat—"so high" says Josephus in his *Antiquities*, "that it made one giddy to look down from the 'pinnacle'." The devil can tempt a man at home, in the wilderness, the city, market-place, or in the temple. To the pride of Christ he appeals, saying, "cast yourself down" with emphasis on the *down*. He could well have elaborated by saying, "the people want to be surprised, they want to be startled and you can do it now." Jesus had met the tempter with "It is written," and now the devil answers with Scripture. However, he omitted a part, and misapplied the other. He frequently quotes from the word of God, but he always distorts and misapplies it. Evidently Satan meant to impress the Lord with something like this. "Cast yourself down from this dizzy height. You know God has promised to bear you up, and to prevent you from suffering any harm. As you float gently down upon the breeze, landing safely upon the ground among all those people, they will make a great hero of you. And since you know, and they know that God has confessed you as his Son, they will at once proclaim you as the Messiah." But again Jesus turned from his appeal, and we shall observe later how he met it. But once more the devil makes a desperate effort, and this time risks all on it. But once he succeeds, it is a guarantee of final victory. If he fails, it is the beginning of the finish.

3. *An Appeal to Ambition—a Short Cut:* The Devil took him to "an exceeding high mountain" and showed him the "kingdoms of the world" and the *glory* of them. In effect, Satan was saying, "The long fight which you have begun need not continue longer. You plan to go the long hard way—the way of the cross, but here is a much shorter way. All you need to do is to fall down and worship me. Satan said: "I will give it to you, if you will fall down and worship me." What a price! It is the same price however that he exacted from every other world ruler. It is the universal price that Satan puts on all his wares. Yet millions are
willing to pay the price. The counter-part in human life today is when men are tempted to secure what they desire, or to hold what they possess, at the price of a compromise with evil, surrendering their principles, stifling their consciences, in short bowing down to Satan.

II. THE ANSWER OF CHRIST TO THESE APPEALS

1. To the First Appeal: To the first appeal he said in essence, "thanks but I cannot feed the natural man just now; I must wait till the spiritual man is strengthened. The father has some good reason for leaving me here without food. At the proper time he will see that I am strengthened both physically and spiritually." The evil in this appeal was adroitly concealed. The devil tried to persuade Jesus to presume on the wisdom and goodness of God. Jesus said, "Yes, a man must live, but not by bread alone. It is written in the Word of God; in the stars, and in the moral fabric of the universe, in the heart and conscience of man—written everywhere that 'man must not live by bread alone.'" Tragic is it when the man who lives by the Word of God dies within you—and man then lives on the animal and beast level.

2. To the Second Appeal He Said: "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." Jesus had been dared. We are all dared and challenged. First, the challenge, then the pressure, after which comes the yielding or the refusal to yield. Thank God, Jesus did not yield. To put oneself in a dangerous position to prove that God cares for one is both foolish and sinful. I believe in the providential help and care of God, but in my voluntary indulgence, whereby we "test the grace of God," this I do not believe. A man would not expect to put a match to a keg of powder and then expect God to keep him from being blown to atoms. One need not jump into the Niagara River and then expect that by some miracle God would keep him from being swept over the falls. Yet there are otherwise rational men and women who will walk in the way of temptation and seem to expect that they will be delivered therefrom.

It is said that one of the early church fathers after his conversion met on the street one day a former mistress of his sinful and licentious days. He turned and walked in the opposite direction. Surprised, the woman cried out, "It is I, It is I." But the new convert, proceeding on his way, cried back to her, "Yes, but it is
not I.” He meant this that a new convert would not tempt temptation by walking in the old territory of danger.

3. He Strips the Mask in the Last Appeal: In this last appeal, the Lord inflicted a mortal wound from which Satan has never recovered and never can recover. It was an earnest of Christ's final triumph. “Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had power over death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb. 2:14, 15.) Jesus met and foiled him with a “Thus it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.” There was no parleying, no hesitation. It was absolute reliance upon God and his word.

It is recorded in history that when one of the old Scottish warriors going into battle saw that many of his soldiers had no breastplate such as he was wearing, he flung off his armour, thus showing to his soldiers that he would avail himself of no protection that they themselves did not have. Thus Christ has fought Satan as you and I must fight him—that is, hand to hand, man to man, face to face.

After the great interview and dual has passed, the angels came and ministered to Jesus, both spiritually and physically. So today, every time we overcome temptation, we receive greater strength for service in the kingdom of God. One unarmed and humble mortal in touch with the Lord Jesus Christ, can overthrow Satan and all his armed hosts.

It was Archimedes, who said, “Give me a place on which to rest my lever, and I will move the earth.” It is said of him that he destroyed the Roman fleet off the coast of Sicily by setting fire to it by reflecting and conveying the sun’s rays with mirrors. These were put in harmony with the physical forces of the universe and by them he won the victory.

So in temptation, if we will be put ourselves in harmony with the spiritual forces round about we, too, can win and victory will be ours. Many are the forces at our disposal. By prayer we gain strength. David said, “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.” Thus the Lord utilized the word of God and turned the darts from his soul. Proper associations and
the continual avoidance of those things which tempt one will give added strength and power to overcome. May God bless you in walking day by day with him who supplies you with all power in overcoming the tempter.
MAN’S MOST PROFITABLE PURSUIT

Of all the pursuits of life there is one that stands above all others, name, pointed out and described by Jesus himself. After enumerating all of the things which create “anxiety” such as food, clothing and shelter, he finally summarizes it in man’s most worthy pursuit—Hear it. “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:33). God has through all generations of the past demanded the first and best of man’s possessions, time, talents and energies. The first of the ten commandments was that man should ascribe to Jehovah pre-eminence over all gods, and if man did not recognize the righteousness of this divine and jealous God, then God said he’d destroy him from off the face of the earth. “Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you; for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God.” (Deut. 6:14, 15). Jehovah demanded the first and best of the flocks of the field and the produce of the land. God has always given the best and demanded the best. He brooks no rivals and no superiors. The relative value that we place upon things determines the place they shall occupy in life’s program, therefore of paramount importance is our attitude and exertions with reference to this theme.

I. What to Seek?

1. The Kingdom of God: The words of Jesus declare “the kingdom of God . . .” If I had to propose an estate, province or kingdom, I could propose nothing more alluring than that proposed here. Here we behold “the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God is a group of people related to God and one another in a manner which God specified through Christ. That relationship included entrance into the kingdom, living within it, and reverent motives throughout. Christians are even now partakers of a system of noble principles which, as a leaven, day by day masters the life and improves the character. The royal spirit of his subjects is “Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.” (Gal. 3:22, 23). But these come not without struggle. True enough their present participation is imperfect. The royalties of this kingdom are from above, robes, crowns, palaces and life eternal. But now let us look at another phase of the kingdom.
2. His Righteousness: Be it readily observed that the Master said: "Seek ye first the kingdom and his righteousness. It is at once obvious that there is an inseparable connection between the kingdom of God and "his righteousness." It is his righteousness, and here means real "holiness." The Hebrew writer declared that we are to "follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification (The King James version says "holiness") without which no man shall see the Lord. It means the sanctification of our lives, that is the setting apart of our lives to the cause of righteous living. Said Paul, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Again, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement had a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:14-16). Once more, "But sanctify in your hearts the Christ as Lord . . ." (2 Pet. 3:15). And we do not forget that salvation is "by grace" . . . that's God's part—all his part in which man cannot function. Man is also saved "by grace through faith"—that is all man's part where God cannot function. Hence, "his righteousness" consists in right living, right relationships, to God—to others. We now ask.

II. When to Seek It?

1. First in Affections: Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). Paul admonished the Colossian brethren on this wise: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind (affections—K. J. V.) on things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. It is important that we keep the relative difference of our affections in mind when thinking about God and our relationship to him. For when Jesus touches these differences between those we love dearly in this life and our
relation to God he says: "If any man come after me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Lu. 14:26). Matthew's record makes it somewhat plainer to us. It reads: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:37, 38). Jesus said to some people upon one occasion who wanted to bid "goodbye to the folk" "to go bury their dead" that such would brand them as unfit for the kingdom. So you see our affections for this pursuit are to be primary and deeper than even our own family relationships. You say, "difficult." I agree. But the Lord said "this we must do." But again.

2. First in Importance: Somehow we still do not realize just how important the kingdom of heaven is. Carelessness and indifference toward God's provision for salvation is in evidence upon every hand. In theory we say, "the kingdom must be first," while in actual practice we put it last in relation to earthly allurements and interests. Let Jesus tell us just how important the kingdom is anyway. And we use the word kingdom in this study, as the church. The kingdom and church are used interchangeably in the New Testament. We find two illustrations of this divine estimate in the New Testament, and both in the same chapter. Said Jesus, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." This represents the kingdom as a man walking in a field and discovering a treasure. Anxious to obtain it, he goes home, sells "all that he has and buys that field." The second picture is that of a man—a merchant on search of goodly pearls. Hear his very words: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." (Matt. 13:44-46). Could one improve on the high value that Jesus attaches to the kingdom in these two dynamic parables? Here is a man who turns everything he has into money and purchases the pearl of great price. Paul said: "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. (Phil. 3:8). Paul did the same thing the men of the parables did—that is, he gave up every-
thing for the kingdom. Does one not in reality put the kingdom of God first who does this? The kingdom takes precedent over business, social appointments, school, club, family or whatever might be named that takes our time, thought and attention. But once more.

3. First in Attention: David said: "One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life." (Ps. 27:4). Paul said: "This one thing I do" (Phil. 3:13). It means the concentration of all our energies, attentions as the focus of the sun's rays through the glade to the object beneath. To determine our attention we need ask but two pertinent questions. First, what are your desires? Every man has some languid, lazy desire. Old Balaam practiced forbidden arts of divination; Herod endeavored to please Herodias; Pilate's supreme desire was political prestige. But if we be in earnest we will hunger and thirst after righteousness and thus be blessed. We ask what are your exertions? This is set forth in such passages as: "The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." (Lu. 16:16). Again, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force." (Matt. 11:12). To Timothy, Paul wrote saying: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses." Or, "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12:1, 2). Hence the question. Are our exertions toward the church all the time? Do we labor in it come what will? Or do we quit, and give our exertions toward the weak and beggarly elements of the world? These two questions will determine our attentions. And now we go on to say:

4. First in Time: God said in the long ago, "My spirit will not always strive with man." (Gen. 6:3). We learn two things from this passage. The first is that God's spirit does strive with man, and the second that it may in righteousness cease such strivings... it will no longer seek to induce man to come to God. In
Romans the first chapter three times over it is said: "God gave them up." In each case man had given God up first. Thousands today, like Governor Felix, are waiting for a "more convenient season" (Acts 24:25). That convenient time never came for Felix, and it will never come for you, my good friend. He who serves God only when convenient will never serve him. Too many want to attend worship when convenient, give when convenient, serve when convenient, and do whatever is done in the service of God on the basis of "convenience." People have been seen to stand by the thousands down through the years who were almost persuaded to be Christians and Christians only. They have stood in the presence of divine favor and allowed their last opportunity to leave them without God and hope; with their soul in darkness and despair. How irreparable will be the loss our soul—forever and forever. Why run the risk of losing life hereafter? The risk is too great, our interests are too important, our souls too immortal. Let us seek him in our youth. "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." (Eccles. 12:1). And what speaks to you falls with redoubled force upon age.

I come to appeal to you today not to delay this important matter of becoming a Christian. You owe it to yourself; to your family; to your community; to your God to thus be. In the midst of life we so often forget that there comes a first and a last. The whole tenor of our lives will be colored and shaped by the things we put first. The most worthy thing in this life is to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

One of the most singular events that ever happened in the life of Christ was that of his baptism. You have, no doubt, read the brief account in the Bible of the Baptism of Jesus. John the Baptist came preparing the way for the Lord, saying as he beheld Jesus coming to him, “behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (Jno. 1:29). Let us read first of all the account as given in Matthew’s record.

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:13-17).

As we read these verses there are a number of questions which come trooping to our mind. We shall view our theme under three topics. First, the difference in John’s and Christ’s Baptism; second, The Likenesses of Both; and Third, Why Christ Was Baptized.

I. THE DIFFERENCE IN JOHN’S AND CHRIST’S BAPTISM

1. The Name: John did not baptize into the name of Christ. The expression, “Into the name of Christ” denotes “relationship.” John did not baptize into this name, whereas the baptism of Jesus was to be administered “into the name of Christ.” We hear Christ in the Great Commission saying, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19). When the terms of salvation were first announced by the Apostle Peter under the Great Commission we hear him commanding his audience to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Nicodemus came to Christ to be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly. He learned that he “must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.” If John’s baptism was not the new birth then it did not introduce
anyone into the kingdom. Still another very marked difference between John’s baptism and that authorized by Christ, is that John’s baptism was not predicated upon faith in Christ.

2. Faith in Christ: The identity of Christ was not revealed until after he was baptized. Two times John said, “I knew him not” (Jno. 1:31, 33). He told how he was to know him. “And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water.” Of course John was a cousin of Christ, but did not know that this Christ was the Son of God, for it had not yet been revealed to him. Luke indicates that the great majority of the Jews had been baptized by the time Jesus made his appearance and demanded baptism. We read, “Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” (Lu. 3:21-22). Had John therefore demanded faith, he would have demanded an impossibility. He preached to those of his day that they “should believe on him that should come after him, or rather believe on him when he does come.” We have an incident out of the early history of the church which illustrates this point most vividly. The record is found in the 19th chapter of Acts of the Apostles. It reads: “And it came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, into what then were ye baptized? And they said, into John’s baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. This is the very opposite to what we do now. We now demand that people have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence baptism is an act of obedience—an act of faith. Here is one reason we cannot baptize an infant, regardless of the method, for an infant has no faith in Christ. Another fundamental difference in the baptism of John and of Christ, is that the baptism of Christ was universal in its scope. Let us view this for a moment.

3. The Scope of Each: John the Baptist administered his
baptism to Jews and to Jews only, whereas Christ administered his baptism through the Apostles to both Jew and Gentile. In the Great Commission he commanded his disciples to go everywhere—"into all the world"—to make "disciples of all nations." At the House of Cornelius, Peter commanded Gentiles to "be baptized into the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). This was a thing that the forerunner of Christ never commanded—he was confined in his efforts to the Jewish world, and it only. Now let us look at some of the likenesses.

II. SOME LIKENESSES

1. Both Were "in Water": We read, "John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (Jno. 3:23). Again we read, "Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan (Mk 1.9). In Matthew 3:16 Matthew declares that "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." These passages are conclusive to show that Jesus was baptized in water. Need we spend any time showing that water is the element used in the baptism administered today by those who baptize? Let us look now at an inevitable conclusion.

2. Both Are By Immersion: There are three conclusive lines of evidence which we shall look at rather briefly. First, the evidence from circumstances. In all the rites and ceremonies ever set forth by men as baptism, only one ceremony requires much water; and that, of course, is immersion. Moreover, it is stated in Mark's record that "Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan (Mk. 1:9). Matthew says that "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." These two passages alone establish the fact which indeed is hardly disputed by any, and that is that Jesus was baptized by immersion. Immersion is the only performance ever known that requires the person baptized to be in the water. No one ever saw "sprinkling" take place in water. The importance of this conclusion is obvious, because within the next three years Christ gave to his disciples the Great Commission in which he required them to "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). It is inconceivable that Christ himself having been immersed, would have commanded his disciples to baptize others unless he had intended for them to bap-
tize in the identical way in which he was baptized, namely, by immersion. It follows then, that any man who would be baptized in a manner acceptable to God should be immersed; for that action, and that action alone, is baptism.

Second, the meaning of the term vindicates "immersion" as the action of baptism. By adoption, this word "baptize" which we read in our New Testaments is Anglicized. The translators simply dropped the Greek-ending and gave it an English ending. The Bible is written therefore in a dead language, which simply means that the meaning of the words current in the first century are embalmed in that meaning, and have not changed with the passing of time. The word "baptizdo" means "to dip, submerge, overwhelm, cover up, etc." The Greek for sprinkle is "rantidzo." Some one may be saying, "now preacher, that is your interpretation of the word." No, my friend, that is what the Bible says—that is the way it is defined by all authoritative Greek-English Lexicons. Our third line of evidence comes from the Bible description of it.

We read in Romans 6:3, 4 this language: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." We have a similar statement in Col. 2:12. Paul continues the figure by saying: "For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." So it all sums up to one fact—namely, that baptism is immersion. Now we ask—

III. Why Was Christ Baptized?

1. Not for Remission of Sins: Christ was not baptized for the remission of sins, and this is true for the simple reason that he had no sins to remit. The Hebrew writer says of Christ that he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Even at the time of Christ's baptism, John recognized his sinlessness, and was reluctant to baptize him. Hence, he was not baptized for the remission of sins.

2. Not for Our Example: One of the most unscriptural phrases of modern times is that in which people talk of following Christ in
baptism. It is impossible for any man to follow Christ in baptism today for the following reasons: 1. As we have already learned, Christ was sinless, perfect and complete. How unthinkable it is for one whose life has been tortured and perverted by sin to speak glibly about following Christ in baptism. We should remember that the Lord has not told men to follow him in baptism, but to obey him in submitting to another baptism, as different in purpose as possible, from the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Christ was baptized when he was about thirty years of age. How unfounded, then, is the idea that the baptism of infants and small children is following the example of Christ! 3. Christ was baptized unto John's baptism; and we learn in the 19th chapter of Acts that his baptism is no longer acceptable to God, for it has been superseded by another baptism, the baptism commanded in the great commission. Then why was he baptized.

3. To Fulfill All Righteousness: Here is the Saviour's own answer. "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). This expression is a bit ambiguous unless we read it in the light of Old Testament Scriptures. It means to fulfill all the commandments of God. This use of the term "righteousness" is further justified by the expression in Lu. 1:6 concerning Zacharias and Elizabeth: "For they were both righteous, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless" (Lu. 1:6). In this passage, it will be observed that "righteousness" is used synonymously with "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord." These Scriptures lead us to the conclusion that Christ was submissive to the baptism of John, because it was God's commandment. God withheld his recognition of Jesus as His only begotten son until after his baptism. Is there any reason to believe that he will recognize a person today who has not obeyed. Have you done this? If not, then there is no hope or promise.
HAS CHRISTIANITY FAILED?

The question is often raised in these days of chaos and world upheaval as to "Why Christianity Has Failed." To raise such a question is, in a measure, to question the ability of God to meet the conditions of every changing generation. The question is at once wrought with the germ of deception. It assumes that which cannot be proved. The truth of the matter is, Christianity has not failed and it will not fail. To be sure, civilization may be crumbling but that should not cause one to lose faith; indeed, it should strengthen one's faith. Some things are crumbling today because they ought to crumble, for they are not good enough to continue.

Rembrandt is not a failure because more people are content to read the colored supplement. Shakespeare is not a failure because more people are satisfied with red-backed magazines and stories of soiled lives. International good-will is not a failure because an occasional nation or demagogue hurls billingsgate at the world. Christianity is not a failure because some political figure posing as "God" should laugh it into oblivion. Christianity is not so easily disposed. God is not willing that any man should perish, but desires that all men come to repentance. He sent Jesus into the world to accomplish this purpose. The great commission is to the whole world. Indeed, the whole remedial system has but one objective—the salvation of the world.

Someone will now ask, why do wars continue to curse the world? Why does sin still prevail in every land? Why are so few Christians in the world? And of those professing to be Christians, why are so many of them only nominal—just church members and very poor ones at that? Why all this, if God is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent; if he wills that all men be saved? With more sin and the world's worst war just concluded, many have concluded that Christianity has failed, and not only so, but that if there be a God, he is impotent to save.

But such reasoning is too hasty. Let us observe some of the stock arguments of the foes of Christianity. They just about summarize themselves into three basic ones. Any one of which are without foundation. Now to them.
I. Arguments Examined

1. Christianity Failed in Palestine: It is argued that in the very birthplace and cradle of Christianity, it failed. They remind us that this land is now pagan, and we are having to send missionaries to the very city where Christ was born, and, if Christianity could not live in its native land, it could not live anywhere. The answer to this charge is that Christianity was never accepted by the masses in that land. It was offered to the people, but rejected by most of them. Christ was killed as a common enemy of the public weal. More than once during his lifetime, he reminded them of the fate that would befall them because they rejected him in person. That which grew out of his life, namely Christianity, found little favor in the eyes of the masses. The answer to this charge, is that Christianity was never tried in Palestine save in a limited sense and by a small group in comparison to the multitudes, and these were imprisoned and killed by their enemies for their faith. But those who tried it, who will dare say that it did not succeed with them. My friends, the Bible is right, Christ is right and those who live by these will be right and will succeed. But another line of reasoning.

2. After Two Thousand Years It Has Failed: There are those who say that after 2,000 years of preaching that the worst war of all ages has just bathed the world. This seems conclusive proof to them that Christianity has failed. But what are the facts? Why war is but ample proof that the world has failed for lack of Christianity. It is proof positive that all things have failed except Christianity. Education could not prevent this war. Science has but accentuated its horrors. The philosophies of men have proven themselves empty and worthless. Politics failed. Statecraft failed. Culture failed. My friends, the cause of Christ has met with many contrary during these 2,000 years. It has suffered many reverses in different ages. Forces of evil still plague it. Nevertheless, it continues to grow and to influence the lives of more men and women. It will continue thus to the end of all time. Other kingdoms may rise and fall; civilizations may come and go, but the kingdom of Christ will never perish from off the earth so long as the world shall stand. Another line of reasoning presented by the opponents of Christianity is.

3. Our Own Nation Is Not Altogether Christian: We are told
that our own nation which claims to be a Christian nation, has more lawlessness than any other nation. And it does seem somewhat inconsistent that a crime wave should gain such headway in America. But we ask is Christianity responsible for the crime wave? No infidel would be foolish enough to make such a claim, but even the most bitter and unreasonable would admit that if all men lived by the principles of Christianity and by the teachings of our Blessed Lord that it would be a better nation. We are not a Christian nation. We only claim to be. We are Christian only in spots and that very sparsely. We have too much savagery, pagan and heathen coloring in our lives to claim to be as Christian as some claim. Hate, brutality, crime, and all the evil influences in the nation and world have come because of a lack of Christianity and not because of it. To point to the weaknesses and shortcomings and sins of any professed Christian is but to admit the value of Christianity. For on the other hand those who live up to the standards of Christianity are better, happier and more useful citizens in their communities. But now we ask why the apparent failure of Christianity. We can only suggest a few.

II. APPARENT CAUSES FOR FAILURE

1. The Love of Pre-eminence: One of the very first plagues of the early church was the love of pre-eminence (2 Thess. 2:1-12; 3 Jno. 3, 10). We need but point out one of these. In the little book of 3rd John the author tells us that there is a certain man in the church to which he writes, Diotrephes, who “loveth to have the pre-eminence among you,” who has created divisions because of his undue assumption of authority, and who has exercised said authority by trying to keep John away from the church. The word “Diotrephes” is a Greek term and means literally “one who is nourished by God.” There never was a greater misnomer. Whenever Diotrephes received his nourishment, it certainly was not from especially divine sources. Dictatorships, wars, rebellion and the like, both in and out of the church, can and will be stopped in no other way than by a complete submission to the will and authority of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

2. Division Creates a Condition: Division in our way of thinking, in our speech, in our interests, creates parties, factions and strife accompanied with bitter hatred. Christianity strikes at the very root of division. To the church at Corinth, perhaps more than
any other in the New Testament is perhaps the most striking case of this sort. Said he to them: "It hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are divisions among you." (I Cor. 1:11). But he had exhorted them to be of the same mind and the same judgment, perfectly joined together in the same. Jesus gave earnest attention to this in his prayer in the very shadow of the cross as he prayed that they "might all be one as he was one with the Father." (Jno 17:11, 20f).

3. Selfishness—Self-Willedness: Closely akin to these two causes is the selfish attitude of many, a spirit which prompts us to seek out our own interests, even at the interests of others, and even to the point of dividing the body of Christ. Paul gave one of the highest commendations to be found anywhere of his "Son in the gospel," Timothy, when he wrote concerning him: "For I have no one like-minded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 2:20). With one stroke he said he had no one thus minded. And then in the 3rd chapter he spiked the matter by saying, "Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things but each of you also to the things of others." (Phil. 2:3, 4). Until we look to the good of others, greed, corruption and dishonesty can never be stopped.

4. The Love of Ease: The love of ease is subversive to the spirit of Christianity. Paul said: "If any will not work, neither let him eat." Christianity calls for the very best there is within us. It calls for all our energy, our thought, our courage, our efforts, our sacrifices, our all. We can never succeed as a Christian, or as a congregation, as a body till we give the best that we have to God. The church has always experienced its triumphs when it was in a struggle on its way up the ladder of life. Israel had a woe pronounced upon her when she was at ease in Zion. That same woe will befall the church of our Lord when she settles into beds of ease. Christianity is not akin to this. It is a struggle, an effort, a constant alertness in action.

5. The Tyranny of Things: The love of things—the material
aspects of life has more and more absorbed those of us in this country. The love of the world and things worldly is contrary to the love we should have for God. John put it this way: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (I Jn. 2:15). As long as we love the things in this world more than we love God and the things that are eternal we can never be fitted for the society of God and the redeemed after awhile.

It is the objective of Christianity to remove and overcome these evils. Four thousands years had lapsed before the Son of God was revealed with healing in his wings to dissipate the night of darkness which enveloped the earth. It will take a long time to pull us out of the depths. We usually travel faster going down hill than in going up hill. But we may rest assured that God will not make a mistake. He has never made one and will not now. He has always succeeded in every undertaking. Humanity is too near-sighted. It expects things to account a success when accomplished in one lifetime, but the fact of history is that it takes successive generations to bring to fruition even the attempts of our devisings, much less the ultimate scheme of things with God.

Many things have not changed since first the world began. Sin is still destructive, Satan is still active, lives are still stained, hearts are still broken, human nature is still in need of regeneration, eyes still weep, disappointments are still around us, and multiplied millions are still traveling the road of discouragement. We still have the same Savior, the same remedy for sin. Programs and methods may change but these things never change. No, Christianity has not failed, to the contrary it has not been given a chance. Give it a chance in your life today.
WILL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?

We are all interested in any question that relates to the future life. There are many questions about the great beyond about which we shall never know in this life. There is nothing revealed that will satisfy all the longings of the soul that we have in reference to these things. I think, however, that this is a gracious provision of our father. It would probably disqualify us for the practical things of this life if he allowed us to dwell too much upon the things of another life; upon the things of the spirit world.

We all have friends and loved ones that have gone on before. They are waiting for us on the other side. Shall we meet them there? And when we meet them, shall we know them? Shall we know them as we knew them here? Shall we remember them in connection with all we knew of them in this life? Or shall we meet them as strangers? Shall they, like all the rest of the heavenly host, be known simply as redeemed spirits, whose acquaintance is to be formed, and who possess no knowledge of an earthly life to distinguish them as those dear to us here? These are questions of absorbing interests to God's children. On the answer depends the very nature of the future life. Now if I can say to you that we will know one another in heaven and remove such objections as may stand in the way, I will have answered this question not in vain. Let us notice some objections.

I. SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

1. We Shall Be Simply Disembodied Spirits: It is argued that in the world to come that we shall be disembodied spirits, and how can formless, featureless spirits recognize one another? But I ask, whence this idea? Did it come from the Word of God? If so, what chapter or verse contains the thought? The idea is not once contained in all the Bible. The thought originated outside the Bible. Some of the modern creeds of Christendom say: "God is a spirit without body, parts or passions." If a thing has neither body, parts, nor passions, pray what has it? This nothingness is predicated of God and, of course, it follows that the same is true of all other spirits. But this is an unwarranted assumption. It is true that God is spirit. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." (R. V.) Paul says, "There is a natural
body and there is a spiritual body” (I Cor. 15:44). “It is sown a
natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” The spiritual body is
just as much a reality as the natural body. It is no more “formless
and featureless” than the natural body. This objection, I regard as
wholly destitute of foundation in truth. But another objection is
often offered.

2. We Shall Miss Some Who Don't Get to Heaven: If we
know our loved ones and friends whom we knew on the earth, we
shall miss those whom we do not see there, and as a consequence
we shall be very unhappy. Now this is quite plausible, and has
staggered the faith of many. But let us see the fallacy in this
observation.

Why do you conclude that it will make you unhappy to miss
some of your friends from the heavenly circle? You say, because
I love them. Sometimes we hear a man say, as one did recently
in a popular periodical, “If my wife is not in heaven, I would not
be happy there.” Such an objection is illogical. It is nothing more
than an effort to put God in a dilemma, as though we said, God
has promised this, but we know that he cannot perform it.” Do
you think we shall have more love than God. “Greater love hath
no man than this, that one lay down his life for his friend.” But
Christ gave his life for his enemies. His love is infinitely beyond
ours. And yet sinners whom he loves are going down to perdition
every day. The road that leads to death is thronged with them.
And yet the Son of God is not unhappy. The fact that sinners miss
heaven does not “deprive heaven of its happiness to Him.” Then
why should the missing of some of our loved ones render us
unhappy?

Why people don't find any trouble being happy on this earth
in the midst of want and woe, sin and suffering. We live in the
midst of misery, human suffering and privation. Nevertheless, we
live in the midst of this in good homes, enjoy life, and are not
rendered unhappy. It is a little strange that people get all con-
cerned about the suffering of those who do not go to heaven, and
imagine that our happiness would be destroyed by the knowledge
of the fact that some are lost. God is an infinite creature (being).
If He with His great heart of compassion, with his tenderness and
love—if he, I say can be happy there, why should I worry or
trouble myself with doubts as to my own condition? We shall not
only see Him and be like Him, but we shall see things as He sees them and He is happy, so shall we be happy. Hence this objection, plausible as it first appears, is without foundation in fact. Now let us turn to the positive side of this question.

II. Why I Believe We'll Know Each Other

1. The Continuity of Memory: My first argument is based upon the continuity of memory. Man's memory, from all we can gather in the Bible persists on in eternity. Man is a dual being. He is composed of a mortal and an immortal part. The immortal part thinks, reasons, reflects, remembers. On it all moral, intellectual and spiritual impressions are made. This part never dies. It simply passes from one state of existence to another. It is what Paul calls the inward man. It dwells in the body. It is the "I" of Paul. "When I am at home in the body, I am absent from the Lord; and when I am absent from the body, I am at home with the Lord." Since the inner man alone thinks, reasons, and remembers; and since it never dies, but simply changes its place of residence, we see nothing from which we might infer that any impression upon it is marred or obliterated.

There is one key which unlocks to me the door of all mystery connected with the things of the spirit. This key proposition is the belief that there is in the universe an infinite God. If you grant me that promise, I see no reason to deny any conclusion, for if God is infinite then nothing is impossible to Him. If we should grant that man is wholly mortal and that at death he ceases to be, if there is an Infinite God who created man, there is no reason to believe that God cannot retain the memory of him and re-create him whenever he should see fit to do so. Allow me to illustrate this point.

My mother has been dead for more than a quarter of a century. Her body has long ago returned to dust from whence it came, yet I can speak the word now and there she stands before me. I see her form. I see the expression of her face, her cold black hair, the twinkle of her eye, the tone of her voice and recognize it. She stands there before me as clearly as if it had been yesterday that I last saw her. You cannot see her, but I do. By a moment of concentration, I can bring the picture of my mother to my mind. If I, by my finite mind, can retain the complete image and personality of my mother for a quarter of a century, and then cause her to
reappear before me in mental image, how easy it would be for the Infinite Mind to cause her to reappear in reality.

In that matchless story of the rich man and Lazarus in the 16th chapter of Luke, Abraham said to the rich man who lifted up his eyes in torments and said, "Son remember." My second argument is based upon the—

2. The Transfiguration: When Christ was transfigured before three of His disciples, there appeared and remained with them Moses and Elijah. Moses has been dead near fifteen hundred years, and his body sleeping in an unknown grave. Elijah had not seen death, for God took him. The body of one had returned to dust, and that of the other had been "changed" as those will be who are found alive when the Son of Man comes. But they both appeared to the disciples and talked with them. The difference in the disposition of their bodies seemed to make no difference in their existence at that time. This is in harmony with Paul's teaching, that the body with which we are "clothed upon" at death does not differ materially, so far as can be observed, from that which we shall have when our vile bodies are fashioned like unto his glorious body. "Moses and Elijah appeared as themselves." They were recognized as such. They were "two men." They were not "formless, featureless spirits" but men. And they appeared "in glory." They were, therefore, in the glorified state; and yet they were men, as much as Moses and Elijah were men on the earth. They talked with Jesus about His death, which was soon to take place at Jerusalem. It follows, therefore, that in their home in glory they knew about the Savior's work upon the earth, and they knew that He was soon to die at Jerusalem. It is not said that Jesus talked to them about His death, but they talked to Him. They, therefore, had to know the things of which they talked. Here is a clear cut case of recognition. My next argument is based upon—

3. An Actual Case of Recognition: This argument is based on the facts stated in regard to the rich man and Lazarus. Whether this be a parable or a historical fact, it matters not. In either case it teaches the same lesson. A parable never represents a thing as occurring that never occurs, or that may not occur. Hence we may rely on this as worthy of our attention.

I think it would be fair to presume that the acquaintances between the rich man and Lazarus was not very intimate in this life.
But when they met in the unseen world, they recognized each other. The rich man knew Lazarus and knew himself. When he prayed for Lazarus to be sent to give him a drop of water, he was told to "remember" that in this world he had his good things, and Lazarus his evil things. He was told to reflect upon the way he had lived on the earth; how he had treated Lazarus, and lived only for self. He was not only told to remember, which establishes the fact that the Son of God recognized the exercise of memory as a fact in the spirit world, but he actually did remember, and did recognize the beggar whom he had turned hungry from his gate. He also remembered that he had five brothers living in sin as he had done, and he remembered the teaching of Moses and the prophets, that if they died in impenitence, they would come to the same place of torment. This, therefore, is an actual demonstration of the fact of future recognition. My final argument is based upon—

4. A Case of Special Pleading: In Matthew the seventh chapter we have these words from our Saviour's lips. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Here the Savior represents a scene which will take place at the judgment. There will doubtless be thousands engaged in it. They plead their case for divine favor. They tell what they did by the name of Jesus. They remember what they did while here in this life, and those associated with them. The two worlds, the connection between them, and their idea of meriting divine favor, were all vividly remembered. This knowledge and exercise of memory are not peculiar to that class. All have the same faculties. They remembered themselves and their associates and their earthly life. All this demands recognition. Take that idea out of it, and such language could not be used.

That we shall know each other is our inevitable conclusion from these arguments. There is not a great deal said in the Scriptures on this point, but all that is said is in favor of the idea that we shall know each other. May the Lord bless this message to the good of your soul and may he bring us all at last into that Land beyond where no sorrows ever cross, is my prayer.