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Six Gospel Sermons

John T. Hinds

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SIX GOSPEL SERMONS

By JOHN T. HINDS



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UNIVERSAL NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY

It is conceded by all that the establishment of Christianity in the world was for the purpose of saving men and women. What Christianity is, its adaptability to man's needs and the necessity of all responsible beings accepting it are questions of vital concern, which no one can safely ignore. The absolute demand for its acceptance is supported by the highest authority. Moses, the world's greatest lawgiver, said of Christ, the author of Christianity: "A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22, 23). At his transfiguration the voice of God said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

That Christianity is universal in its demands is seen in the fact that God does not propose to accept any half-hearted service. Jesus said ye must love God with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." No half way serving the Lord if we are to be accepted. In rebuking the congregation at Laodicea for being lukewarm John represents Christ as saying that he would spew them out of his mouth because they were neither cold nor hot. We must accept Christianity and render honest service to God or be lost. There is no other alternative.

This rigid demand of Christianity must be understood,

of course as being applicable only to those responsible. The infant and the mentally incompetent are not gospel subjects. As the gospel is not addressed to them, they are not included in the demands for obedience. Christianity applies only to those who have lived or will live since its establishment and are capable of rendering intelligent obedience to its requirements. To all such Christianity offers the only hope. This fact, I am sure, will be abundantly sustained by the Scriptures to be offered in this lecture.

The universal nature of Christianity is forcefully presented by the significant use of the word "all" both by Christ and his apostles. The following examples will be sufficient as proof:

1. "All authority." This is the claim that Christ as the founder of Christianity made for himself when he sent his apostles as his accredited representatives. His words are these: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." The King James version says "power," but there is no question but that authority is the better word. The fact that it is found in the Revised Version is all the proof we need.

These words should make a profound impression on all honest hearts. It was Christ who said them. He had been raised from the dead and was soon to return to his Father. He was issuing his final commission to the apostles and giving the law by which men should be saved. Under these solemn circumstances he said, "All authority" is given to me. Are we willing to obey the command of God and "hear him"?

To fully appreciate this authority we must remember that it applies to both heaven and earth. Not only so but to the full extent of both realms; for it is said that

Christ has all authority in each realm. Paul said because Christ humbled himself in becoming obedient to the death of the cross, "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name that is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). In referring to Christ's present state Peter said: "Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him" (1 Peter 3:2). Surely if all the angelic hosts of heaven must bow to the authority of Christ, there can be no reason why men should be excused.

Paul not only says in heaven and on earth but under the earth. In Rev. 1:18 it is said that Christ, since his resurrection has the "keys of death and of Hades." Since Christ's spirit went to Hades while his body was in the tomb, and since he now has the keys of that realm, we are safe in saying that Paul's expression "under the earth" refers to Hades—the state between death and the resurrection. This makes his authority supreme in all realms except Satan's domain where no one can or is expected to serve him. This authority may be rejected, of course, but only at the peril of the one who does it.

A pertinent question in this connection is this: How long will Christ be permitted to hold this authority? Or, putting it in other words, when will he relinquish it? We are not only told that this authority will be exercised while at the right hand of God but we are also told exactly when he will give it up. In speaking of Christ's coming Paul said: "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority

and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death" (1 Cor. 15:24, 25). Christ reigns while at the right hand of the Father but will turn the rule and authority back to God when he comes.

II. "All nations," "Every creature."

After all the Scriptures have said about the authority of Christ it seems unnecessary to add more to prove the universal nature of Christianity. But men are often slow to accept the plainest facts sustained by the most unmistakable proof. The Holy Spirit through the apostles has made provision to meet this human weakness by giving elaborate evidence and by mentioning the smallest details. In the report of the commission as given by Matthew, Mark and Luke we find that all nations are to be taught, the gospel is to be preached to every creature or the whole creation, and that repentance and remission of sins in his name is to be preached among all nations. This shows that every nation, tribe and tongue in this world is required to hear and obey Christ—to become a Christian. None are exempt except the babes and those not responsible. These statements make the obligation individual.

The commission also settles the missionary problem. If the gospel is for all and is the power of God to save people, then it must be preached to all, those near us and those far from us. No difference where a human being lives he is entitled to hear the gospel. Christians, to the extent of their ability, should either send or take it to him. For this we have the unquestioned example of the apostles and early Christians. When a persecution scattered the Jerusalem church abroad they "went about preaching the word." Much of Paul's life was devoted to carrying the gospel to other nations than

his own. No individual or congregation should be satisfied till some provision is made for some missionary work. The universal nature of Christianity requires it.

III. "All things commanded."

Jesus not only told the apostles to teach the nations or preach the gospel to every creature, but to teach them "to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Of course, in requiring them to preach the gospel to every creature it is implied that they must preach all things he demands of sinners as conditions of salvation. This would necessarily include the commands to believe, repent and be baptized. The story of the conversions under their labors proves that they did preach these commands; for, the converts all obeyed them. This is final proof that the commands of the gospel are also universal.

But the expression "all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Matt. 28:20), refers to the things he required them to teach Christians respecting their duties. Since Christians must be faithful until death to receive the crown of life, it is just as necessary to be taught Christian duties as what to do to become Christians. This involves not only the duties of faithful Christians but backsliders as well. If all things should be taught to one Christian, then to all Christians. So, even Christian duties are as universal as the membership of the body of Christ. I shall not stop here to mention all these duties but will say that meeting for worship on the first day of the week and "laying by in store as the Lord has prospered" us are just as universal and individual as other Christian duties. We do not worship the Lord by proxy; we must do it ourselves if it is done.

IV. "Always"—that is till Jesus comes again.

When Jesus sent his apostles to preach the gospel and teach all nations, he said to them: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This language does not mean that he would remain with them personally, for he has long since gone back to the Father. Neither did he mean that they would stay on earth till the end of the world, for they have long since passed to the beyond. He must have meant that his approval would rest upon them till they completed the work he gave them to do, and that what they did because inspired by the Holy Spirit would be binding till the end of the world. This harmonizes perfectly with what he had told them before his death when he said, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." This again proves that the gospel requirements are not only universal for every responsible creature but it is to remain that way until the end of the world.

Customs and fashions often change and this is all well enough, but this does not change the nature of man nor the conditions of the gospel. When man needed to be saved in the first days of Christianity he needs now. Christ provided for the needs of man's future. Hence, the universal nature of his law.

Preachers may go to their appointments in the automobile, the limited train or even the aeroplane, but the truth that saves men is just the same as when the apostles walked about the hills of Galilee. Science in the fields of electricity, medicine and surgery has accomplished wonders and has done much to relieve life of many burdens, but man's nature remains the same and his spiritual needs are unchanged.

Men often cry for a change in the church and the plan of salvation in order to keep up with the times. They want the same liberties in divine things that God allows in temporal things. But this would not be best. An unchangeable covenant with unchangeable conditions is man's only guarantee against the devices of Satan. If variable and left to the whims of men, soon there would be no certainty or safety anywhere. The history of denominationalism with its human creeds is ample evidence of this truth.

Just here, it will be well to ask again for emphasis, How universal is Christianity? The sum total of what the Scriptures say on the question is that it is for every creature in every nation until the end of the world. Hence the law of pardon expressed in the commission, the law by which people become Christians, will be binding till the end of the world. If there were any other law that would save, people in some other world would have to be found to be saved by it; for, the law in the commission is for every responsible subject in this world as long as it stands. This may seem an exacting position, but man has no right to judge the Lord and say his ways are not just. If he be able to save, he surely knows how to save. His law can neither be wrong nor unjust.

V. All are invited to come.

While the law demands that all obey or else have no promise of salvation, the Lord makes the invitation just as universal as the law. Tenderly he pleads, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Almost the last thing said in the divine record is an invitation from the spirit and the bride saying, "Come." Then the statement is made that "he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the

water of life freely." The only thing that will hinder people from coming is a lack of willingness to come. Since all may come, the law that demands obedience of all is just.

VI. All Must Face the Judgment.

Paul in 2 Cor. 5:10 says: "For we must all be made manifest before the judgement 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." The universal nature of Christianity is here seen in the fact that all the race must face at the judgment the Christ whose authority covers the whole realm of intelligent responsibility. Whether good or bad no one is to be excused from this great universal meeting. Since we are all to be present at the judgment, all should be ready by obeying the only law that prepares for that day.

VII. All the Wicked Will Be Lost and All the Righteous Saved.

In Matt. 25:31-46 Jesus has given a vivid picture of the judgment. He says that all the nations shall be gathered before him and he will separate them as a shepherd divides between the sheep and the goats. Those placed on the left are the wicked who will be told to depart; those upon the right are the good who will go into eternal life. The two classes constitute the sum total of the race. The judgment then is just as universal as the race. Well may we ask with the apostle Paul, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" How can we afford to meet the Lord when we have refused to obey his law or have "counted the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified an unholy thing?" Why be lost when

a law has been provided that will save every willing responsible soul." Why waste the few years allotted us here when eternity with all its wealth of heavenly blessings is open to all who desire to enjoy them? Let us obey and thank the Lord for a law that is broad enough to save every one that really wants to be saved; a law as universal as the needs of the human race.

WORKMEN APPROVED OF GOD

The passage of Scripture that will best serve as a suggestion for what I have in mind to say is Paul's familiar exhortation to Timothy, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." Two things are here mentioned—the work to be done and the divine approval if rightly done.

Work is one of the universal requirements laid upon the human race. The first statement regarding it was made when man was placed in the garden of Eden and told "to dress it and keep it." Because of sin man was cast out under God's displeasure. At this time it was said of him: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat all the days of thy life;" and again it was said: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground." The production of thorns and thistles is nature's way of enforcing this primitive decree and proving that Moses has correctly reported the facts. Nature willingly gives up her treasures only to the hands devoted to wise and persistent toil.

This truth is everywhere apparent. The student finds that success is obtained at the price of unrelenting effort. The lawyer, the doctor, the mechanic or the financier goes onward and upward by the way of hard work. No substitute has been found that will take its place.

In the spiritual realm this truth is equally evident.

Idlers succeed no better in the Lord's vineyard than elsewhere. Besides this we have work directly commanded. To Christians Paul says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." James agrees with Paul when he says we must be "doers of the word, and not hearers only," else we will delude ourselves. He further tells us that a man who is a doer of the work shall be blessed "in his doing." Some one has well said that success can generally be attributed to five per cent inspiration and ninety-five perspiration.

There must be something more than the pleasure of the work itself. Some motive must stimulate us for the task. But whatever be the motive in view we want our work approved. If we do not receive approval, we are disappointed and consider our labor wasted.

We may have the satisfaction of our own approval. Like Paul we may have a conscience "void of offense toward God and man." Such honesty should characterize all workmen; but even then, like Paul, we may be mistaken and have our work rejected. Fortunately for him, he learned his mistakes, changed his work so that he might have a better and safer approval than his misguided conscience.

We may have the endorsement of men—the world in general—and yet not be doing the right work. On this point Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). James puts the matter in the form of a question, as follows: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (Jam. 4:4). A kindred thought is expressed by John in these words: "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." (1 John 2:15).

The approval that will always be just, and the only one that will be satisfactory finally, is that which comes from God. Jesus settles the whole matter in one verse when he says: "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." This point is well illustrated by an incident said to have occurred at a railroad station. The crowd was pushing and surging as if each felt that he must be the first to pass the gateman. "Take your time, show your tickets," said the gateman as he let them through one by one. The gateman would not yield, and the road's orders must be obeyed. When all had passed out, an interested bystander came up and said: "Pretty hard job trying to please everybody, is it not?"

"I am not trying to please everybody," the gateman replied. "I am trying to please the general superintendent; my job depends on him."

We should work to please God and get his approval. Our salvation depends on that. Everything else will be of little value if we fail in this.

Life in its entirety may be appropriately viewed as a structure the building of which is left to us. A wise selection of materials and a happy way of forming them into a complete building is what brings both joy and approval for the workman. Only those who build upon the sayings of Christ can hope to receive divine approbation in the day of accounts. It is worthy of note that just as much labor and time may be given to our life work religiously without doing what Christ says as by doing it, but it will not meet his sanction at last.

In every undertaking there are certain fundamental things that must be considered if we succeed. In the matter of buildings at least four things deserve special consideration: a safe foundation, a proper superstructure, a wise plan and a right purpose. The further discussion of this subject will follow more or less closely this outline.

I. A Safe Foundation.

Regarding the necessity of a foundation Jesus said that every one who heard and obeyed his words was like a man building a house, "who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it; because it had been well builded." (Luke 6:48). A great building cannot rest upon a flimsy foundation. Men who have achieved great things or risen to places of trust and honor have usually come up through years of persistent and painstaking effort. Such hard experience is the best school from which to graduate for the really big things of life. The best thing in store for man is eternal life, and the best way to obtain it, in fact, the only way to obtain it, is to build a life structure of which we will not be ashamed when the Lord comes.

Two things are vital in making a safe foundation. Tested material must be used and time enough taken to lay it well. Taking chances on either one is too risky when the destiny of the soul is at stake. A failure here will be disastrous and prove the workman to have been foolish instead of wise. Since this is just as true of the building as of the foundation, the language of Jesus in John 14:6 is appropriate here. He says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto

the Father, but by me." We are "laborers together with God," and should understand with the Psalmist that, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." (Ps. 127:1).

Many failures in life can be traced directly to faulty material or too little preparation for the work. It is said that Edison made several thousand experiments before perfecting the storage battery. When some one remarked that it was too bad that so much labor was lost, the great inventor replied: "It was not lost; I know a lot of things which I must not do."

Respecting the length of time that may be spent in properly preparing for a great task we have two outstanding examples in the Bible. One was Moses, the other our Lord. Moses was reared in the royal Egyptian family where, no doubt, he passed the better part of the first forty years of his life. Stephen tells us that he was instructed "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works." This was fine schooling. Years later he must meet the Egyptian king face to face and make a demand so astounding that it would arouse the bitterest opposition of that powerful people. Forty years of experience with them was a piece of foundation work that would be invaluable when the time for deliverance came.

At the close of this period he considered himself ready for the great task, and thought his brethren would so understand; but they did not, and God knew that he needed more fundamental experience before attempting to lead a people so long in bondage. Hence forty years more of schooling in the wilderness of Midian. Here as he led his father-in-law's flocks he could commune with nature and learn the lesson of absolute dependence

upon God, a lesson he afterwards often needed sorely. After eighty years of foundation work was done he was ready to do in the next forty the really big things God had in view all the time.

Christ grew to manhood in an earthly home, busied about the things of a carpenter's shop. For more than three years he was giving fundamental instruction, preparing a few followers for the work before them. All this before the inauguration of his own kingdom. If the ancient lawgiver needed eighty years to prepare for his work, and our Lord, with his divinity, more than thirty, we should not become impatient if most of our time in this world is needed to lay a foundation for some special work. Neither should it seem strange because it requires all our life to prepare for heaven.

II. A Proper Superstructure.

Careful consideration must be given the kind of building or we may find when we have finished our work that we have spent time and labor with the result that we have something of no value whatever. The kind needed depends upon the use to be made of it, and the person or thing that is to occupy it. If a residence is desired, a certain form of arrangement must be adhered to. If a school or store be the purpose in view, a different plan is necessary.

Adjustment to whatever the situation demands is one of the secrets of success. If one wishes to specialize in some particular work, a suitable course of instruction is the proper thing. Schools of law, medicine, agriculture and arts are established to meet any and all special needs that may arise. But all these temporal things may be provided for and yet one's education be sadly deficient. Any education is incomplete that fails to

take into account man's whole nature. Specializing is all right in its place, but the problem of human life is a bigger and broader proposition than medicine, law or agriculture. The specialist who knows nothing outside his own little world in which he may be an expert is poorly prepared for the duties of life.

There are four essential parts in man's complex nature and all of these must be cared for if we expect to have our work approved.

1. A body of flesh which requires food, exercise and rest. Physical culture has a vital place in the scheme of correct living. The laws of hygiene should be known and carefully observed. Proper clothing, protection from the elements and wholesome food contribute their part toward a healthy body. But one might be all this and still be just a street bully, prize fighter or a college athlete. One might be able to reach the goal with a touchdown, or knock a home run whose grades in mathematics, history or philosophy might be F. Physical culture alone cannot build a lasting structure. Champion prize fighters sooner or later get defeated, drop out of sight and are forgotten. They have too little in their building and the material is worthless to the world. So of all others who care for the needs of the body only.

2. A mind. This part of man's nature is looked after with the most painstaking care. Thousands of school houses and millions of dollars spent each year for education is proof that both parents and state are making heroic efforts to train the mind of the young. But when this is done to the limit hoped for we may have only an educated criminal. It has now come to pass that law enforcement officials must match wits with criminals equally brilliant. The boy or girl with a per-

fect body and a trained mind may be a menace to society still. The noted Franks murder case in Chicago, in which two brilliant moral perverts were tried for deliberately killing an innocent child just for the thrill, is unmistakable proof that we must have more in life's structure than just mind culture.

3. The moral nature. It is agreed on all hands because social science and ethics so teach that there is a moral feature to our nature which must be sustained and safeguarded. The thief, liar and moral renegade are all detestable to good people. By rigid and careful training we may make our children live true to the principles of honor and morality; but in that event they are only meeting the requirements of this world. This all ends at death. What preparation has been made for the future? Absolutely nothing. A strong body, a brilliant mind and a perfect honor toward humanity may all be possessed by the rank skeptic. What has the Christian more than others if this be all he claims? What has man done to honor his maker if he has been true only to his fellowman?

4. The spirit. This is the part of man by which he is directly related to God. Paul calls God the "Father of our spirits." When our education leaves out the proper care and development of the spirit, the only promise left is eternal despair. The world will smile and say you are all right without spending time on the spiritual nature, if otherwise educated, but God's approval cannot be thus received.

The life of Solomon furnishes a fine example of the point just made. He tasted about all the temporal pleasures of life, yet his final conclusion was that all was "vanity and vexation of spirit." His wisdom was

the equal of any and superior to most, yet he did some very foolish and hurtful things. In the last days of life he allowed his heart to be turned from God to idols by his unholy alliance with foreign wives, and thus laid the foundation for the downfall of his kingdom. We can accept his conclusion, though he failed to live up to it, that "to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man."

III. A Wise Plan.

A plan of some kind must be devised or no building work can be done. The workman is not allowed to change the plans prepared by an authorized architect. If one plans his own structure, he must do it according to the law and rules which are endorsed by those competent to judge.

The only reliable source of information on how to build spiritually is found in the Bible. The "blue print" on the plan of salvation is a part of the story in this book. The penalty for making any change is that the one guilty shall be accursed. See Gal. 1:8-10. The pattern for the Jewish tabernacle was given to Moses while in the mount. He was warned several times to make all things according to the pattern shown him. The church is the temple of God, established by Christ through his inspired apostles, and a curse of destruction is pronounced against those who would destroy it. The pen picture of an ideal life is also found in the Bible. No one can succeed in pleasing God whose work is not guided by this record.

IV. A Finished Work.

A workman receives the coveted honor when he turns over the finished structure to the one for whom it was

built and hears him say, "Your work is well done; I accept it in full." In order to have God's approval at the proper time we must finish the work he has given us to do. Illustrating this point, Jesus says we must count the cost lest, like the man who laid a foundation for his tower but was not able to complete it, we may be mocked with the words: "This man began to build but was not able to finish." Jesus carried out his own teaching in this matter; for, his last words before he died were these: "It is finished."

We can never know what the final results will be till the end is reached. Ancient history furnishes a splendid illustration of this point. Croesus, the Lydian king, whose prodigious wealth perpetuated his name in the proverbial expression "Rich as Croesus," was once entertaining the Greek philosopher Solon. After he had shown all the splendor of his kingdom, he asked Solon who was the happiest man he had ever seen. Solon replied that the happiest man he had ever seen was one Tellus, a Greek citizen, who had a virtuous wife, obedient children and a pleasant home. When a war was waged against the Greeks Tellus gave service to his country and lost his life in defense of his country's honor.

Croesus was disappointed at Solon's reply, but asked who was the next happiest man he had ever seen. Solon mentioned two brothers who possessed great bodily strength and received public praise for their respect for and obedience to their aged mother. Then Croesus wanted to know why Solon did not name him, since his wealth was enormous and his kingdom glorious. To this Solon replied that he could not name Croesus as among the happy men until he knew how his life would

end. The philosopher's reasoning was justified; for, a son who was heir to the throne was killed in an accident, and later still Croesus lost his kingdom. A sad ending to years of worldly glory. He began to build but was not able to finish. He had no doubt trusted in his riches and royal power, but did not have God in his plans. Building for time instead of eternity will not give us God's approval.

Any failure is sad, but failing to finish the task and losing all we have done is inexpressibly so. Dr. W. M. Taylor of Liverpool, England, tells this touching incident: He was requested to break the news to a mother and children concerning their husband and father who was lost at sea that day. In the service of his country, the sailor had been around the world and was nearly home; so close, in fact, that he had sent a message saying he would be home for dinner that day.

The meal was being prepared, the table set, the house was in order and the mother and children happy in anticipation when the preacher arrived. The mother met him at the door with the good news that her husband was to be home for dinner and asked him to stay for the meal and rejoice with them. With tenderness and tears the preacher told the story of the accident which for that home had turned sunshine into shadow, and smiles into weeping. The brief, sad and expressive words of the mother were these: "So near home and yet lost." To the same effect but with far greater sadness will be the word "depart," which at the judgment will

be spoken to those who have not "fought a good fight," nor "kept the faith," nor "finished the course."

The finishing touches of any work are the most interesting and attractive. May God at last approve of our work and say, "Well done!"

CHRIST BEFORE THE CROSS

A famous bridge builder, Ralph Mojeski, said: "There is in every problem what may be called a central theme or principle. Unless this theme or principle is grasped clearly at the start, every subsequent attempt to solve the details of the problem is undertaken blindly. You may indeed happen to stumble on the solution. But a man works to a purpose only when he thoroughly understands what his job is all about, and why he is doing it at all."

There is not only a central theme or principle but a central character. Beyond question, if we accept God as the Father of us all, Christ is the great central character of all true religion. One evidence of his greatness and superiority is that like his illustrious prototype, Melchizedek, he stands alone with no predecessor or successor in his work or position. Of the levitical priests it is said that by reason of death they were hindered from continuing, but of Christ it is said, "because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable," and that "he ever liveth to make intercession" for us.

The vital nature of Christ's work is plainly set forth in such statements as these: "For except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5). "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." (John

15:10). No further evidence is necessary to prove that all men must honor Christ by obeying him if they have any promise of salvation.

In further explanation of the universal nature of Christ's work we have this from Paul: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever." (Heb. 13:8). Christ has not always been in the same form, neither have divine covenants been the same, but he has always been the same in his oneness with the Father and the basic principles of his work have been the same. There has never been any way to serve God and be saved except to believe and obey his word. In whatever way Christ was related to any divine covenant to that extent we obey or disobey him by accepting or rejecting that covenant. In some way, even if inexplicable to us, Christ was in the development of God's plan for the salvation of the world. This will appear as we proceed. It is his work preceding his death upon the cross that you are now asked to consider. Logically it falls under three general heads.

I. Christ with the Father.

Just how the only begotten Son of God could be with the Father before he was made flesh and dwelt among men is, of course, beyond human wisdom to explain; but that does not render the fact less true. If man could solve all the secrets of divinity, he would become God himself. Moses declared that "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but things that are revealed belong to us and unto our children forever." (Deut. 29:29).

The question of Christ with the Father in the beginning is a matter plainly asserted by the divine record. John, in the opening of his gospel, says: "In the begin-

ning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." In the first verses of his first letter the same apostle says of the word of life, which was from the beginning, which was with the Father, it was manifested unto us. The connection leaves no room to doubt that he means the same Word referred to in his gospel. That he means Christ is also beyond question.

John not only states the fact that Christ was with the Father in the beginning, but also of his part in the creation itself. He says: "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." Paul agrees with John when he refers to Christ and says, "for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him." (Col. 1:16). In Heb. 1:2 Paul, speaking of Christ, says, "through whom he made the worlds." In verse 10 it is said of him, "Thou Lord, in the beginning, didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands."

As Christ was in God in some sense in the creation, the first sin was not only against God but against Christ as well. Every sin since has in the same manner been against Christ. But if Christ was in the creation, we are forced to accept the Mosaic account of it. Jesus himself said: "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46,47). No clearer endorsement could be given the writings of Moses. If the Mosaic account of creation were not true, it is unaccountable that Jesus did not expose

his mistake regarding the origin of man. If Jesus endorsed his writings and did not know his record was a mistake, then the divinity of Jesus was of no value, which is just as fatal to the divine origin of the Bible as it is to the Sonship of Jesus. Any way you view it, there is no middle ground. It is either believe what the Bible says about the origin of man or be an Atheist. Evolution is out of the question. In fact, an evolutionist must reject the Bible account, and therefore must be an infidel.

When one sees the engine with power enough to pull hundreds of tons of weight and move at the rate of fifty miles an hour promptly respond to the engineer's touch as he applies the power, he knows that piece of machinery did not make itself. One who would so reason would be considered a simpleton. That this world or universe of worlds is a gigantic system working with mathematical accuracy is too patent to be denied. The seasons, the tides, the daily revolution of the earth and its yearly circle are simple evidences of system that are clear to all. No scientific knowledge is necessary to appreciate these proofs.

The occasional appearance of an eclipse, though at first thought an irregularity, furnishes no mean evidence of a world system. The total eclipse occurring in this country, January 24 . 1925, is a striking example. According to reports, the darkness arrived at various points only three to five seconds behind the schedule fixed by astronomers. We are amazed at the scientific skill that can so accurately forecast such phenomenal events. They must have some reliable data or it could not be done. If there were not a world system, their forecasts would be the wildest kind of guesses.

As wonderful as this scientific knowledge seems, it is less wonderful than the system of worlds that really does these phenomenal things. Are such wonders just a "happen so?" If there were no data upon which these marvels could be forecasted, then we might conclude that they are only "happen so's," maybe just a broken cog in the wheels of the universe. But such accuracy in figuring it all out in advance proves that the planets in their movements, like well-timed wheels in a machine, fit and mesh with mathematical precision. Evidently such systems do not make themselves. Evolution does not and cannot give a satisfactory solution to these problems. As each perfectly working system implies a systematizer, the Bible story of creation alone gives the solution.

II. Christ in the Types of the Old World.

That the Jewish covenant contained many things of a typical nature is attested by plain statements in God's word. Paul says that the law had a "shadow of the good things to come." After describing the Jewish tabernacle he declared it to be "a figure for the time present." In the same connection he teaches that it was a figure while the first tabernacle was standing, that is, while the old tabernacle service was in force as the way to worship God.

But the types began earlier than that. When the Israelites killed and ate the passover lamb on the night they left Egypt, they saw in it no more than God's way to save their first born children. It was a solemn night and one the Jew has never forgotten, but he was only thinking of saving his family and escaping from a cruel bondage. As the centuries passed his children no doubt lis-

tened to the relating of the story with the same interest, but saw in it no more than their ancestors who were present when the strange event occurred. But when Paul centuries later said, "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Jesus," we see in the passover lamb, what the Jew, as a Jew, never saw. We see and know that the lamb represented in type our Lord. The Jew was therefore in that service honoring Christ, though he never understood it.

Before they reached Mount Sinai, the manna began to fall. They were amazed, I am sure, at this strange provision for their temporal needs, but probably saw nothing more in it than a divine protection from physical death from starvation. But when Jesus said he would give the true bread from heaven that would lead to eternal life, contrasting himself, as the bread of life, with the manna that fell in the wilderness, we know that manna meant more than those who saw it fall understood. In coming directly from heaven without man's power it becomes one of the most beautiful types of Christ. The Jew did not see it, but he was eating in anticipation of the Christ to come.

Just before reaching the mount the people began to murmur for water. The Lord instructed Moses to smite a rock and supply water for the needs of the people. This was done and the murmuring multitudes were satisfied because their immediate temporal need was met. But this was all they were able to see at the time. But Paul again gives us the light when he says they "did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ." How beautiful and significant the incident—to us since we know its typical meaning!

As already stated, the tabernacle was, in its furniture, and service, typical of the plan of salvation through Christ. Plainly we are told that the death of Christ was "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant." (Heb. 9:15). The Jews then in type were serving Christ, and their ultimate salvation depends upon him, though they only saw the shadow. We have the substance, the reality.

Paul describes the journey from Egypt to Canaan and the loss of the disobedient. He says these things were written for our admonition. Since Christ was in the old covenant through its types, those who disobeyed were disobedient to Christ. Those who perverted the tabernacle service, as did Nadab and Abihu, were likewise disobedient to Christ; for he was in the types. They mixed with idolaters—a plain violation of God's command—which sin was described by God's prophets as spiritual harlotry. For this and other sins their kingdom was divided, ten of the tribes lost their identity and the kingdom of Judah was punished with seventy years of captivity. The lesson I wish us to get is this: If God severely punished his people who sinned in the age when they had only the types of Christ, what will he do for us who disobey Christ after he has been manifested in the flesh? If Nadab and Abihu, with only a typical service to render, were struck dead for perverting the worship of God which had been revealed, what may we expect if we tamper with the worship of the church? If to dishonor Christ in types was so serious, it cannot be less so in the realities of the worship which he has prescribed for his church. Introducing instrumental music in the worship, and human societies in the work of the church, is apparently a far greater perversion of worship

than getting fire to burn incense from a different place than the altar. Those who disobeyed Moses' law died without mercy, we are told by Paul. The examples are in the Old Testament record. May we learn from them neither to reject Christ nor pervert his worship!

III. Christ in the Flesh.

In order that Christ might be manifested to mankind he had to appear in human form. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins. Christ must become the sacrifice that would be effective; hence, it was necessary that he have a body. For this reason we are told that he took the form of man; that he was born of woman.

But we are told that he was "the effulgence of his [God's] glory, and the very image of his substance." We may never know while in the flesh what this means, but it shows that while Jesus dwelt in this world he was also divine—not just a man. As man was made a "little lower than the angels" and Christ took the form of man, he was also, by virtue of his human body, a little lower than the angels; but by reason of being the image of God he became "so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they." A human body so that he might die for mankind; the divine image so that he might save the world.

During the period of his public ministry he went about blessing suffering humanity, giving the most unmistakable evidences of his divinity. In his parables and wonderful discourses he gave the world some of its most simple and profound truths, laying down the great fundamental principle of his kingdom that was soon to be set up.

While Jesus came to establish a new covenant, which

in the language of the prophet Jeremiah was not to be like the old, yet he scrupulously obeyed the requirements of the old till his death. He said of the law, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." But Paul in referring to the law said that Christ took it out of the way, "nailing it to his cross." Up to the time of his death he strictly observed the law's commands. When he cured a man of his leprosy he gave this command: "Go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." (Mark 1:44). He taught thus: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." (Matt. 23:2,3). On the night of his betrayal and arrest he had just kept the sacred Jewish passover supper with his disciples. The law was then in force and he honored it. In fact he had said in the sermon on the mount, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all be accomplished." He also said that those who broke the least of his commandments or taught others to do so, should be called least in the kingdom of heaven. If it were so sinful to break the Mosaic law when in force, it cannot be less to break the law of Christ now in force. If the Savior must obey the law then, we must obey the gospel now.

The last words of our Lord on the cross were, "It is finished." As Jesus expired the sun went down on the Jewish world—the last Lamb had bled with God's approval. The divine purpose lay hidden in Joseph's new tomb till the third morning when through the resurrection we find the full meaning of the prophet's words: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

May God's blessings rest upon us as his approval rested upon the Lord!

CHRIST IN HIS KINGDOM

That the New Testament speaks about the kingdom of Christ is admitted by all. But when that kingdom was established, if it has been established, and how Christ now stands related to it, are matters about which there is much controversy. It is the purpose of this lecture to show that the kingdom has been established and that Christ is now king upon his throne.

After the abrogation of the old covenant by his death and the three days in the tomb he arose from the dead, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. Then a kind of preparatory period intervened during which he showed himself to his apostles "by many proofs" and "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." The period lasted forty days. We may not know fully why this time intervened between the ending of the old covenant and the beginning of the new, but some plausible conjectures may be offered.

This additional time may have been needed to give just the proofs that would completely qualify his apostles to meet the situation that was to confront them. To this end he met them on several different occasions and under different circumstances; enough to make the proof satisfactory. By putting fifty-three days between the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new there was no chance left to conclude that they were the same. This not only settles a matter of vital importance, but it also fixes definitely just when the institution Christ established began.

This institution is presented in a variety of ways in the Bible. It is called the church. This designation is accepted by all, and is based upon the idea that the people composing this institution are "called out" from others; hence an assembly distinct from others in a religious sense. By a figure of speech the church is called the "temple of God." In the same way it is called the "house of God" or the "household of faith." "The body" is another designation of like character. If the same institution is in the Bible itself in different passages called church, temple, house and body, why not possible that it be called the kingdom in the same way? Is it not reasonable to expect that it would be? I am sure a careful examination of the Book will prove that it has been so called.

I. The Use of the Word Kingdom.

There can be no logical reason why the words church and kingdom should not refer to the same institution. It is quite true that as words they do not mean the same thing, but that does not keep them from referring to the same institution. The words temple, house and body do not mean the same as words but all concede that they all are used to refer to the church. Some feature of the church is similar to the idea contained in each of these words; hence, by a figure of speech, the church is called by all these different names. By the same figure the church may be called the kingdom.

All understand that the Jews had a national kingdom of a temporal character. We also agree that Christ has a spiritual institution in existence now. That there will be some kind of a future state of existence is accepted by all believers in the Bible. The same word that de-

scribes the Jewish state has in several instances also been used to describe the church and the final state. A few examples will be sufficient to illustrate this phase of the case.

The Jews had a capital city called Jerusalem. Paul in comparing the old and new covenants in Gal. 4:26 refers to the church as "Jerusalem that is above," which he says is "our mother." John in Rev. 21:1,2 sees the final state as the "new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." That the word Jerusalem in these passages refers to the three states—the temporal, the spiritual and the eternal—is too evident to admit of question. The Jews also had a tabernacle, a real material building. Paul in Heb. 8:2 says that Christ is, a minister of the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." In Rev. 21:3, where the future state is described, John hears a voice saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them." Later in their history the Jews had a temple in place of the tabernacle. In 1 Cor. 3:16 Paul calls the church "the temple of God." Rev. 7:14,15 refers to the final state of the saved and says they are before the throne of God and "serve him day and night in his temple."

With such clear examples we know that this use of words is logical and Scriptural. Since the church may be the kingdom, the proof against it being the kingdom would have to be found in one or both of the following facts: Either there is no passage in which the word kingdom refers to the church or there must be a plain declaration that the church and kingdom are not the same thing. There is no passage containing the latter idea, and there are passages that show the two words are used to refer to the same thing. The word kingdom

often refers to the Jewish state. But in Col. 1:13 we have a passage where no kind of logical twisting can make it mean anything else than the church. Every effort to evade the force of this plain meaning has been a disgrace to its author. The same is also true of Rev. 1:6-9. In the first verse John says Christ "made us to be a kingdom." In the last verse he says he was a partaker "in the tribulation and kingdom." If the tribulation existed, the kingdom did. If in one, then in the other. If John was in the kingdom, then the kingdom was in existence at that time. If in existence then, it is still.

The final state is referred to in many passages as a kingdom. But if there were four times as many passages where the word is so used, that would have nothing to do with the passages where it means the church. If there were but one in which it is so used, that would prove that the church is the kingdom.

II. Christ's Exalted Position Proves the Kingdom Now in Existence.

The following facts relating to the exalted position that Christ now occupies will be sufficient proof that he is all that is necessary to be considered as a ruling king.

1. He is at God's right hand. Paul says that "when he had made purification for sins," he "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3).

2. In this position he is above the angels. In Heb. 1:4 it is said that he has "become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a better name than they." Peter says of Christ that he "is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and au-

thorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Peter 3:22).

3. He has a name above every name. In Phil. 2:5-11 Paul briefly covers the whole field of Christ's relationship to the Father. He explains that God has "highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name," for which reason every knee should bow and every tongue should confess him.

4. In viewing Christ's work from the standpoint of the atoning sacrifice Paul calls him our high priest, the highest possible position that could be assigned him. You are referred to Heb. 8:1 and 9:11.

5. When the church is viewed as a temple Christ is called the foundation and the chief cornerstone. (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:20).

6. Likewise when the church is represented as the body of Christ, he is called the head. (Eph. 1:22,23). The head rules the natural body; Christ rules the spiritual body. This is what we mean by king. While the figure is changed, the thought is substantially the same.

7. He has the keys of death and hades. (Rev. 1:18). Keys carry the idea of authority and in this case mean that Christ has authority over the Hadean world.

8. On the day of Pentecost Peter called him both Lord and Christ.

It would be hard to see what more could be necessary to call Christ a king and his church a kingdom than the things here said about him in his present exalted position. If all these figures point in the direction of a ruling sovereign, why should we refuse to grant that he is actually one? To say the least of it, the logic of the case certainly implies it beyond doubt.

III. When Was Christ Invested with this Supreme Authority?

Putting it in other words, the foregoing means this: When was Christ crowned or when did he become the ruling king in fact? Christ was a prince, a king in prospect, an heir to the throne, before he became such in fact. The question we are now discussing is, when did he become a king in the full accepted sense of the word? Several things have a material bearing on this question. This point must be settled before we can know whether Christ is in his kingdom or not.

Before exercising full kingly power one must be anointed and crowned. If Christ be a ruling king now, his kingdom is spiritual, not temporal. If so, his crown would not be a literal one but a spiritual one. This happens to be the exact fact. Paul quotes the following language from David and applies it to Christ: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; and the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Heb. 1:8,9). In 2:9 Paul says we behold him "crowned with glory and honor." In his first sermon to the Gentiles Peter said Christ "is Lord of all," and that God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power." (Acts 10:36-38). The Holy Spirit came upon Christ at his baptism, which was three and a half years before he was crowned. Paul says in Heb. 2:9 that it was "Because of the suffering of death" that he was crowned with glory and honor. The difference in the time of the crowning and the anointing is not strange. The same thing occurred in the case of

David who, as a king, was a type of Christ. Samuel anointed David a long time before he succeeded to the throne.

The necessity of Christ's suffering death before he became king is a position which he himself presents in his parable of the vineyard in Matt. 21:33-43. The vineyard represents the Jewish kingdom. The killing of the householder's son represents Christ's death at the hands of the Romans but at the instigation of the Jews. After giving the parable Jesus asked: "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner?" This proves that Christ could not become the head of the corner till he had been rejected and killed. He then says: "Therefore," that is, for the reason that you will kill me, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This passage is final on the proposition that Christ's kingdom did not begin till after his death. It does not say, of course, just when it did begin, but the language strongly implies that the abrogation of the one meant the establishment of the other as quickly as all necessary matters could be adjusted. Certainly it does not indicate that centuries would first elapse. The common sense view here implied would always be accepted if one did not have a theory to defend that required some other interpretation of the parable.

The resurrection was also necessary before Christ could become a ruling king. In Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia he uses this language: "And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God has fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the sec-

ond Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts 13:32,33). Since the full meaning of this prophetic psalm must include the resurrection of Christ, and the promise made to the fathers must also include it, we are certain that this kingdom could not precede the resurrection. In verse 34 Paul says, "As concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David." Whatever is meant by the sure blessings of David, it was not to be received until after the resurrection. Paul is here quoting from Isaiah 55:3, where the prophet says the sure mercies of David is "an everlasting covenant." Language could hardly be plainer or more decisive.

Peter in his Pentecost sermon said that David being a prophet, knew that God had sworn to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, and "foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of Christ." (Acts 2:30,31). In verse 33 he said that Christ was at the right hand of God. This proof is also unmistakable that Christ did not sit upon David's throne till after his resurrection. Since he was raised to sit on David's throne and was then at God's right hand, the implication is almost as strong as an assertion that he sat on David's throne when he went to heaven.

Following the events as they occurred, we find that the ascension was necessary before he sat upon his throne. To be a high priest in the true tabernacle and a king upon a spiritual throne are undoubtedly different ways of saying substantially the same thing. Paul says (Heb. 8:4), "Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all." The reasoning of Jesus in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27), is a direct set-

tlement of this point. In verse 12 he says a certain nobleman "went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." As this was spoken because, being near Jerusalem they thought the kingdom was to immediately appear, it must refer to Christ's going to heaven and his return. According to this parable, the kingdom was to be received in the far country and the return to occur after it was received. There is no possible chance to avoid this conclusion, if the words of Jesus are to have any meaning whatever. Before leaving for the far country he gave his servants a pound each and said, "Trade ye herewith till I come." In verse 14 we are told that his citizens said: "We will not that this man reign over us." When the householder returned he settled with the servants to whom he gave the pounds. Then as verse 27 shows he ordered those who would not allow him to reign over them to be slain. The time they refused to let him reign over them was while he was in a far country. This being true, his reign began when he went to the far country.

It will be generally conceded that if Christ is on David's throne, the kingdom has been established. David said that God would raise up one to sit on his throne; Peter said God had raised up Christ in fulfillment of that promise and that he was then at the right hand of God; and James argues that the tabernacle of David had been rebuilt. If the last point be sustained, the future kingdom advocates will have to yield; for there is no chance to come this side of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David to find the beginning of the kingdom.

In Acts 15 we have the report of the council at Jerusalem regarding the question of requiring the Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses. Paul

and Barnabas told of their work among the Gentiles and Peter rehearsed how God made choice of him to present the gospel to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. Then James made a speech in which he used these words:

“Brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” This shows plainly that the Gentiles had already been admitted to the church. This should not be forgotten. Then James goes on to say: “And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written.” He next quotes the words of the prophet Amos as follows: “After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord and the Gentiles, upon whom thy name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old.” (See verses 14-17). The expression, “After these things,” is a part of the quotation from Amos and is not the words of James. Hence it cannot mean that after the reception of the Gentiles into the church, which James had just mentioned, the tabernacle would be rebuilt, but after the things which Amos had mentioned in previous verses.

In the preceding paragraph, Amos 9:7-10, the prophet refers to their deliverance from Egypt and then calls them a sinful kingdom which he says God will destroy from the face of the earth. But God also promised that he would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob. Next God said: “I will sift sift the house of Israel among the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth. All the sinners of

my people shall die by the sword, who say, The devil shall not overtake nor meet us." Then comes the quotation made by James. No individual Jew who was worthy would be rejected, but the people would go into captivity and be sifted among the nations. Their kingdom was to be destroyed, which occurred when Christ died. After these things the tabernacle of David would be rebuilt. If it had been rebuilt the next day after the resurrection, all the requirements of this passage would be met.

To show that this view is the correct one it is only necessary to remember that James was quoting a passage to prove not only that the Gentiles had already come into the church but that according to the prophets they had a right to come in. He quotes Amos who said that the tabernacle of David would be rebuilt that the residue of men, or all the Gentiles, might seek the Lord. As the tabernacle of David was to be rebuilt for the purpose of allowing all Gentiles to seek the Lord, and the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius had already sought the Lord, then it follows with the force of demonstration that the tabernacle was rebuilt before the conversion of Cornelius. If this is not true, James made a mistake in his quotation. He evidently was trying to quote a passage to prove this point. If the passage had said that after the conversion of the Gentiles, the tabernacle would be rebuilt, the future kingdom theory might appear as a certainty. But that is not what the passage says. It says the tabernacle was rebuilt that (plainly in order that) the Gentiles might seek the Lord.

But the objector tells us that Christ is not on David's throne now but on God's throne. His proof text is Rev. 3:21. But if this objection were true, which in part it

is not, it admits that Christ is upon a throne. Since all power in heaven and on earth has been given into his hands, and he is on a throne, he is king and ruling. But the contention that he is not on David's throne is false in fact. It is squarely against the argument of James just given. It is cheerfully admitted that Christ is now on God's throne, but it is also David's unless the way of speaking about the matter has changed in the New Testament from what is in the Old. In 1 Kings 2:12 it is said "that sat upon the throne of David his father." In 1 Chron. 29:23 it says "he sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father." In 1 Chron. 1:1 it says Solomon was "in his kingdom." The throne was God's; it was David's because God placed him upon it; it was Solomon's because he, as David's son, inherited it, but it was one and the same throne. So it is now. Christ sits upon God's throne; he as a son of David sits upon David's throne; as a ruling king he sits upon his own throne. This must be the exact truth about the matter. Christ being with God does not keep him from being king. He is the head of the church and it is called the church of God and the church of Christ. At any rate he said "my church" when promising to build it.

The objector also refers to Matt. 25:31 and says Christ will be upon his own throne when he comes again. True enough but he is on his own throne now according to the argument just made. The whole context of this passage shows the throne here to be the judgment throne not the throne of rule.

Finally, I insist that Christ is now ruling as king or he never will. I submit the following as proof: In Heb. 10:12, 13 we have this statement, "But he, when he had

offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet." This passage definitely fixes it that he did not sit down at God's right hand till he had made the one offering the everlasting atonement. "Henceforth", from that time, he was expecting, waiting, for his enemies to become his footstool.

Peter quotes David as follows: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou upon my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Acts 2:34). This proves that he must remain at God's right hand till his enemies are become his footstool. In 1 Cor. 15:26 Paul says "The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." As long as mankind is subject to death Christ will remain in heaven. But when will death be abolished? Revelation 20:11-15 gives a most vivid view of the resurrection and the judgment following. It says that "the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire." Since death is not to be abolished till the final judgment, then Christ will not come till then; for, he is to remain in heaven till his enemies are abolished and death the last enemy will not be abolished till then.

But the matter is fixed with 1 Cor. 15:25 where Paul says: "For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." The period of reign is precisely the same as the time he is to sit at the right hand of God. As death the last enemy will be abolished at the final judgment, Christ will reign till that time. As he reigns while overcoming his enemies and does this while

sitting at God's right hand, then he has been reigning ever since he sat down at God's right hand. He did this when he went to heaven. The final conclusion of the matter is that Christ has been reigning as king upon David's throne since he made the offering for sin, and will continue to reign till the final judgment. Hence, I repeat, he is now reigning or he never will.

A question may be asked: How does Christ reign or rule? The answer is: Through his truth, just as he, the head, governs the body which is the church. This is too simple to need more notice.

It is my sincere wish that we may not be as the citizens of the parable who refused to "have this man rule over" them, but that we may as good stewards so use the pounds committed to our care that we will merit our king's approval when he returns from heaven to reward each according to his works.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

Christ and his apostles were accustomed to use as illustrations the simple everyday things with which their hearers were fully acquainted. They did this, no doubt, because such a method would enable the people to more easily understand what they said. Inanimate objects, animals and the various relationships of life were made to do service in explaining the great truths of the kingdom. When the church was called the household of faith, or the family of God, the matter of our close relationship to God and each other was vividly set forth. When it was called the temple of God, the matter of worship was the main idea. But when the Christian life is represented as a warfare and Christians as soldiers there is brought to view the defense of the truth, the necessity of "contending" earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Some are very much opposed to fighting. A fighting preacher they can not endure. In fact, they do not believe in fighting, they say, but rather they propose to win the day simply by loving the sinner into the church and the devil out of existence. Of course, such contention is popular but clearly out of harmony with the Bible teaching. Paul says, "Fight the good fight of faith." When about to close his earthly labors he said, "I have fought a good fight." Those who do not believe in fighting simply do not believe what the apostle says about the matter. Of course, no one with the proper consideration

for the rights of others believes it a right thing to abuse people because of their teaching. But this and a courteous contention for the truth are two different matters entirely. A warfare without contention or fighting can not be. The very existence of war implies fighting on all proper occasions.

For the sake of clearness I will divide the subject into the following sub-heads:

I. The Enemies We Must Encounter.

While some are very much opposed to fighting along religious lines they are perfectly willing to engage in carnal warfare. They are ready to defend their country but not ready to defend the kingdom of Christ. It is not my purpose here to discuss the right of Christians to take part in carnal warfare. My subject is the Christian Warfare. However, the language of the Master in John 18:36 is worthy of our most serious consideration. He said: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but my kingdom is not from hence." As has been well said we have the example of a soldier becoming a Christian, in the person of Cornelius, but not an example of a Christian becoming a soldier.

The kind of enemies we have to fight shows clearly the nature of warfare in which Christians are to be engaged. The same thing is indicated by the rebuke which Christ administered to Peter when he thought to defend his Master with the sword. The mob had just come to the garden to arrest the Lord. When they laid hands upon him Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Then Jesus said: "Put up

again thy sword in its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." If his kingdom had been a worldly one, he would have allowed his servants to defend him with the sword, as he said; but being a spiritual kingdom he refused to permit Peter to use it in his defense.

Paul has given us some very plain statements on this phase of the question. In 2 Cor. 10:3-6 we find these words: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Substantially the same thing is found in his letter to the Ephesians. He there says: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

II. The Necessity of an Enlistment.

No nation accepts the service of any one in its army in the capacity of soldier without the regular enlistment. No difference how much ability or courage one may have, he must enter the army in the manner laid down by the government. This is not only the universal practice of nations but it is a matter of plain common sense. Hence, as we would expect, Paul mentions this custom when he says: "No soldier on service entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath enrolled him as a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4). There

would be no occasion for Paul referring to this custom, if the same principle did not hold in the Christian warfare. The use of carnal warfare as an illustration is not to endorse such warfare, but to show that the same principles hold and are necessary to success in the spiritual warfare.

This plain fact fixes another matter for all time. Christians are represented as soldiers, the Christian life as one continuous fight, and the church therefore must be understood as the army. This being true no one can fight for the Lord outside of the church. This is equivalent to saying that one must be in the church to be a Christian. This is not strange when we remember that no one can be a soldier outside of the army. Fighting out of the army is not legal; in fact, is criminal.

Not only must soldiers be enlisted, but the government specifies the kind of men it is willing to accept as soldiers. The qualifications have reference to physical fitness, proper age and mental capacity. Many prospective soldiers have been rejected because they are deficient in on or more of these points. Likewise there are qualifications for those who propose for the warfare is not against flesh and blood. No definite age limit is given because it is a matter of knowledge and not of years. One must be old enough to understand God's will and render intelligent obedience to it. The conditions of entering the Christian army are mental and moral. Jesus himself has fixed them. Sinners must believe in him, must repent of their sins and be baptized into him. These are definite requirements of the New Testament which I shall not stop here to quote. All will agree that when these have been obeyed the individual is in the church, he is a soldier in the Christian army.

III. The Arms To Be Used.

All nations try to provide their army with all the necessary equipment that it is possible to obtain. No difference how capable and courageous soldiers might be they would stand no show of gaining a victory unless they had the implements of warfare. This all recognize as the proper and safe course in carnal warfare. In providing soldiers with armor two things are considered: one is the soldier's own protection, the other is ample means to defeat the enemy. As much or more care is given to the protection of the soldier than is given to the means of defeating the enemy. It is recognized as a fact that a dead soldier is of no help in the army. And we may safely say that a Christian spiritually dead is of no help to the church. A crippled soldier is even worse as a part of an army. The wounded soldier not only cannot fight but he requires the help of others physically sound to care for him. The backsliding Christian not only fails to render service to the church but his influence is positively harmful. The real live Christian soldiers have all the burdens to bear and have to fight to counteract the bad influence of those who do nothing for the church.

Paul exhorts us to put on the whole armor that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and reminds us of the fact that we are to stand against the wiles of the devil. His list of the armor contains the following things: The girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith with which we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one, hope as a helmet, and the sword of the Spirit, which he declares

is the word of God. It will be seen by this list that all the armor is for the soldier's own protection except one piece—the sword. God's word is all we need to use in fighting the enemy, but we need all the rest to protect ourselves while we fight. In warfare the soldier is in constant danger of losing his own life. Untiring vigilance and watchfulness are necessary if he would escape all danger and fight safely to the end. This is no doubt the reason we have so many warnings in the Bible against unfaithfulness. It explains the statement of Jesus when he said: "He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved." No soldier is safe till the war ends; no Christian can be safe without being faithful till death.

IV. Drilling is Necessary.

No nation ever thinks of sending untrained soldiers to the front to meet the enemy. Such a thing would be considered the extreme of folly. It will be remembered that when America went into the world war it was necessary to raise an army of several million men. The enlisting was a matter of a short time, but getting the men ready for real service at the front was another matter. Training camps went up as if by magic; the most rigid training was used to prepare the soldiers as quickly as possible. If the United States had sent those boys straight to the front to meet the well-trained, seasoned German soldiers, the American fathers and mothers would have raised such a disturbance about it that all the world would have heard their cry. In fact, it would have been the same as sending them out to be slaughtered.

Generals, majors, captains and lieutenants come from the ranks by way of good service rendered. Preachers, elders, deacons and all church workers must come from

the members of the church. It is by training—taking part in the exercises of church service—that we develop the ability and courage to do great things. Men cannot be qualified for leaders in religious work any other way. It is just this fact that shows the church to be so necessary, and proves the wisdom of God in providing local congregations where this training can be done. Time and experience have also shown the absolute necessity of congregational worship. Those who wish to be successful Christian soldiers cannot neglect this part of the religious life and win the victory. Soldiers must drill; the government will not accept excuses. Christians must have part in the worship of God; God demands it and our own salvation depends upon it.

Soldiers drill for efficiency, not for show or the entertainment of their fellows. War is a desperately serious business; human lives are at stake; nothing must be allowed to interfere with preparation. Fighting Satan is more serious; eternal life is to be lost or won. We must know how to fight him, and then do it. Men fight for their families, their property, their homes and their country, but how few fight for the salvation of their own souls! We want our country to be a good place to live. Do we want our families and friends to be saved in heaven? If so, why not fight for it? Why not drill till we know how to do it?

V. The Fighting.

There are a number of things said about the fighting, and that may be said about it. In this closing division of the subject I wish to dwell upon HOW this fighting should be done.

1. Paul tells us plainly that the one who pleases as a

soldier must not "entangle himself in the affairs of this life." Anything in conflict with his duty as a soldier must be rejected if one is to please his government. What kind of treatment would a soldier receive, if he should say when called to duty that his private business was such that he could not come? Or, if he should say he did not feel inclined to come? Such flimsy excuses would not be tolerated at all by any government. Many Christians do not hesitate to shirk divine obligations if it is the least inconvenient or their business or pleasure happen to be in the way. Any kind of business or social relationships that will in any way interfere with our service to God should be rejected or abandoned if we are already in them.

2. We must contend lawfully. Paul says that if a man "contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully." Even soldiers, though their business is fighting, are not allowed to do as they please. Military law is perhaps more strict than civil law. Soldiers are courtmartialled for their disobedience of military law. The one outstanding feature for which an army is noted is the strict requirement of obedience to constituted authority. It is far more important to be obedient to the "Captain or our salvation" than obedient to a superior officer in an earthly army. In the athletic games the contestant must work according to the rules or be put out of the game. All accept this as just and fair. Likewise all religious service must be rendered according to New Testament teaching or else the Lord will give us no credit for it. This eliminates putting into the service just anything that suits our fancy or pleases the people whether authorized by the word of God or not.

3. Paul also says that we are to "endure hardness as good soldiers." The Revised Version says: "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." We are not only to endure hardness but we are to suffer it. The Christian warfare requires suffering; all warfare does. Suffering is no new thing in war. The soldier who is not willing to suffer for the cause, does not love the cause enough to be a good soldier. In the margin of the Revised it says, "Take thy part in suffering hardship." This means that no one is to shirk his part in the hardships that come. Paul again says: "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12).

Suppose some American soldier when told to go over the top in France had said to his commanding officer, "I do not feel very well, or I think it will rain, or I am afraid the Germans will shoot at me, so I think I will not go," what would have been his reward? How would he have stood with his home government? What does Christ think of his soldiers who allow trivial and insignificant things to keep them away from the church service? Paul says "forsake not" the assembly. This is a command from our Captain through one of his chosen apostles. Should we ignore it? Can we afford to disobey it? Surely such neglectful Christian soldiers do not realize how disrespectful they are to Christ or they would act differently.

Some years ago when Russia and Japan were in war a call came to America for a certain per cent of the Japanese to come home and help defend their country. At a railway station two men were watching a number of them some were laughing. One man remarked that it was too as they were about to leave. Some were crying and some were laughing. One man remarked that it was too

bad that some of them had been drafted to go to the front and were crying about it. The other man said: "You are mistaken; those laughing are going home to fight for their country and the others are crying because they did not get to go." They love their country so well that they consider it the highest honor to risk their lives in its defense. How different are many Christian soldiers? Some are ready to cry if they are even asked to do anything. Shame on the profession of any Christian when he will not do as much for the kingdom of the Lord as others do for their earthly kingdoms. Recently men worked untiringly both day and night to save Floyd Collins from death in a Kentucky cave. Every means known to the mining profession was used that could be with safety. The effort was not abandoned till they reached the place and found his dead body. All of this to save a physical life for a few years. All around us men are dying every day unprepared. They are lost spiritually. What are we doing to save them from eternal ruin?

4. In carnal warfare there are dress parade occasions. Passing in review before superior officers or any admiring crowd is one thing; meeting a real enemy in deadly conflict is entirely a different thing. Sham battles give a thrill, but risking life before shot and shell tests who is a real soldier. Protracted meetings are often a kind of dress parade occasion, when all the members are on display. Every day fighting tells the story of those upon whom the church depends for its success.

5. In armies there are sometimes cowards, who would rather see the cause go down than to fight for it. So there are cowardly Christians who are so afraid they will offend some one that they will not stand up for the gos-

pel truth. They have no better standing with the Lord than cowards in an earthly army have with their officers. Then there are deserters in armies. They are men who for personal gain will sell their cause to the enemy by joining his ranks. So there are people in the church who, like Esau of old, are willing to sell their chance of heaven for a mess of pottage—the praise of men. They know the truth but will not confess it lest they be put out of the synagogue—lose the coveted position in society. Then there are traitors in armies sometimes. They not only desert the side they believe in but try to accomplish its ruin by helping the enemy to fight it. In earthly armies traitors are usually shot when caught. Their names go down in disgrace. Benedict Arnold, the arch-traitor of the American colonies, heads the list in this country. Judas Iscariot occupies the same place relative to Jesus Christ. Every Christian that goes to the enemy ranks and fights against the truth is following the example of Judas.

6. After a while the battles will all be fought, the victory lost or won, and the soldiers will be mustered out of service. To the Christian soldier this will not be till death. We do not enter the Lord's army on probation, for two, three or five years, but for life. "Be thou faithful until death," is a command from heaven.

7. Year by year we see the old soldiers meet for a reunion, where they again build the camp fires, relate the stories of bravery, heroism and death. In God's own good time the faithful in Christ will have a reunion about the throne of God, when they will receive an incorruptible crown and enter upon such eternal joys as are held in reservation for the good soldiers in Christ. May you be among that number.

COMING TO GOD

It is a fundamental truth that no journey can be made without starting. It is equally true that the destination is reached by completing the journey. To start or travel only a part of the way is all in vain if the end be not reached. This principle is just as true in the matter of coming to God as to any journey we may take in this world.

The expression "coming to God" may be used in different senses. It may refer to coming into the personal presence of God, which thing all pious people hope for in the heavenly state. It may also refer to the coming into a state or place which God has provided for us. When the prophet said the dust would return to the dust "and the spirit to God who gave it", he must have meant the place that God has provided for disembodied spirits. Ultimately we may come to God in both these senses. We also come to him when we come under his favor or into his kingdom—when we become Christians.

The popular notion about going to heaven is that it does not make any difference what road you take; or, to use a more popular expression, it does not make any difference which church you join. This is heard both publicly and privately when the importance of the church is up for consideration. Of course, the Bible says no such thing nor anything that sounds like it. But this fact does not seem to disturb those who confidently assert it to be a fact just why preachers and others will boldly assert that for which there is not even a scrap of

Scripture is indeed strange. It seems that people who make such bold statements would feel the necessity of at least trying to quote some passage as proof.

If it be an earthly journey we are never so careless as to say it makes no difference. In fact, we know that we must take a road that goes to the place we wish to reach or else we will not go to that place. Why should we reason differently about the journey from earth to heaven? If a man wishing to go to some distant place should ask people he met how to go, how would they answer him? Suppose one would say, "If you will take a certain road, change cars at a certain place, I think you will reach the place." Would this be satisfactory? Surely not. The man would probably say that he did not want to miss the destination, was intending to make the trip but once, and could not afford to take chances. He would likely also ask the other man if he had ever been to that place or knew certainly that the proposed road would take him to the place. If he should reply that he had never been to the place and did not know the road would be certain to take him there, then the inquirer would conclude that the information was unreliable and would seek information from some one else. This would be his conclusion each time someone told him he thought a certain road would lead to the desired place, but confessed that he had never been there and did not know certainly that the road proposed was the right one.

Such answers could not leave him otherwise than confused. But suppose some one should suggest that he consult the Railway Guide, a book that is official on the question of routes, distances and destinations. He would be told that the Guide was made by those who had been over the roads and that they knew exactly what they

were talking about. Would this be satisfactory? Would it be correct? No one would question it for a moment.

But suppose the inquirer wants to go to heaven instead of some place on this earth, would indefinite and uncertain answers be less dangerous or unsatisfactory? If some preacher should say: "Come around to our church prayer-meeting night and I will state your case to the church and we will all go to the Lord in prayer in your behalf. I think you will get relief and be saved." Should the inquirer be satisfied with this? He should ask the preacher if he had ever been to heaven and knew therefore that the road he proposed would lead there. If the preacher only thinks so, his advice is entirely unreliable. The same would be true of all preachers who would give a similar answer to this important question. If the speaker said he knew the road he proposed would reach heaven when he did not know it, the situation would be all the worse.

But again let us suppose the inquirer is advised to get a copy of the New Testament, with the suggestion that it has for its author Christ who has been on earth and is now in heaven. As he knows the way, what he says in that book on the subject is official and final. No difference what any individual thinks or supposes about the train to a certain place, what the time card says is official and correct. So, no difference what any one guesses or imagines about the road to heaven, what Christ says in the New Testament is absolutely right and final.

If there be ten or more roads leading to a place any one of them will be all right that suits the traveler's convenience. If there be just two roads to the place, then one of the two will have to be taken if the place is reached. But if there be just one road to that place,

then that road must be traveled or the place will not be reached. This is too plain to need more than a bare statement. In the journey to heaven the case is the same. If there be a number of roads that lead to heaven, then any one of the number that pleases will be all right. But if there be just one road to heaven for gospel subjects, then that road must be traveled or heaven will be missed.

What is the fact in the matter of the way to heaven? Two or more roads or just one? This is very definitely fixed by Christ himself. In his contrast of the two destinations and the two ways leading to them he says, the way leading to life is narrow and few find it, while the way leading to destruction is broad and many go that way. See Matt. 7:13. By no sort of juggling of words or logical scheming can this passage be made to say there are many ways to heaven. If language means anything, the passage teaches that there is just one way to heaven and only few comparatively find this way. Jesus expresses the same thought in different words in John 14:6 where he says: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh to the Father, but by me." Our sympathies for our friends who do not walk in this way may make us wish there were many ways so each could have his choice, but the fact remains that Christ says there is one way. That is final. It seems impossible to state the case plainer than he has done. Why people will assert in the face of his words that there are many ways to heaven and that it makes no difference which road you take is hard to understand.

For the benefit of those who are slow to accept these plain statements I will give some additional proof of the fact that there is just one way, one road or one church.

In presenting the matter from the viewpoint of shee_r, shepherd and sheepfold Jesus said: "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" (John 10:16.) He meant that he would call the Gentiles who did not belong to the Jewish fold and they, both Jews and Gentiles, would become one fold under one shepherd. This shows that both would go the same road or belong to the same church. The simple reason for this has already been given. There is only one way or church; hence, all must go that way.

Paul presents the same idea when he refers to the church as the body of Christ and says that Christ is the head of that body. As the human body is used as an illustration we know that there is one body and one head. It would be absurd to think of it otherwise. But Paul plainly says "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). In the same connection he says "one Lord." Since Christ is the Lord and there is only one Christ, then there is only one Lord. But Christ is the head of the body. Then there is only one head. If only one head, then only one body. But again, the body is the church. Hence, the conclusion, there is only one church. That means, of course, only one that has Christ for its head and therefore only one that is acceptable to God. When Paul says "one Lord" he means one true Lord. One God means one true God. So one body means one true body. As the body is the church, then one body means one church. Since there are many religious institutions claiming to be churches, Paul must mean there is one true church.

Since Christ is the head of the body which is the church to be in the church is to be under Christ the head. This can not mean anything except to be in spiritual relation-

ship to Christ. This means to be in Christ or to be saved. To be out of the church is to be out of Christ. This fixes the question of morality being enough to save. Morality can not be enough if one is required to become a member of the church. The contrast between the broad and narrow ways is equally decisive on this question. The moral man who thinks morality enough to save prides himself on the fact that he is a good man, guilty of no outrageous crimes, every ready to treat his fellowman, right, but no member of the church. He does not like the restrictions of the narrow way nor the destiny of the broad way. To suit him there would have to be a way midway between the broad and narrow ways. But since the narrow way leads to life and the broad way to destruction, there is no destination for a way between these two. That may be the reason the Lord did not make a way midway between them—no place for it to end. The moral man is in an unfortunate condition; according to himself he is too good to be lost, and according to Christ he is not good enough to be saved. This of necessity puts him among those who will be rejected. Those that come to God must come through Christ.

Some folks object to the narrow way apparently for no other reason than it is narrow. They are opposed to anything that is narrow, it seems. All kinds of narrowness with them is charged to "a narrow mind", which they are sure is the result of prejudice and ignorance, mainly the latter. All in vain usually you point out that the narrow way leads to life. The happy destination is lost sight of in their opposition to narrowness. But really what is wrong with narrowness? The question is both sensible and vital and deserves serious consideration. Refusing to consider it is no answer.

Again, we may ask, Is a road bad simply because it is narrow? Usually the reverse is true. If the foundation is solid and safe with a properly built road bed, it needs to be only wide enough to take care of the traffic. They are made as narrow as is consistent with the traffic, considered as to numbers and weight. All that can be left off the width can go toward making the road better and safer. It follows then that the narrow road is the better one. Why argue against that which is really in itself better than what you want? Both scripture and common sense are on the side of the narrow way. Why go against both of these?

Did it ever occur to you that when you speak lightly of the narrow way, you are really ridiculing the words of Christ himself? Do you believe he is pleased with that kind of treatment of what he says? Had you ever thought about how serious a matter this is? The way to heaven must be just as narrow as the truth which Christ uttered; it must be broad enough to include all who render obedience to that truth, and no more so. And this regardless of who preaches or who may be lost or saved. Nothing short of this is faithfulness to Christ.

The railroad is perhaps the best road in the world yet the rails are just a few feet apart. The ponderous engine and the long train of cars weighing hundreds of tons go speeding over the rails in safety as a rule. This could not be if the rails were not of a standard width. A car can go all over the country, changing from one road to another, because the tracks of all roads are made exactly the same width. And the remarkable thing is that the railroad is a narrow road. Its safety is in the fact that everything is brought to a standard.

There are a number of things that might cause a wreck

of a train. If by any chance the dispatcher should give the wrong order, there would be great danger of a wreck. If the conductor or engineer refused to obey the orders, the danger would be just as great. But in addition to human weakness that might cause trouble there are other things that might also do it. To put some kind of obstruction on the track might easily derail the train with such loss of life and property as wrecks produce. When the flange of the wheel gets outside the rail a wreck is almost sure to result. But if some spikes are drawn so the rails will spread, the danger is equally great. There is no way to be safe except to have a standard track, follow orders, and keep the flange of the wheel inside of the rails.

The lesson is just the same in the matter of going to heaven. Christ will not give us a wrong order. Preachers must deliver the message just as it was given by Christ. Man must not refuse to obey these orders. If we will keep our practice within the limits of God's word, we will be absolutely safe. The road Christ made for us is the only one that leads to heaven. Our only chance to reach that place is to walk between the rails; that is, do just what he says, nothing more nor less.

Some years ago an Arkansas coal miner fired a shot of dynamite just before leaving the mine for the day. He had only one match but his miner's lamp was burning. After lighting the fuse, he stepped back to what he thought was a safe distance, but the explosion put his light out, leaving him almost three-fourths of a mile from the shaft in total darkness. All the other miners were gone. The thought of spending a night in the mine was not at all pleasant. He knew the track over which the coal cars hauled the coal went to the shaft which

was the only way to light and safety above. Before losing his sense of location he stepped between the rails. But in such darkness, one might become confused and turn around and go in the wrong direction. To be sure of not doing this, he put one foot on a rail and never allowed it to leave the rail for the whole distance. Dragging one foot over a rail for such a distance was no easy task, but was better than a night in the mine alone.

The way Jesus has made for the world is the only way that leads to heaven and eternal joys. The world is so dark with sin that our only chance is to get in that way, stay within the teachings he gives and keep going till the home is reached. True it requires some effort and persistence, but that is far better than spending eternity with the lost. To walk as Jesus directs will bring us home to God. The joys awaiting the successful travelers will pay for all the effort it requires.

