

There Are No Moral Accidents

AND OTHER RADIO MESSAGES

By Russell V. DeLong, Ph.D.

THERE ARE NO MORAL ACCIDENTS

EIGHT TESTS OF TRUE RELIGION

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE HALFWAY COVENANT

THE CHANGELESS CHRIST

DECAYING FOUNDATIONS

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH

SIMPLIFYING A DIFFICULT WORD

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THE CHURCH

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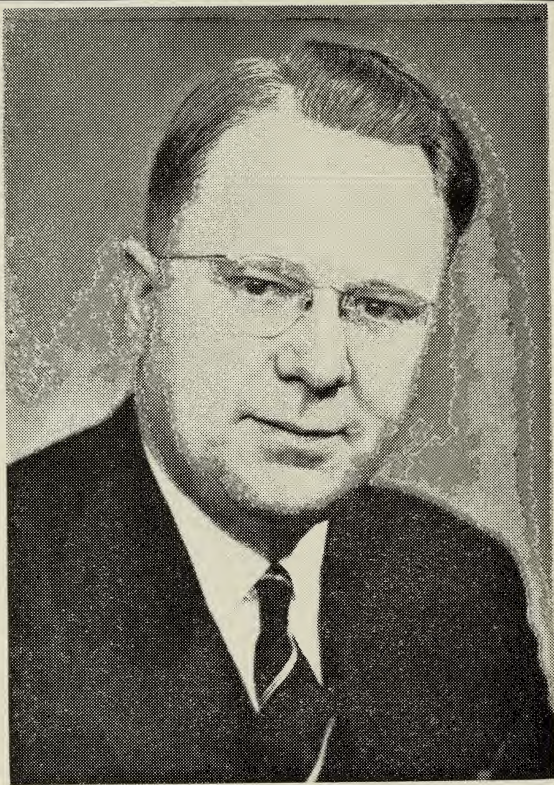
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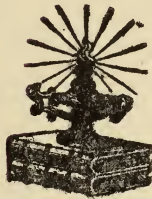
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Russell V. DeLong

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MORAL ACCIDENTS**

Russell V. DeLong D.D., Ph.D.



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INTRODUCTION

This age of radio calls for a radio-minded church. Any full obedience to the Great Commission involves the use of every legitimate agency of communication to "preach the gospel." Hence, with a sense of both imperative obligation and high privilege the Church of the Nazarene has inaugurated a world-wide broadcast under the direction of the Nazarene Radio League, operating from the International Headquarters of the denomination at Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.

For two years the "Showers of Blessing" broadcast of the Nazarene Radio League has been bearing "a message of hope, with songs of cheer" to multiplied thousands in all parts of the world. A major element in the success of this project has been the ministry of Dr. Russell V. DeLong, Dean of Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri. To this radio ministry Dr. DeLong has come with an unusually rich background of training and experience. Reared in a New England parsonage, as a young man he had planned a business career and had demonstrated his talents in that field. But the call of God to the Christian ministry became so insistent that he was led to consecrate his life and talents to that work.

Following the completion of his undergraduate college course at Eastern Nazarene College, Dr. DeLong received the Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Boston University. He was ordained in 1926 and in the same year was

called to the faculty of Northwest Nazarene College. The following year he was elected president of that institution, serving in that capacity for twelve years. For three years he was engaged in the administrative work of the denomination as superintendent of the Northwest Indiana District of the Church of the Nazarene. When Nazarene Theological Seminary was organized as the graduate school of theology for the denomination, Dr. DeLong was elected to the faculty and was made dean of that institution, in which he also serves as Professor of Missions and Evangelism.

With sound scholarship and wide experience, Dr. DeLong combines a fervency of spirit and an evangelistic zeal that has made him outstanding in the field of evangelism. His radio ministry on the "Showers of Blessing" broadcast has been received with growing appreciation as this broadcast has gradually been extended to a world-wide scope. It is with thanksgiving to God and a sincere desire to promote the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men that we present this book of selected radio sermons by Dr. DeLong. We send it forth with the earnest prayer that all who read it may be strengthened and enriched in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

HUGH C. BENNER, D.D.

President, Nazarene Theological Seminary
Member, Nazarene Radio Commission

THERE ARE NO MORAL ACCIDENTS

SCRIPTURE READING—Galatians 7.

TEXT—*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6: 7).*

Some wrecks are accidental—some are due to carelessness—others are premeditated.

Who has not driven by vacant lots covered with what is left of hundreds of automobiles—mechanical wrecks.

Hundreds of wrecks were before my vision in another setting—human wrecks. I was in the old Doyer Street Mission, New York City. Over 300 men were present—at least present physically—some were not there mentally. Many were asleep, others were under alcoholic numbness, a few were victims of dope. Human wrecks—some young, some old; some white, some black; some Americans, others foreigners. Here they were all assembled in one room, not primarily to attend a religious service, but receive the post-service soup and a bed for the night. Old men, emaciated, shaking limbs, quivering lips, thin bodies, bald, and what hair remained touched by the white snows of many winters. Middle-aged men bound by the unshak-

able habit of alcohol. Dope fiends who were so dominated that they would pay any price to satisfy that insatiable craving for morphine, heroin, or marijuana.

As I looked at this motley group of tattered men with hair disheveled, unshaven faces, with sensuous lines of sin creasing their skin I wondered how many were married, how many had children and how many had fathers and mothers still living. If so, how hurt the wives must be because of their husbands' broken-down condition; how the children must be ashamed of their daddies, and how mothers must be crushed over their sons' debauched condition.

It occurred to me that years ago every one of these human wrecks had been a plump, handsome baby in the arms of a loving mother who had high hopes for that boy. As he played about the home the father had allowed his ambitious imagination to envision his son as a successful doctor, lawyer, educator—maybe a minister. As the lad had gone through school the mother's fond hopes for that favored boy increased.

Yes—but something happened. Here he is—a human derelict, a complete wreck. No fond ambitions of a father will ever be realized; no proud achievement to present to a loving mother.

Here he is broken down physically, weakened mentally, well-nigh damned morally, and corrupt spiritually. A human wreck.

But why?

Did it just happen?

Was it an accident?

No! There are no moral accidents.

There may be moral wrecks—but none are accidental.

The word “moral” implies choice. There can be no moral act without the possibility of alternatives. The thing you are forced to do has no moral value. If there is only one road to take it is of no ethical significance that you take it.

The basic principle of this existence is freedom of the will.

The greatest day in the history of the universe was when God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit sat down together in the council chambers of eternity and said, “Let us make man in our own image.” What a momentous decision. What did it mean? Three things:

1. “In our own image” *intellectually*. Man thinks. No animal has the power of reflection, of reasoning, and of reaching a logical conclusion.

2. “In our own image” *morally*. Man was given the power to know right from wrong.

3. “In our own image” *spiritually*. Man was endowed with a spiritual nature which gives him a capacity for God and which will assure his existence when material things are no more.

To guarantee and make possible these Godlike characteristics God gave man the sovereign power of will. Sovereignty does not mean power. It is not synonymous with might. It means self-directing, self-governing. Man is completely autonomous. This is an awesome truth. What a decision for God to make! How freighted with danger. But how

loaded with possibility! Man can say, "Yes," or "No," to any creature or thing.

I say this reverently, but as I do, I am uttering a solemn, sobering thought—man can defy God and even *God* cannot make man obey Him. Oh, He *could* by His *power* force man's body to behave in the way He desires but not his spirit. If God should make man do what He wanted done He would violate the governing principle of a moral creature—*freedom*.

For man to be a moral creature he must face alternatives. There may be the possibility of great good but also of terrible evil.

So—God made the decision—He created man a moral creature endowed with the matchless gift of freedom. Man can look the field over and make his own choices.

The choices of one man make him a Hitler, a Dillinger, a Capone, or a Judas. The choices of another man make him a Lincoln, a Wesley, a St. Augustine, or a St. Paul.

It is the will of man that decides his destiny. The old stoics said, "A man's character is his destiny." There is some truth in that statement. A man's character is the sum total of his decisions. What any person enjoys depends on what he is. What a man suffers depends on what opportunities he has missed and what privileges he has prostituted. The enjoyment of heaven in no small measure will depend on our holy character while the torments of hell will in no small degree be due to an enlivened memory of squandered opportunities, as Abraham said to Dives, "*Son, remember.*" For

a moral creature, lost opportunities, betrayed trusts, disloyal acts, and imposed aloneness will cause the most acute suffering. The boring worms of memory, the hissing serpents of lost opportunity, and the howling devils of debauched privileges will make hell a place of extreme torment.

Your will can send your soul to the richness and happiness of heaven or to the remorse and torture of hell.

In navigation, it is not the winds, waves or storms that guide or send a vessel to a chosen port. It is the set of the sail or the slant of the rudder. In aviation it is the bend of the stick.

*One ship drives east and one drives west,
By the selfsame wind that blows;
'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale,
Which tells the way it goes.*

So in life it is not environment, heredity, friends, enemies, conditions, storms, sorrow, betrayals, financial reverses, or things, that determine a man's moral character—*it is the will*. Which way is your will set?

Set your will to the right and all the wicked men of earth, plus the cohorts of hell, plus the unfavorable conditions of environment cannot defeat you. God gives power to the will which is set in line with His immutable standards.

On the other hand, set your will to wrong purposes and all the power of God, plus praying mothers, interested friends, and conducive circumstances cannot make you do right.

No—*there are no moral accidents*. What happens to you morally is the result of your premeditated choices.

You may ultimately become a human wreck, take your place with the group in the mission and finally wake up in hell, but if so, there is no one to blame but yourself.

Life is such that some people get *results*, others get *consequences*. Results come from a planned program of righteously chosen deeds. Consequences come from wrong acts. You cannot do right and get bad results morally. Neither can you do wrong and get good consequences.

Another startling fact is that we have the power to make our own *choices* but we do not have the power to change the *consequences* of our choices.

The universe is moral. God is just. His standards are immutable. His laws are irrevocable. I may talk about "breaking God's laws," but I don't break *them*. The fact is that they will ultimately break me. I will be left helpless, hopeless, and finally homeless.

God's three major moral attributes are justice, holiness, and love. These are complementary to each other. Calvary is an expression of all three. The *holiness* of God could not tolerate sin. The *justice* of God demanded that the penalty for broken law be paid. The *love* of God sent His Son to save poor, lost man. Jesus came as an expression of divine love. Jesus paid the penalty of sin to satisfy the divine justice and preserve the integrity of the moral government of the universe. Man's depraved

nature can be cleansed by the Holy Spirit—a requirement of the holiness of God.

So—God is *just* but He also is *loving* and *merciful*. Choose Him today. Repent of your past willful choices and God will forgive you. He will also give you a power to activate your will in choosing right.

Remember—there are no moral accidents. If you finally make your bed in hell it will be the result of your own free choice.

The Buddhists have what they call the “Law of Karma.” It is this: “All deeds, good or bad, work out their moral recompense, either in this or in a future state of existence.” The Christians, too, have a Law of Karma. It is stated in the text, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” You can’t live a bad life and reap a good reward. You can’t live a good life and be consigned to a bad eternity. But Christianity goes one step beyond Buddhism—for Buddhism offers no remedy for one who has lived wickedly. Christianity says to the man who has lived sinfully, “Stop. Repent. Confess. Change your manner of living. Choose Christ.” The man that does so will find a power to regenerate his soul and God will wipe out the past. A new day can dawn.

Your will decides your happiness and your destiny. Somebody has pertinently put it:

Sow an act—reap a habit.

Sow a habit—reap a character.

Sow a character—reap a destiny.

You face the necessity of a choice. There is no neutral ground in the moral universe. You are on one side or the other.

*To every man there openeth a high way and a low,
And every man decideth the way his soul shall go.*

Down in your heart you know you are on the wrong side. Your choices have been against your better self, Christ, and the Church. You have sown to the flesh and have reaped nothing but sorrow, disappointment, and sin. It is time to change. The remaining moments of this broadcast are dedicated to you in the hope that you will call a halt. For this purpose such services are conducted. It is for you. Christ is pleading for your right choice. Answer His call now.

*Jesus is tenderly calling thee home,
Calling today, calling today!
Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam,
Farther and farther away.*

Don't you sense His presence; is it not a fact that your better self is saying, "Surrender to Him." Too long you have ignored His pleadings. Too long you have chosen evil and sin. Stop! Why don't you change now before it is too late either for this life or eternity? Don't become a moral wreck. Your will given to Christ can bring happiness in this life and heaven in the future. Yield yourself now. Your will determines your character and your ultimate destiny. Throw your will on the side of Christ and right.

I am asking one of my colleagues, Dr. Mendell Taylor, who is a guest in the studio, to offer a closing prayer. Let us pray.

PRAYER

O God, we sense Thy Holy Spirit's presence. Thou art speaking to multitudes of hearts just now. Thou hast endowed them with the sovereign power of will. Help them to choose the right and accept Christ. May they turn from their evil ways and sow to the flesh no longer. The crop they have already sown is enough unhappiness and eternal death. But Thou wilt forgive and blot out the past. Let a new day dawn. Help them to place their wills in harmony with Thy plan for their lives this moment. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

EIGHT STANDARDS FOR TRUE RELIGION

TEXT—*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:31).

Borden Parker Bowne, that great philosopher, said, "For good or for ill the world is full of religion." True! It is estimated that there are over 500 different organizations purporting to be religious. At the same time in the United States and Canada there are over 75,000,000 persons who are not affiliated with any church whatsoever.

How would a non-church member proceed to ascertain just what is true religion? A distinguished businessman courteously refused my invitation to a religious service saying, "There are so many religions and because I cannot investigate all of them, I have decided to investigate none." He might just as well have said, "There are so many foods advertised and because I cannot sample all of them, I will eat none," or "There are so many books and because I cannot read all of them, I will read none," or "There are so many theories and because I can't know them all, I refuse to think at all." Oh, no, we must think and our spiritual nature must be provided for or life becomes empty and meaningless.

We are living in a scientific age of tests, measurements, and standards. Why investigate all 500 religions? Why not set up standards for judging any religion as true? Such is the objective of this sermon. Here are eight proposed standards. No one

by itself is sufficient but it would appear that all eight taken together will measure true religion.

NUMBER ONE—THE STANDARD OF DURABILITY

It must be a religion that has demonstrated its strength by having withstood the onslaughts of scientists, critics, skeptics, agnostics, and atheists. Dean Inge said recently, "There are two kinds of fools. One says, 'This is old, therefore is good.' The other says, 'This is new, therefore, is better.'" A thing is not *true* because it is *new* nor is it false because it is old. But with religion—a matter of primary importance—it does not square with reason to suppose that the human race had to wait until 1946 to find the *true* religion. The fact that a religion has been tried and tested over centuries, gives some indication of its truth.

NUMBER TWO—THE SUPERNATURAL STANDARD

It must be a religion that claims to be supernatural. If I am to transcend nature—If I am immortal—my religion must be more than natural. No man-made, humanistic religion can qualify as true religion. Such a religion is merely an ethics—not a religion. If I am not immortal I do not need a religion, just a social philosophy of conduct. But if I am to live beyond the grave, my religion must also carry through and be supernatural.

NUMBER THREE—THE ETHICAL STANDARD

It must be a religion that sponsors high, clean living. Any religion that does not lift me to a high-

er plane of ethical ideals is false. A religion that permits me to go to church an hour a week or a month and continue to live on a low, corrupt, immoral plane, is unworthy of serious consideration as a true religion. Something within me demands that religion shall be associated with the highest and best in life.

NUMBER FOUR—THE STANDARD OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

It must be a religion that can change me. I find myself bound by habits—within are uncontrollable passions, ungovernable tempers, unbridled instincts. I need a religion that can do something to change *my nature* and make me a new creature. If a religion can do nothing for *me*, I am as well off without it. I need a dynamic that can break bonds of habits, purify passions, and give me a new freedom of mind and soul.

NUMBER FIVE—THE STANDARD OF VICTORIOUS LIVING

It must be a religion that can give me power to meet the problems of life successfully. Steep hills are met frequently, jagged rocks protrude, thorns are numerous, scalding tears wrung from a broken heart flow, financial reverses come, dark hours with death arrive when it seems that all the lights of life go out. I need a religion that can endue me with power, not to remove earth's ills, but to meet them victoriously. If a religion cannot help me in the hour of trouble, it is worthless.

NUMBER SIX—THE STANDARD OF JUSTICE

It must be a religion that believes in ultimate rewards and punishments. There is something within all of us that demands justice. If a Hitler or Al Capone are to receive the same rewards as St. Francis or Abraham Lincoln, the universe is a madhouse. There is an "eternal fitness of things" in the world that is reflected in every mind, namely, that in the end, the scales will balance—the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished.

NUMBER SEVEN—THE STANDARD OF VALUE

It must be a religion that costs me something. The degree to which a person values anything is commensurate with the price he paid for it. The best things in life are the costliest. The sands of the seashore are numerous and cheap but the pearls of great price are rare and difficult to procure. Could it be otherwise with religion? Jesus told of the man who sold all that he possessed to buy the pearl of great price. Yes—true religion demands a high price—it demands *you*—and when it has *you* it has all you possess.

NUMBER EIGHT—THE PRAGMATIC STANDARD

The final standard—and most important—demands that true religion shall satisfy my nature. It must bring peace, rest, poise of mind, contentment of spirit, and satisfaction of heart. My physical hunger finds satisfaction when food is provided. My intellectual hunger finds satisfaction when facts are obtained. My spiritual nature must also find satisfaction. Any religion that fails here is false.

We demand a sort of negative pragmatism. A religion *is not true* because it satisfies but it *satisfies* because it is true. Therefore, our final standard demands that true religion meet the needs of the heart.

Eight standards for the measurement of true religion. Most of the 500 religions have now dropped out, being unable to meet one or more of the standards. But is there a religion that can measure up? *There is.*

The vital, vibrant, potent gospel of Jesus Christ fulfills all the innate demands and requirements of the mind for the evaluation of true religion.

In spite of critics, skeptics, and atheists, the gospel of Christ has come down over the centuries victoriously. It has withstood the vicious attacks of all comers and today is more powerful and potent than ever before.

It is a religion that can change man's nature so that one can exclaim with St. Paul, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

It is a religion that provides power daily to make living successful.

It is a religion that demands the highest ethical standards. It heralds the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and lifts a man to new plains of ethical living.

It is a religion that believes in justice. It contends that in the long run the scales will balance and the Judge of the universe will ultimately say to the righteous, "Well done," and to the wicked, "Depart ye cursed."

It is a religion that demands a high cost. If you are to receive the pearl of great price, you must give yourself completely and unreservedly.

And finally, it is a religion that will satisfy your deepest cravings, bringing peace, rest and joy. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Wherever you may be—this very moment—whether in Maine or California, Oregon or Florida, Texas or Michigan, Alaska or Puerto Rico, Hawaii or South America, pause for a moment, bow your head by your radio or, better still, kneel, and yield your life to Christ by praying—

*Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay,
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting
Yielded and still.*

Let a new day dawn in your life. Christ can turn darkness to light, sorrow to joy. He can break sinful habits. He can liberate your soul. You, too, can know the truth. He will set you free. Yield yourself to Him—your will, your heart, your intellect—your all.

*Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!
Fill with Thy Spirit 'til all shall see,
Christ only, always
Living in me!*

Reach out for Christ. Open your heart and this very moment He will come in.

Let us pray: O God, meet hundreds of hearts just now. Let Thy truth flood their minds. Set them free from sin, superstition, and fear. Speak the word of pardon. Break fetters that bind. Mold yielded souls and fill opened hearts. Amen.

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

TEXT—*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2: 10, 11).*

For more than four centuries the human race had been estranged from God. No word had come from Jehovah. Man was searching for satisfaction and peace—all to no avail. Philosophers advanced theories, politicians presented proposed Utopias and religionists offered rituals. Man was groveling in intellectual darkness, moral night, and spiritual despair. The lights were all out—life seemed hopeless. The human race needed something or somebody to lead it to the light and to liberty.

One night as shepherds were guarding their flocks, a lurid light flashed in the sky. These shepherds fell down affrighted. While in this prostrate condition, a voice broke the silence of the night and said in the words of my text, "Fear not." Now is not the time to be afraid—*now* is the time to rejoice—the great moment has arrived for which you have been praying, anticipating, and hoping. "For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." What a message! What a pronouncement! What news! The greatest news story of the ages.

Why is Jesus the most outstanding personality the world has ever known? Why does He stand at the head of every list of great men? Why is He superior? To use a modern expression, Why is He "tops"? In other words, Why is He unique? Why is He different? The answer to these questions is my message today.

I. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS PERSONALITY

Jesus is like unto no other man. He is God-man. Because He is God, He can reach up with one arm and grasp hold of God and reach down with the other arm and grasp hold of poor, lost man and thus make a bridge of reconciliation bringing God and man together. A man couldn't do this and neither could God alone. It took just such an one as Jesus—both God and man.

II. THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST AMONG FOUNDERS OF RELIGION

There are in the world several outstanding religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. But notice this point of uniqueness regarding Christ. If you subtracted Confucius, the founder from Confucianism you have not changed Confucianism one iota. If you subtracted Buddha from Buddhism you have not altered Buddhism in any way. If you subtracted Mohammed from Mohammedanism you have not changed Mohammedanism at all. *But—when you subtract Christ from Christianity you have nothing left. What He is, Christianity is. What Christianity is, He is.*

III. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS RESURRECTION

It is reported that every year tens of thousands of Mohammedans make pilgrimages to Mecca, the Holy City of the Mohammedans, to lay floral tributes upon the grave of their founder. Mohammed is dead. Buddha is dead. Confucius is dead. *But*—the founder of Christianity went one step beyond the founder of every religion and conquered death, coming out of the tomb crying, "I am he that was dead but am alive for evermore and have the keys of death and of hell." He lives and reigns in the hearts of His followers. The greatest proof of the Resurrection is the fact that you—and you—and you—can meet Him for yourselves and hear Him say, "Peace be unto you," and have the fetters of sin broken by the living Saviour.

IV. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS CHARACTER

I might ask you, "What do you think of Winston Churchill? or What do you think of the late Franklin D. Roosevelt? of Joseph Stalin? or Harry S. Truman?" Your answer would in no sense portray your character. But when I ask, "What do you think of Christ?" your answer will reveal the type of person you are. This is true of no other man that ever lived. Why? Well, let us look at it for a moment. Suppose you are facing a moral situation. You are trying to decide a course of action. You are saying, "Which shall I do?" "What course shall I take?" Let me suggest that you do the *right* thing. Do you agree? Yes. But—notice this: the *right* thing is always the *Christian* thing. Look at it again.

You are facing another dilemma. Again you are asking yourself, "What course of action shall I take?" "What shall I do?" let me suggest again, "Do the Christian thing." Do you agree? Yes. But notice that the *Christian* thing is always the *right* thing. What is *right* is *Christian* and what is *Christian* is always *right*. Why is this? Because Jesus is the fountainhead of righteousness, goodness and justice. Therefore, when I ask, "What do you think of Christ?" I am really asking, "What do you think of right?" and when you answer that, you reveal your character.

V. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS LIFE

It is trite to say, "He is the Ideal of ideals." This statement is true, but sometimes rather empty and quite meaningless. Let us look at it for a moment from a different angle.

Let us make a list of the twelve greatest men of history. You make your list and I will make mine. The lists will not include the same men—although the number of duplications will be surprising. After you tabulate this list—by the side of each name in a second column write down what you think is the outstanding characteristic of each man chosen. Twelve great men and twelve great attributes. Here would be my list:

Aristotle—Intellectual power

Abraham—Faithfulness

Moses—Meekness

Socrates—Kindness

St. Paul—Sacrifice

William Shakespeare—Literary excellence

Martin Luther—Sincerity
Woodrow Wilson—Brotherhood
Theodore Roosevelt—Courage
William E. Borah—Honesty
Oliver Wendell Holmes—Justice

Suppose you take these twelve outstanding characteristics of these twelve outstanding men of all history and wrap them up—tie them up into one *great synthetic personality* possessing all of them. The thing that blesses and inspires my soul is this: *Jesus is all of that—and more.* He is the Ideal of ideals.

Try it from another angle. Scan your life and select the twelve people that have done the most to influence your character. We owe a lot to others. There are really no self-made men. We are a part of all that we have met and all those we have met have influenced us for good or for ill. But—select the twelve most beloved persons in your life and then list their outstanding characteristics. Tie these up into one *great, beloved, imaginative personality and Jesus is all that and more.*

Every man we have ever met, no matter how ideal, can be improved upon. He has some point of weakness. *But*—and now I challenge you—you cannot add one thing to Jesus to make Him better—you cannot improve Him. He is the perfect Ideal of our innermost nature.

VI. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS BEING

God created man in His own image, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Because of sin and time that image is marred and effaced. The original

outline is pretty dim and hardly recognizable. God created us with categories of the mind norms. To illustrate: I am not proficient at making harmony, but I can detect discord. Why? Did I learn this somewhere? No. I was born that way. I never had to teach my daughters to like ice cream or candy. They came that way. They were created with taste buds that respond favorably to ice cream and repel castor oil. Why? God constituted them that way. Why is it that symmetry, order, and beauty are pleasing, while unbalance, disorder, and chaos are repulsive? God made us that way. When I see a good man, my norm of goodness is stimulated. When I see a just man, my norm of justice is stirred. Within my constituent nature God has given me norms such as, goodness, honesty, fairness, righteousness, truth, sympathy, compassion, harmony, and justice.

If I should be able to draw out of my innermost soul my norm of justice and my norm of goodness and my norm of sympathy and my norm of honesty and all other norms, and tie them up in one *great synthetic personality—Jesus is all of that and more.* He is the Ideal of ideals. He is the perfect objectification of every subjective norm implanted in my soul by God. This is one of the strongest arguments for His deity. He is the personification of every internal norm God created within me. If He had never lived in the flesh, someone just like Him ought to have lived. *He is the Ideal Personality.*

VII. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS POWER TO HELP EACH OF US IN OUR DAILY STRUGGLE

Here is the place that Jesus becomes unique in a personal way. Other religions have set up beau-

tiful standards, high ideals, and worthy rules of conduct. Their adherents strive vainly to attain. They do all kinds of penance. They inch along the highways in the dust, covered with blood and mud, trying to reach the ideals of their religion and atone for their shortcomings. They are powerless. *But—* Jesus is unique in that He offers the highest standards for life—the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, etc., but in *addition* He also provides a dynamic power to make us *victors*.

Are you struggling? Are you defeated? Are you a victim of your environment? Are you a victim of your habits? Are you a victim of sin? Jesus can give you victory. He can make you a conqueror over your environment. He can break the power of sinful habits. He can liberate your soul.

Every person to whom I am now speaking belongs in one of two classes. Either you are a *victor* or a *victim*. To which class do you belong? If a *victim*, the glorious news is that Jesus can give you power to make you a *victor*. Will you trust Him now? If you will, you will be able to say with Lowell Mason:

*He breaks the power of cancelled sin
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me.*

Let us pray. O Thou marvelous Christ, incomparable personality, matchless leader, ideal character, perfect being, living Saviour; speak to troubled hearts this moment and liberate their souls from the bondage of sin. Make them victors and no longer victims. Amen.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE—St. Matthew 24.

Jesus was asked three questions by his disciples:

1. When shall the temple be destroyed?
2. What shall be the sign of Thy coming?
3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world?

Permit me to suggest that you read the answers which are recorded in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew.

The Second Coming of Christ will be in marked contrast with His first advent. He came the first time as a poor man, born in a borrowed manger and buried in a borrowed tomb. His first mission was that of a Saviour. Thank God, He accomplished that glorious task and every man of Adam's race may be the recipient of His atoning grace.

The manner and mission of His second appearance will be decidedly different. He comes not as a poor man but with "power and great glory." He comes not as a Saviour but as a Bridegroom.

When will He come? No one knows.

The best one can do is to approximate the end by reference to prophecies depicting the state of world affairs just prior to His second appearance. Present conditions seem to be dangerously parallel to those described by Jesus in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew.

St. Paul gave a detailed enumeration of signs indicating the approach of Christ for His second appearance. Let us look at these for a moment and as I read them will you honestly ask yourself this question: Do present-day conditions square with these descriptions? If they *do* correspond we have a rational right to conclude that we *may* actually be living in the last days. Here is St. Paul's prophetic picture from the third chapter of II Timothy:

"This know also that in the *last days* perilous times shall come." Does this check? Yes, perilous days are upon us.

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves." Check.

"Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents." Was there ever a day when the children raised the parents as today?

"Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good."

"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Pleasure-mad America. Over \$1,300,000,000.00 gambled in 1945 and over \$7,000,000,000.00 spent for liquor, and nearly all athletic events broke attendance records. "Lovers of pleasures."

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." More church members than ever and yet the Church is the most ineffective in its history.

"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." There are more than

1600 institutions of graduate level in the United States.

In a Southern community there lived an elderly gentleman, a godly Christian saint. One day my friend visited him and during their conversation the old man asked, "Did you ever stop to think that our God is one of system and order, that He has a clock and an almanac, that He does things on time? He continued, "We read that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. This figure, seven, runs on through the entire Bible."

Then he added, "We are told that 'a day is as a thousand years to God and a thousand years as a day.'"

And now the old man pressed his conclusion by saying, "I've just been thinking—the first two thousand years brought us to a great world catastrophe—the flood the first two days of world's history. Two thousand more years passed and another epoch—the first coming of Christ—two more days. And now nearly two thousand years more have rolled by."

His final declaration was this, "We are living in the Saturday evening of world's history. Christ will come and take His Bride to spend the Sabbath with Him at the Marriage Supper."

The old man may have been right. Who is to say that it is *not* the Saturday evening of world's history? It may be ten o'clock—It may be eleven. Who knows but what it may be quarter before twelve? And it could be but one minute before the great gong of God's eternal universe may start tolling 1—2—3— announcing the end—"at midnight

a cry was made, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.' ”
When He comes it will be:

1. *The Day of Vindication of the Church.*

From the days of Jesus until now it has never been popular to be a Christian. The man who stands for right will feel the pressure of evil. The world hated the disciples. It has hated His followers since. Jesus didn't promise universal acceptance of His gospel. He said, "Strait is the gate and narrow the way, and few there be that go in thereat."

The Church has been oppressed, ridiculed, hated, despised, and condemned. Millions have been persecuted, tortured, and martyred. Do you think such persecutors will go unpunished and such martyrs will go unrewarded? Not unless the universe is a madhouse and the teachings of Jesus mythical.

The great day of the Church is to come. The crowning day for the Christian is just ahead. Jesus said, "When ye see these things come to pass—lift up your heads for the day of your redemption draweth near."

One day a man had reached the summit of a hill, and as he walked down a dusty road he came to a house on his left. It was an old dilapidated shack—unpainted, shingles blown off by the winds and storms, window panes broken, the board walk leading to the entrance rotting away and the posts supporting a wooden fence were sagging. He wondered who could live in such a frightful place. As he walked farther down the road he noticed a little girl sitting under a tree rocking a doll on her lap

singing and apparently very happy. He approached her and said, "Little girl, do you live in that old house?" She answered, "Yes, Mister."

"Well why are you so happy living in such a poor house?" he asked.

"Oh," she said, "please come with me."

She led him down the road until they could see between yonder hills and there on the mountain-side he saw a beautiful mansion, nicely landscaped with a man on the roof shingling. The little girl said, "Mister, do you see that house? Well that man is my Daddy and tomorrow Daddy is coming to take me and Mamma to our new home. That's why I'm happy."

And then I thought of the people of God. Every one living down here in these old tenements of clay—some with dim eyes, deaf ears, tottering forms, rheumatism, arthritis, and all experiencing sorrow, bereavement, and death. And yet—there is a deep joy. The world says, "You fool you. What are you shouting about—why are you so happy—you are having the same battles, sorrows, and troubles we have?" Well, they just don't understand. We are not happy because we are living in these tenements of clay but we are happy because just tomorrow Jesus is coming to take us to our new mansion where pain, suffering, and death shall never come. That is the all-inspiring, dynamic hope of the Church.

We shall say, "Good-by, old earth, good-by.

"Good-by sweat shops. I'm going to a country where sweat shall never adorn the brow of the redeemed.

“Good-by rent. I’m going to a country where the rent will never fall due on our new mansions.

“Good-by taxes—I’m going to a city where taxes are unknown, for the city is governed by King Emmanuel.

“Good-by pain, rheumatism, arthritis, I’m going to a country where pain shall never wrack the bodies of the redeemed.

“Good-by sorrow and sighing, I’m going to a country where sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

“Good-by scalding tears wrung from broken hearts, I’m going to a country where God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

“Good-by old-age, tottering form, I’m going to a country where the old shall be young there forever, transformed in a moment of time.

“Good-by death, crepe, cemeteries, I’m going to a country where crepe shall never adorn the doorknobs of our new mansions, where no funeral processions shall ever march down the gold-paved boulevards of the New Jerusalem and where no cemeteries shall besmirch the hillsides of glory.

“Good-by sin, I’m going to a city where God has decreed that thou shalt never come.

“Good-by Satan, thou art deceiver of the saints. I’m going to a country barred against thee forever.

“I’m going to a country where gold is so cheap they pave the streets with it and jasper is so plentiful they plaster the walls with it and pearls so large they make gates of them.”

I want to be there in that great climactic moment when all the assembled hosts of heaven gather. There I shall see the multitude no man could number

—the bloodwashed. I want to be among that number. There is the colossal orchestra of 144,000 standing on the sea of glass all with golden harps. Hovering over the throne is a cloud of cherubim and a cloud of seraphim. Gabriel comes forward with a pearl-studded baton calling all the hosts of heaven to attention and then leads in the coronation anthem:

*All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.*

2. *His Coming Will Also Be a Day of Surprise.*

Some who have prayed long and loud will be left. Others who have had good motives although misjudged will go.

3. *His Coming Will Be a Day of Separation.*

Jesus said, "Two shall be in the field, one shall be taken, the other left. Two shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken, the other left."

But His coming will not only be a Day of Vindication, a Day of Surprise and a Day of Separation but it will be a Day when Mercy shall take wings and fly away, and the Justice of God shall be ushered in. Today is one of mercy. You can ignore the Church, refuse Christ, wade through His shed blood, disregard mother's prayers and get by—it is a day of mercy.

Christ may delay His coming. But—you may go to meet Him in death. Your going and His com-

ing mean the same thing as far as preparation is concerned. Are you ready for His coming? Are you prepared for death?

If—this very moment—the door of this large studio should open and a white-clad being from another world should walk up to this microphone—all would be quiet and awesome. And if that angel should say, “I have been sent to announce to the world that at midnight tonight Jesus will return” and then should slowly with measured tread leave this studio, what would happen? Well, for a moment we would all be stunned and then methinks all over America and around the world saints of God would begin to rejoice—old veterans would cry out, “No shroud for mine—no funeral for me—my Lord cometh.” But something else would be happening—in thousands of homes people would drop to their knees by their radios and begin to repent and cry out for forgiveness. I would not have to give an invitation. There would be a wholesale seeking of God.

Why wait for the tragic? Why not now get ready for His coming? And get ready for the ever-present monster Death. It is a sobering thought to realize that many to whom I am now speaking will listen to me no more forever. It is probable that before “Showers of Blessing” peals out next week, some souls will be in eternity. God grant that you may take this message of warning and get right with God now. Kneel by your radio, confess your sins. It could be that God has thrown this radio service across your pathway providentially to give you another warning to get ready. Don't pass it

up. Suppose it should be your golden moment? make the most of it. Pray. Confess your sins, trust God, and be saved.

*When Jesus comes to reward His servants,
Whether it be noon or night,
Faithful to Him, will He find us watching,
With our lamps all trimmed and bright?*

*O can we say we are ready brother,
Ready for the soul's bright home?
Say, will He find you and me still watching,
Waiting, waiting when the Lord shall come?*

Are you ready? Jesus commanded, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Christ is coming. Death is sure. Prepare to meet thy God.

*Blessed are those whom the Lord finds watching,
In His glory they shall share;
If He shall come at the dawn or midnight,
Will He find us watching there?*

THE HALFWAY COVENANT

SCRIPTURE READING—Revelation 3:14-22.

TEXT—*So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth* (Revelation 3:16).

“The Halfway Covenant” is the most striking astounding, surprising document that I have come across in years. I want to pass it on to you. If it stirs and impresses you as it did me, I assure you it will be a valuable ten minutes. It is so descriptive of modern, present-day conditions, although it was written in 1670, that one would declare, if not otherwise informed, that it referred to 1946.

An act of the State Legislature created the Covenant. A Legislative Commission, after investigation, discovered thirteen evils and proposed eight recommendations to correct these conditions. The sermon will give you first the “Halfway Covenant” and list the thirteen evils, while next we shall present the eight recommendations which were so startling and pertinent that they laid the foundation for the Great Spiritual Awakening of 1740.

Before giving you this fascinating, interesting, but important information, permit me to lay a scriptural and present a brief historical background for the “Halfway Covenant.”

I, therefore, invite your attention to a very striking and rather alarming scripture lesson from the third chapter of the Book of Revelation, beginning at the fourteenth verse and continuing through the twenty-second.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

Rather strong, vivid language. It is God himself speaking to the church at Laodicea.

This was one of the seven churches of Asia Minor. To each of these God directed a message of grave importance. Such are recorded in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation.

There are some striking similarities between God's description of the church at Laodicea and present conditions in the church world.

The Laodiceans thought highly of themselves. They were satisfied, complacent, and self-contained. How like church members today. They claimed to be rich, increased with goods, and had need of nothing.

But God said, “Thou art *wretched*, and *miserable*, and *poor*, and *blind*, and *naked*.”

What a contrast between God's appraisal and man's evaluation!

And then God makes an alarming, startling pronouncement to a complacent, self-satisfied church—"because thou art neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of my mouth." In other words, you are nauseating, insipid, repulsive—you make even God sick.

"The Halfway Covenant" could well apply to the Laodicean church as well as to the modern church. Here is the brief historical background to the appearance of the Covenant.

OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE

On September 16, 1620, a band of 102 brave, hardy, courageous souls set out from England on the good ship *Mayflower*. No land was sighted until November 16, exactly two months later, when what is now known as Cape Cod came into view and they set foot on old Plymouth Rock.

The first winter on the bleak, rock-bound coasts of New England, that band faced extreme hardships and tremendous loss. Due to general sickness, savage Indians, and cold weather, fifty-one died. It would have been easy for the remaining fifty-one Pilgrims to have decided that they were out of God's will and have returned to England. And yet—when the good ship *Mayflower* was put in readiness and set sail for home, *not one, no, not one* of those souls returned. No—they had set their hand to this ploughing, and they sowed the seeds of Americanism deep in the soil of our nation.

They stayed—they conquered—they found that for which they had come—freedom to worship God.

This early generation—these founders—were men possessing four dominant characteristics:

1. Sturdy determined faith.
2. Definite and profound convictions.
3. Wholehearted piety.
4. Intense moral earnestness.

THE DECLINE

When the second and third generations came on it is interesting to make the following observations:

1. The spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to sublime moral ideals passed.

2. There came a partial union of state and church as follows:

- a) The churches were supported by taxation.
- b) Church attendance was made compulsory by law.

3. According to the Puritans only the regenerate were eligible for church membership.

4. Only those in full membership had any voice in the affairs of the church.

Such a condition produced many unsatisfactory situations, such as:

- a) Taxation without representation.
- b) Compulsory church attendance without a vote.
- c) Children of non-church members were denied Baptism.

THE HALFWAY COVENANT

In order to quiet the unrest and discontent and to provide a compromise, the General Court of Massachusetts—the State Legislature—created and passed the Halfway Covenant in 1662. This granted persons church membership, even though they were not converted, who could meet any one or all of the following stipulations:

1. Persons who had been baptized in infancy.
2. Those who assented to the doctrines of the church.
3. Those not scandalous in life.

Such as qualified under the above provisions were granted membership and their children were made eligible for Baptism, although they themselves were not to be admitted to the Lord's Table and were denied a vote in church affairs.

It was a halfway covenant—a part-way membership.

But such—instead of promoting spirituality—promoted formality. The church became flooded with unregenerate persons.

Gradually, further compromises were made until the Lord's Table was opened to all, and finally Baptism became a converting ordinance for the unsaved.

The backslidden condition of the church contributed to a widespread apostasy and general lapse in morals until conditions became so corrupt that Rev. Increase Mather cried out: "Oh, New England, New England! tremble, for the glory is gone; it is gradually departing." Later he added, "Oh, de-

generate New England! What art thou come to at this day?"

Conditions became so alarming that even politicians took serious cognizance so that a bill was introduced to the State Legislature in 1670, authorizing a Commission to investigate and report on two items:

1. What are the evils that have provoked the Lord to bring His judgments on New England?

2. What is to be done that these evils may be changed?

After careful investigation the Commission reported on Question Number One, having found the following thirteen evils existing in 1670. Notice them—Do you think these same evils prevail today?

1. Decay of godliness on the part of professing Christians.

2. Pride and extravagance in dress.

3. Neglect of Baptism and church fellowship.

4. Profanity and irreverent behavior in the sanctuary.

5. Absence of Sabbath observance.

6. Lack of family government and worship.

7. Backbitings, censures, revilings, litigations between church members.

8. Intemperance, tavern haunting, adultery, lustful dress and behavior, mixed dancing, gaming, idleness.

9. Dishonesty.

10. Covetousness and love of the world.

11. Opposition to reformation and leniency toward sin.

12. A want of public spirit supporting schools, etc.

13. A general unfruitfulness under means of grace and a refusal to repent.

The Commission not only found thirteen prevalent evils but proposed eight recommendations to remedy these conditions. The proposals made are startling, penetrating, pungent, and scriptural. They provided the background and paved the way for the Great Spiritual Awakening of 1740.

I firmly believe that if these eight recommendations were followed today, we would look back in the future to the Great Awakening of 1946.

The thirteen evils which existed at the time of the Halfway Covenant all exist today in a more universal manner. Lukewarmness, godlessness, neglect of means of grace, Sabbath desecration, lack of family worship, lack of family government, intemperance, tavern haunting, immodest dress, pride, adultery, dishonesty, love of the world, refusal to repent.

Our nation needs to confess its sins. Uncle Sam could well afford to go to the mourner's bench and repent in sackcloth and ashes.

We cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot hold on to church membership in one hand for the sake of respectability and hold on to the world for the sake of sinful pleasures.

Upon us as church members rests the responsibility for the apostasy and evils of our present

generation. We must return to God in humility and repentance. The halfhearted attitude of half-way covenanters will never produce a great spiritual awakening. We must accept our responsibility and save our nation, our children, and our church by rededicating and reconsecrating ourselves completely.

EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislative Committee not only found the evils but it also recommended specific remedies. It is one thing for a physician to diagnose a case, but it is another to prescribe a cure.

Here are the eight recommendations of the Commission. Note how they might apply today.

Number One—That the *chief persons* in church and state set a godly example.

Sin and godlessness on the part of government officials encourages corruption, graft, and irreligion. If the President, his cabinet, senators and representatives, governors, and other officials would humbly confess their need of divine guidance, and by their example live a godly and moral life, it would do more for our nation than all the proposed appropriations, labor and farm legislation, and other legal machinery.

Our trouble is not lack of knowledge, not ignorance of proper techniques, not paucity of education. Someone has said, "The worst man in the world knows more than the best man practices."

We need something to activate the will in the direction of righteous acts. Our nation needs not

only leadership in the fields of government, finance, labor, agriculture, and education, but we must have moral and spiritual leadership not alone by precept, but by godly example.

Such leadership is needed not alone in affairs of state but in the church as well. Bishops, superintendents, pastors must not only preach truth—they must be personifications of righteousness themselves. It is not enough to be administrative, financial, and ecclesiastical leaders—such must be pre-eminently *spiritual* leaders.

The recommendation of the 17th century Commission is still sound—let there be a godly example set by the chief persons in church and state.

Number Two—“Let none be admitted to the church who has not made a full profession of saving faith.”

In other words, permit only regenerated persons church membership—nullify the Halfway Covenant—keep church membership sacred for Christians who have met Jesus and have been born again.

It is time to call a halt in America. It is time to stop lining up new members three-deep in front of church altars, men and women who make no profession of saving faith. To receive into the church sinners of all description, Sabbath desecraters, adulterers, gamblers, drinkers, dancers—worldlings all—is about as practical as it would be for a United States battleship to take in German sailors during the war. How long before they would scuttle the ship? And—it looks as if these unregenerated, worldly-minded, sinning church members

have pretty well scuttled the true Church of Christ in America.

Let's heed the recommendation of the Commission and stop this nefarious, insidious practice and keep the church pure and sacred for spiritually born-again Christians.

Of course, such a measure will hinder the minister in making a large numerical increase in church membership, but it will make a church stronger spiritually when undissipated and undiluted by a host of carnal-minded, sin-loving worldlings.

Number Three—"Let the discipline in the church be enforced."

In other words, stand by the ideals, rules, and regulations as laid down in church manuals.

Number Four—"Let the churches renew their covenants with God."

In other words, come back to God and re-vow the statement of faith and code of conduct. Re-dedicate and reconsecrate yourself to the program of the church.

Number Five—"Let the sins of the times be engaged against."

In other words, let the church stop pussyfooting and fence-straddling. Let the preachers gather some of the fire of holy indignation against the sins of the day. Too many ministers are afraid of their own sinning official members to strike out against sin. But if the evils are remedied, such judgment must begin in the church. Ministers must be ready to preach without fear or favor and be prepared for the consequences as were the prophets of old.

Number Six—"Let the churches promote holiness and a closer walk with God."

Instead of casting reflection on the ideal of holy living, let ministers and laymen alike make holiness and communion with God the definite objective of church activity.

Number Seven—"Support Harvard College."

Today this would mean—give your support to colleges that believe in the church. Support your church colleges.

Harvard was founded by a group of ministers. It was organized as an arm of the church to promote religion.

If we would have a revival of religion today we must look to church colleges for spiritual and moral leadership. Little help will come from state and private institutions.

Number Eight—"Cry mightily unto God that He be pleased to rain down righteousness."

Here is the climactic recommendation. Prayer—more prayer—intercession—importunity. Prayer is the key that unlocks God's spiritual storehouse. Prayer changes things. Prayer changes persons. Prayer changes the pray-er. And prayer causes God to work objectively.

I challenge the church members of America to follow these eight recommendations. If done—a mighty revival will follow inevitably.

Back in the early part of the eighteenth century the thirteen evils were running rampant. The Commission presented the eight recommendations. It was not long before Jonathan Edwards, the Ten-

ants, and George Whitefield began to preach with fearlessness and power. Tens of thousands were converted and the Great Awakening swept New England and the eastern seaboard.

Churches were crowded, schoolhouses packed. Whitefield preached to as many as 30,000 at one time in the open fields. At Yale he warned of the "dreadful ill-consequences of an unconverted ministry."

A tremendous, soul-transforming revival came.

Today evils exceed those of early New England. Crime is overwhelming our nation. Drinking, gambling, murder, burglary, and divorce are reaching new highs.

Our churches are swamped and filled with half-covenanters—people who want the benefits of the church but shirk their duties. They want the church in one hand and the world in the other—lukewarm, indifferent, lethargic.

God is surely speaking anew, "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Oh, for a Jonathan Edwards to preach on the sovereignty and justice of God.

Oh, for a Whitefield to picture the beauties of Christ.

Oh, for Charles G. Finney to point out the logic of Christianity.

The Great Awakening of 1740 came on the heels of great sin and colossal apostasy.

The Great Postwar Revival can and will come if millions of lukewarm church members will cast

aside the halfway covenant and be wholly and completely given to God.

It is impossible to serve God and mammon. You cannot have the sinful pleasures of the world and at the same time, have the happiness of spirit that comes from God. You cannot hold evil in one hand and good in the other hand. You must be on one side or the other. You cannot belong to both the army of Satan and the army of Christ. You must choose one or the other. Jesus said, "He that is not *for* me is *against* me." Which side are you on?

Jesus stands bidding for you today. Surrender completely to Him. Bid good-by to the things of the world, to evil companions, and to selfish ambitions. Don't be a halfway covenanter. Don't be a halfway Christian. Be out and out for God and His kingdom.

Yield your all to Him. Make a wholehearted, complete surrender.

*All to Jesus I surrender
Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me, Jesus, take me now.*

*I surrender all, I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all.*

God grant that thousands of lukewarm, half-hearted church members may surrender to Christ completely today.

The fire of His Holy Spirit can burn all worldly inclinations out of your heart.

*All to Jesus I surrender,
Now I feel the sacred flame;
Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory to His name.*

Let us bow in prayer.

To Thee, O God, we commit this vast radio audience. Many have tried to hold on to Thee and the church in one hand and the world and sin in the other. They have wanted the benefits of the church but have refused to pay the full price for these blessings. They are lukewarm, unconcerned about souls, and indifferent to the demands of the Kingdom.

We pray that such may surrender their all to Thee and renounce any connection or allegiance to Satan and sinful pleasures. Help them to come over on Thy side unreservedly and surrender completely to Thy will. Amen.

A CHANGELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD

SCRIPTURE READING—II Samuel 22: 1-3, Psalms 18: 2, Psalms 89: 26, Psalms 95: 1, Psalms 61: 2, and I Corinthians 10: 4.

TEXT—*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever* (Hebrews 13: 8).

Man is living in a world of change. The problem of stability versus change, the permanent versus the transient, the abiding versus the passing has characterized man's search in the field of religion, politics, ethics, finance, business, medicine, law, education, in fact, in every field where man is engaged.

In the realm of finance the problem is how to stabilize the dollar or pound or whatever the measuring stick. How can it be kept from constant fluctuation?

In business the task is to execute rapid merchandise turnovers and meet changing demands.

In medicine constant change is noticed. How much of the new may be accepted and how much of the old may be retained? The recent marvelous discoveries of penicillin and the sulfa drugs make many old treatments obsolete.

Law changes so rapidly with new statutes replacing old.

The field of religion is not free from this continual process of change. It is a perpetual task to

determine what part of the new is true and how much of the old is sure.

The domain of ethics, if there is such, is a constant battleground. What is right? What is the yardstick of conduct? The prevalent tendency is toward relativism. No authority is accepted, therefore, each individual is a law unto himself—there is no final tribunal. This is a recrudescence of Sophism.

The Roman Catholics have relied on the stability and the authority of the Church. Protestants formerly accepted the Bible as the final word on conduct. When you discard the Church and renounce the Bible there is nothing left but the reason of each individual. Your idea of right becomes as good as mine. This leads to pure relativism making impossible any sure, certain course of reliable, collective ethics.

What is it you rely on? Upon what do you lean in times of stress and strain?

When the sun is shining and the birds are singing, life is easy, buoyant, and exhilarating. In such times man is inclined to be boastful, bombastic, and flout his independence. He struts, throws his head back and his chest out and is the self-appointed lord of all creation. He flaunts his independence. He is the head man and recognizes no dependence on either God or man. Such hours are dangerous, for a person can take attitudes, make statements, and commit acts which may take a lifetime to rectify.

I agree with Schleiermacher that normally and naturally man is a dependent creature; being of a social nature he must have companionship. The

sense of "aloneness" is unbearable, in fact, it is the most pungent form of personal pain.

No stronger statement of eternal punishment is pictured than when Jesus referred to "castaways." "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." Unwanted, unfit, undesirable, disqualified for social communion, repulsive to God, repugnant to man, alone in the universe. No more tragic picture can be painted than that of a poor finite soul having flaunted his independence of God and snobbishly to have severed his need of man to find himself alone, unrelated, unsupported, and unloved. Just a metaphysical existent—an empty entity—devoid of love, without a sense of gratitude, a traitor to duty, a renegade from truth, a disloyal soul, loose in the universe, a castaway, thrown away from God, flung away from man, unworthy of an eternal home.

What a pathetic, tragic picture! Such is the final end of a disloyal, ungrateful soul. Keep going the direction you are and ultimately you will become disconnected from anyone good and from anything worth while. Be independent and cocky and you will gradually ungear yourself and have what you think you want, a perfect independence and complete autonomy with no obligations to anything or anybody and without a duty to any person, ideal or thing. But when that state of complete aloneness is accomplished remember you merit no further expression of gratitude, love, or devotion from others. You can achieve your independent rights and sacrifice your normal privileges. Rights are guaranteed only by the performance of duties.

The highest values of association, fellowship, mutual affection, love, and communion are possible only as one meticulously performs his duties to others and thus merits their regard for his rights.

To go it alone in life soon becomes boresome and very dangerous. One gets on fairly well when the sun shines, but when the clouds begin to gather and the storm breaks, the lightnings flash and the thunders roar—what then? When the lights all go out and you are in darkness, where is your spirit of boastful independence? Upon what can you rely then?

Some people pile up a reserve of *money* for the so-called "rainy day." But money is a poor comforter for a sorrowing heart. It may buy things but it cannot purchase spiritual peace or mental rest. Money cannot turn the lights on again. But suppose financial loss comes, and your monetary reserve crashes to bits? Money is fleeting—its value changes—it vanishes like all things material.

Other people put their reliance on *position*. They reach the top in their business or profession and rest on the power of office. This is quite satisfying as long as one is on top but when political storms come and you are swept off—what then?

Education is the desired end of many. Build up a reserve of knowledge and when the hour of stress comes you will be secure. But is it not a fact that education is merely instrumental, a *means* and not an *end*? Is it not true that educated persons are as discontent and miserable, if not more so, than others? Something more than education is needed for happiness.

Friends—good friends are thought to be the guarantee of help in the hour of personal need. Yes, a good friend is an invaluable asset. We make very few genuine friends in a lifetime. When one is on the top and prospering he has legions of apparent friends. But when adversity comes and prosperity disappears, where are your friends? In most instances they are elsewhere worshipping at the shrine of other prosperous persons.

Money, position, power, education, and friends are not sure and certain in the hour of storm.

Is there anything stable in the world? Can anything be relied upon? Is everything transient, temporary, passing? Is all flux and change? Is all purely relative to time, place, and condition? If I cannot depend on money, position, power, education, or friends, what can I be sure will stand and abide?

There is only one answer—Jesus Christ. He is the Rock, the unshakable, immovable Gibraltar.

He is the same, yesterday, and today, and forever.

No earthquake can dislodge Him. No storm can overwhelm His height and no typhoon can upset His depth. No wind can cause Him to topple and fall. He stands as the only dependable, reliable thing in the universe. Everything centers about Him and gets its points of direction from Him. He is the pole star; He is the compass; He is the chart; He is the Way. You can get your position from Him and be right.

Jesus is the Rock. He is ageless, timeless, unchanging, and eternal. When friends forsake, He remains faithful. When money becomes valueless, He

remains priceless. When men fall from power and influence, He remains all-powerful and omnipresent. When education fails, He remains the Truth. When friends prove faithless, He stands faithful. When all is dark He is the great Beacon Light. When you find yourself on shifting sand, He is the Rock of Salvation.

He is the Rock of Ages, the only sure, abiding, stable point of sure reference in all the universe.

During the summer of 1941, just before the war, Mrs. DeLong and I visited Mexico City as delegates to the International Congress of Religious Education. It was a glorious experience. Enroute we stopped at Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. In my opinion this is one of the greatest natural phenomena in America, if not in the entire world. Accompanied by five hundred others we followed the official guide to a depth 850 feet beneath the surface of the earth. We walked single file from one great room to another, squeezing through small openings in the rocks, observing the beautiful formations and gorgeous coloring of the stalactites and stalagmites.

After lunch we took the trip through the great room sometimes called the "big room" or the "King's chamber." It is a mile and a half long, 450 feet across and 320 feet to the ceiling and no one knows how deep. We encircled this room, walking perhaps four miles. At the end of the trip we approached what is called the "Rock of Ages," a massive formation of rock extending upward many feet and protruding forward. The guide requested all to be seated on the sloping incline of that great

spectacle. He then informed us that in a few minutes all the lights would be extinguished and requested that all cigarettes and flashlights be put out and that silence reign, calling attention to the fact that for the first time many of us would be in stark darkness. Soon the lights were turned off and we were in darkness and silence. I felt creepy and very uncomfortable. There we were sitting 850 feet beneath the surface of the earth. If the earth should quake only God would know where we were. After about ten seconds of such stark darkness I felt like saying to the guide, "We have seen it and felt it, please put on the lights." But another ten seconds passed and the uneasiness increased and finally when thirty seconds had elapsed—it seemed like an hour. Then away down at the end of the cavern—more than a mile and a half away a little speck of light appeared. At the same time a male quartet from that distance began to sing softly, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me; let me hide myself in Thee." The light grew larger and larger until it illuminated every corner and crevice of that cavern. As the light increased in intensity the singing grew in volume and as that blazing light filled the room, the quartet struck the last verse with tremendous vocal power:

*While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death;
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

Well—something happened to me. It seemed that a new room in my soul had opened. Something within me was stirred. I felt like shouting and praising God for the one sure, steadfast thing in all the world—the Rock of Ages.

As I sat there in that darkness I remembered that away back 1,900 years ago, the world was shrouded in spiritual, stark darkness, when one night, a speck of light appeared in Bethlehem's manger and down over the centuries it has grown in intensity and clarity until it has penetrated and cast its glorious rays to the farthest corners of a sin-darkened world.

In these days of uncertainty and change, turmoil and tumult, thank God there is a rock upon which we can place our feet with certainty and security.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.*

Jesus can forgive your sins—your outward transgressions. He can also cleanse your soul. His is the double cure. He forgives the outward acts and cleanses the inward nature. Good works will not save you; tears have no cleansing power. It is only Christ that can save and purify. Money, worldly position avail nothing. You must come as a man, as a sinner.

*Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know;
These for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone;
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

PRAYER

Let us pray: O God, for that soul that is unsettled and troubled we pray. For that one in sorrow and darkness we seek Thy help. For those souls bound by sin we intreat Thee to break such fetters. For those who have relied on money, power, position, education, and friends and have found them unstable and unreliable, help them to cast themselves on Thee, the Rock of Ages. Amen.

DECAYING FOUNDATIONS

TEXT—*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* (Psalms 11:3).

The text is a very striking and thought-provoking question. *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

Our present civilization, particularly here in America, was founded upon religion. Roger Babson, the great statistician, in reporting a conversation he had with the president of one of the South American republics, discovered the reason for the difference in the progress made by the northern continent and that of the southern. The founders of the South American countries, for the most part, were Spaniards who went there for the purpose of discovering *gold*, while the Puritans and Pilgrims came here for the purpose of finding *God*. There is the difference of only one letter in the spelling of those two words, "Gold" and "God" but there is an eternity of difference in the meaning of these words.

On September 16, 1620, a band of 102 brave, hardy, determined souls set out from England on the good ship *Mayflower* to sail through an uncharted sea in search of freedom and religious liberty. There was no sight of land until daybreak of November 16, exactly two months later, when what is now known as Cape Cod came into view and these 102

rugged pioneers stepped out of the *Mayflower* onto Plymouth Rock and into a new, virgin territory.

The first few months this brave band faced starvation, savage Indians, and a scourge of what was called "general sickness." Death came to twenty of the twenty-four households, taking a toll of fifty-one, exactly fifty per cent of the original band. Terrible as the suffering had been, heartbreaking as was the bereavement experienced with mounds of the newly dug graves within sight, not one of the Pilgrims returned with the *Mayflower* when it set sail for England in the spring of 1621. Longfellow has well written:

*All strong hearts and true—
Not one went back on the "Mayflower."
No, not one looked back
Who has set his hand to this plowing.*

Pioneers of true Americanism, they stayed, they conquered, they sowed their seed in the sacred soil of the rights of men and garnered a goodly harvest.¹ Dr. Marsh has well said:

*Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod,
They left unstained what there they found;
Freedom to worship God.²*

They laid the foundation for the great American superstructure. It was a solid base. But no matter how good the foundation, if forces are per-

¹ Daniel L. Marsh, "The American Canon."

² *Ibid.*

mitted to undermine and bore, sooner or later the entire superstructure will come tumbling down. If the termites are permitted to do their devastating work, eventually the building will crash.

The Psalmist cries out, "*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*" Well—what can they do? Kill the termites and repair the foundations. That is the imperative need today.

Look at conditions:

1. Fifty-eight per cent of the population does not attend church regularly. The National Opinion Research Center reports that only 69% of Catholics, 39% of the Protestants, and 9% of the Jews attend church once a week.

Dr. Leavell in his book, *The Romance of Evangelism*, gives the following interesting but alarming statistics relative to church members:

- 5% do not exist.
- 10% cannot be found.
- 20% never pray.
- 25% never read the Bible.
- 30% never attend church services.
- 40% never give to any cause.
- 50% never go to Sunday school.
- 60% never go to church on Sunday evening.
- 70% never engage in any church service.
- 80% never have family worship.
- 90% never win a soul to Christ.

If the above figures are accurate, it is no wonder that the church is powerless, that moral standards are low, and that crime is high.

2. Crime increased 12.4 per cent in 1945 over 1944. One major offense was committed on the average of every 20.1 seconds. Every day on the average 149 persons were robbed, 662 automobiles stolen, 881 places burglarized and 2,371 other types of theft were committed. An estimation of 1,565,541 major crimes were committed in 1945, an increase of 171,886 over 1944 (Associated Press, March 19, 1946).

In a very recent issue, *Life* magazine devotes a lead article to the alarming prevalence of crime (April 8, 1946). It contends that "A new crime wave hit America last year." The following startling figures are released relative to young people under 18 years of age:

Since 1939 the number of girls under 18 arrested has increased 198%. Boys arrested under 18 has increased 48% for homicide, 70% for rape, 39% for robbery, 72% for assault, 55% for auto thefts and 101% for drunkenness. Total juvenile delinquency is up just over 100%.

J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. Chief, says, "A crime wave is not coming—it is *already here*."

So—what are we going to do about it? There is just one thing to do—repair the foundations. Immanuel Kant, one of the greatest philosophers of all time, said, "*All morality rests upon three postulates; God, freedom, and immortality.*" Upon these three sturdy shoulders morality is founded. When these are knocked out or destroyed there is no dynamic by which people are impelled to right action.

Today we have no impelling motive for right action. Mr. Keeler, the inventor of the Keeler polygraph—lie detecting machine—after examining thousands of people, concludes that only three per cent of all chain store employees and five per cent of bank employees can be depended upon never to steal. He adds, "*Most people are honest only because they are afraid of getting caught.*" *It appears that we are all broken down inside.* Moral standards are no longer binding. Why? Because we have taken God out of the universe and with Him His immutable laws have gone. We have denied immortality—we are to die like animals with nothing either to fear or desire after the grave. And finally, we have made man to be the victim of heredity and environment. His acts are wholly explained by mechanism, endocrinology, evolutionary surges. In brief, we have denied freedom of the will. And, if a man is not free, if he must pursue a certain course of action, it is unfair and unreasonable to hold him responsible.

God, freedom, and immortality have been relegated to the superstitious past. The result is that we have no foundation for the establishment of an ethical code, and we have lost any dynamic guaranteeing moral conduct. The foundations have been destroyed. They must be repaired, and that speedily, or the entire structure will crash. We face either a return to metaphysical religion or an accelerated recrudescence of paganism with its attending calamities. We must act at once. Tomorrow will be too late.

Let me propose a new platform embodying thirteen planks. Look at this suggested foundation and if your heart beats as mine let us work, pray, and plan for a revival of genuine religion. Let us go back and rebuild.

1. Back to the belief in a personal God.

2. Back to the belief that that God has a purpose for this universe.

3. Back to the belief that man is the crowning point of His creation and is not a super-evolved animal, free from personal responsibility for his conduct.

4. Back to the belief that man is sovereign; that his will is more significant in determining his conduct than either his heredity or environment.

5. Back to the belief that a purposeful, personal God would transmit His will for the crowning triumph of His creative genius, man.

6. Back to the belief that this will of God is revealed and recorded in the holy, sacred Book, the Bible.

7. Back to the belief that when man transgresses the law of God, he *sins*.

8. Back to the belief that an atonement is necessary for this sin.

9. Back to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and on the Cross of Calvary an atonement was made.

10. Back to the belief that no matter how bound by sinful habits nor how polluted the personality may have become, the blood of Christ can go deeper than the stain of sin has gone.

11. Back to the belief that the Holy Spirit can transform the individual, rejuvenate his spirit, and give him a dynamic that will make him a victor over, and not a victim of, his environment.

12. Back to the belief that in the end right will triumph.

13. Back to the belief that there is an eternal fitness of things in the universe so that the man that does wrong will suffer for his sinful acts while the man who aligns himself on the side of righteousness will be rewarded by the Ruler of a righteous universe.

“If foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” The answer is *rebuild!*

The restoration of the foundations is not a collective matter although it will take the combined efforts of millions of persons. It must be a personal commitment of my self to God and His will. Such a movement must start in individual hearts. It will then spread to the community and transform society. But it is only changed men that will change society.

Sin is the barrier between man and God. Our willful acts which have violated God's laws must be forgiven and our sinful nature must be cleansed by His blood. If you need forgiveness or cleansing look to God just now. If you have wandered away from the religion of your boyhood home and the prayers of your devout mother, return today. In your own life let the foundations be restored. Rebuild in yourself the standards which sin has destroyed. Let Jesus come into your heart. He is

the solution of your personal problem and is the only answer to the world's present desperate need.

*Jesus is tenderly calling thee home —
Calling today, calling today!
Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam,
Farther and farther away?
Calling today; calling today;
Jesus is calling,
Is tenderly calling today!*

Jesus is standing silhouetted on the horizon of the world's need, calling. But He is also knocking at your heart's door. As He enters your heart and millions of others, the long looked-for and much prayed-for revival will be here.

*Jesus is pleading; Oh, list to His voice—
Hear Him today, hear Him today!
They who believe on His name shall rejoice;
Quickly arise and away.*

Let us pray.

PRAYER

O Jesus, Thou Son of God, Thou art towering over the wrecks of humanity like a great beacon light against a dark sky, calling the nations to repentance. Thou art offering peace, rest, and happiness. We have forgotten God and have well-nigh destroyed the foundations. Help us to stop and begin to repair the inroads made by our sinfulness. We pray that church members by the

thousands may come back to Thee in sincere repentance. Thou art calling. Help many to answer Thee. Thou canst speak peace. Thou canst liberate souls from the fetters of sin. Thou canst cleanse the innermost being. Come, in forgiving pardon and in cleansing power this very hour to hundreds if not thousands of hearts all over America and around the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH?

SCRIPTURE READING—St. Matthew 16:13-18.

TEXT—*And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).*

With all of its faults the Church is the greatest institution in the world. The Church at its worst is so much better than any other institution at its best that there is no basis for comparison.

No one is more cognizant than I of the weaknesses of the modern Church. Such spots should be strengthened. But to accentuate the low points to the exclusion of the high is like pointing out the one black sheep in the flock of a hundred, forgetting the ninety-nine white sheep. It appears customary for critics to magnify one or two black marks against the Church and generalize that the entire Church is black. Instead of crying out constantly, "What's *wrong* with the Church?" why not reverse the process and ask, "What's *right* with the Church?" It might help our general perspective.

No one denies that there are some unworthy men affiliated with the Church. It would be foolish to claim that all church members are genuine. Certainly there are hypocrites in the Church. But—is it not true that there are hypocrites in all organizations of men whether that organization be ed-

ucational, fraternal, business, or social? Why demand that religion be completely free of imperfect, insincere, hypocritical men? Why specialize on the exception and forget the mass of good, clean, sincere, honest church members?

It is one thing to criticize the Church; it is another thing to correct it. Tearing down the greatest institution in the world without proposing constructive solutions is like kicking the crutches out from under a cripple, letting him sprawl on the ground helplessly.

It is much easier to criticize than correct, to tear down than to tone up, to destroy than to rehabilitate. The Church is attacked by skeptics, infidels, and atheists, from without and by termites and parasites from within. Of course there are *wrongs* in the Church—but there are so many more *rights* for every wrong that it is to pull the picture all out of focus and ruthlessly distort it to accentuate the *wrongs* and minimize the *rights*.

The Church has made an unequalled contribution to society

1. Economically.
2. Socially.
3. Intellectually.
4. Physically.
5. Culturally.
6. Morally.
7. Spiritually.

Yes, the Church has made a sevenfold unique contribution.

I. *Economical benefits.*

The Church lays the foundation upon which business can be transacted safely and securely. Credit is based on confidence. Confidence is founded upon integrity. Integrity is guaranteed by religion. Wherever the Christian Church has gone business has prospered and flourished. Take the Church out of the community and you immediately lower real estate values. Who wants to live where there are no churches? Even selfish businessmen who denounce the Church and refuse to support it insist on living in communities where there are thriving, active churches. Why? Because there is less crime, less vandalism, less property destruction, fewer bad accounts, fewer murders and suicides in a Christian community.

Irreligious businessman, why don't you be consistent and play the game fairly? Support the thing that supports you, by your presence and your money. If you don't like the Church, why don't you go to Patagonia, Africa, or Russia and try to do business where you will not be bothered by the wrongs of the Church. You know, and every thinking man knows, that the Church from an economic standpoint, is the most valuable institution in the community.

II. *Social contribution.*

The Church raises the standard of living wherever it goes. One needs only to remember frontier days or to view heathen countries to observe the low plane of living before the Church came. Wherever Christ has gone the people have risen above animal

levels and approximated standards God designed for human beings. Cannibalism, cave-man stuff, cruelty, murder, disregard for womanhood have been transcended by Christian civilization.

The Church gives meaning to such terms as "home," "mother," "sympathy," "mercy," and "fellowship." These are by-products of Christianity. They are unknown among heathen peoples.

III. *Intellectual benefits.*

The Church is the mother of education. The high plane of literacy and the universal prevalence of schools in Christian countries is the result of the emphasis which the Church placed upon education centuries ago. The Church sponsored great universities during the Middle Ages. The outstanding modern American universities and colleges, for the most part, were started by churches. Such is true of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Chicago, Boston, Oberlin, and many others. In fact, even today of the nearly 2,000 institutions of college level in the United States, two-thirds of them are sponsored by churches.

IV. *Physical contribution.*

Another child of the Church is the modern hospital. It has always been the Church which has led the way in alleviating suffering and pain. Mercy, sympathy, altruism, have been attributes of the Church, resulting in the establishment of hundreds of hospitals. Medical and dental colleges, hospitals, dispensaries, and clinics have been furthered by the direct leadership of churches. Even today, most

hospitals are under control of religious organizations.

V. *Cultural benefits.*

The Church has been the spearhead of culture along every line. The finer things of life have been made possible because of the leadership afforded by the Church. The great masterpieces of art were produced either by churchmen, or their subject matter was taken from the religious truths espoused by the Church.

Look at the array of names in the field of music and ask yourself the honest question—Did the Church inspire and father such—Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and Gounod. Certainly one of the most outstanding of the masterpieces is Handel's "Messiah."

The fields of sculpture and painting are filled with men whose masterpieces were inspired by the Church. Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo are representative of hundreds.

In the realm of literature suppose you discard all the great works which deal with religious subjects or which were inspired by the Church. Many of the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, and the other great masters would be destroyed.

Let the critic of the Church confront the fact that the Church has been the mother of the best in art, painting, music, and literature.

VI. *Ethical contribution.*

The Church has always given its blessing to any moral crusade. Morality is the handmaiden of re-

ligion. Religion gives the dynamic for ethical conduct. Where the Church has gone, morality has followed. When the Church has lost influence, the moral conditions have become deplorable. The Church raises the ethical standards of the community. Honesty, truthfulness, purity, and regard for the sanctity of life, have always been by-products of the Church. A member of our Army Air Force gave this testimony: "When we were shot down over a South Sea island, we were afraid of falling into the hands of head-hunters and man-eating savages. As we trudged through the underbrush, we saw smoke coming from a native village. We hesitated in our approach, but as we were able to get a clearer vision we spotted the spire of a Christian church. When we saw that, we were relieved and thrilled, for we knew we need not fear. The church guaranteed our safety. Sure enough, the natives rushed out to meet us and bound up our wounds and nursed us back to health." Yes—the Church changes communities and lifts the moral standards. Some would lead one to believe that civilization came first to the heathen and then came the Church. Oh no, first came the missionary with Christ, and then came the doctor, nurse, teacher, engineer—as by-products of Christianity.

VII. *Spiritual benefits.*

Of course, the greatest and primary contribution which the Church has made to the race has been spiritual. It offers answers to man's greatest questions. Where? Who? What? Whence? Why?

It offers a remedy for sin, a comfort for sorrow, and a hope beyond death.

Today there is a tendency to substitute lodges or service clubs for the Church. It is too true that the average professional man gives himself to his lodge, his service club, the Chamber of Commerce, and gives very little time or money to the Church. It is the Church that has made lodges possible. It is the Church that has guaranteed the continued existence of service clubs. It is the Church that has made commerce and business profitable. Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Put first things first. Put first institutions first.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that we can have the wonderful by-products of Christianity and discard Christianity itself. Such will ultimately drive us to paganism with the loss of all the acquired benefits of a Christian society. Beware! Take heed! If you would preserve your home, if you would guarantee the perpetuation of your business, if you would continue the high standards of living, if you would increase culture, if you would guarantee progress in music, art, and literature, take care to preserve the institution which makes such possible.

Our American civilization may get by for a time and enjoy the by-products of Christianity without paying the price our forefathers paid for religious freedom, but sooner or later our moral and business structure will crumble. It reminds me of my automobile. Suppose I am driving down the highway sixty miles an hour and then turn the ignition off, disconnecting the motor from the car. For a time I sail along more smoothly without vibra-

tion. It is glorious and velvety. But soon I begin to slow down and eventually will stop unless I turn the ignition on—unless the motor and the drive shaft become connected. So it is with America—we may think we are getting along nicely and smoothly without religion. It may appear we do better without the Church. We have disconnected the motor from the drive shaft. We have cut religion off from our civilization. We have forgotten God and disregarded the Church. We give ourselves to our lodges, service clubs, and pleasures. *But—we are slowing down.* Crime is increasing alarmingly. Our children are going to the devil at a fast pace. Moral standards are all broken down. Selfishness, murder, suicide, burglary, and all manner of crimes are stalking the land.

Social service, education, and philosophy are impotent to meet the need.

My plea is: come back to God. Give yourself to His Church. Save civilization by giving your support to the Church and the Christian gospel.

American civilization and the Christian Church must become connected vitally. It is only as individual persons reaffirm their faith in the truths of the Church and place themselves in the hands of Christ that new life comes to the Church. Our forefathers paid the price for our glorious civilization. We are in danger of losing the benefits by our unwillingness to repent of our wrongdoing. America must return to God and the Church or face ruin and annihilation.

Such a return must begin in the hearts of millions of men and women. Christ is making a strong

plea to you this moment. He is knocking at your door personally, begging for admittance. Let the faith of your father and the religion of your mother become yours this hour. Do your part to save our civilization by first letting Christ save you. When He does you will become a member of His Church of which He is the head.

PRAYER

O God of our fathers, we return to Thee for help in this hour of need. Our civilization is tottering on the very brink of despair. The plans of men have failed. The benefits of our civilization are about to vanish. We have forgotten that God alone is the guarantor of the by-products of Christianity. We pray that millions of our people, particularly our business and professional people, may come back to Thee and let Christ into their hearts. Help us not to turn Thee away, for if we do, to whom else can we go? Thou art our only hope. Save us we pray. Amen.

SIMPLIFYING A DIFFICULT WORD

OR

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SANCTIFIED?

SCRIPTURE READING—St. John, Chapter 17.

The average man is confused and frightened by theological and philosophical terminology. His life is such that he has little time for hair-splitting jargon—what he wants is something that he can readily understand and which, when understood, can mean something of value to his problem of daily living. Any doctrine which is merely theoretical speculation devoid of any practical benefit he renounces.

Both philosophy and theology have by their language lost many possible adherents because they have made simple and practical matters too ponderous, too muddy, too theoretical, and too other-worldly. In terminology it has appeared to be their policy always to use a big word when a small one would have done just as satisfactorily. This professional tendency has frightened many persons and reflected on the practicality of both theology and philosophy.

It is my purpose in this sermon to consider one of the greatest of theological doctrines which deals with the most wonderful experience that a finite human being can have in this life. Don't let the customary designation of a doctrine scare you, for we want you to see the simplicity of the truth and

its practical benefit to you personally. The theological name is "Entire Sanctification." Let me simplify its meaning and you will readily understand its great significance and we trust you will come to experience its utilitarian value.

To be sure, to most people, the word "sanctification" is a dark, foreboding and meaningless word. Let me give you concisely its definition as gathered from many dictionaries, including Webster, Worcester, Funk and Wagnall's, Century and Standard. All agree that "to sanctify" means: (1) to consecrate, dedicate or set apart for holy use, and (2) to purify, cleanse or purge. When the word is used with reference to a person it means that such person is: (1) dedicated to God's will and (2) his being has been purified. So you see when the word "sanctify" is broken up into more common words it is easily understood. It simply means consecration and purification. Now let us apply it to ourselves.

Every member of the human race is confronted with the sin problem. Here is where the practicality of the truth comes in, for is it not a fact that the most important hindrance to your personal happiness is the presence of sin bringing its condemnation, guilt, remorse, discontent, and despair? In fact, sin is the cause of all of man's troubles and sorrows? It is the Public Enemy Number One of the world. Greed, hatred, jealousy, envy, licentiousness, covetousness, and war are all results of sin. Speaking of practicality, what could be more practical than the elimination of this monster.

Now let us take the next step—sin is twofold. Sin is what you *are* and what you *do*. It is con-

cerned with both *being* and *doing*. The acts that you commit which are violations of the laws of God's moral government are called *sins*—plural. But the nature that prompts these acts is called the sin born in us, or to use theological terms, inbred sin, native depravity, or carnality. Therefore, we stand before God as sinful creatures who have broken His righteous statutes.

Let us proceed further. A man who violates the laws of the United States is a criminal. He is a rebel against society. He must be apprehended and punished.

In the government of the universe, we find the immutable laws of God, the Ten Commandments. All have sinned—we are criminals in the sight of God. We merit the penalty of broken law.

But Jesus came and paid our penalty on the Cross. When we accept His sacrifice with a repentant heart for our wrongdoing, our *sinful acts*, we are forgiven. We are no longer rebels. We stand before God no longer as a criminal or a rebel. In theological language this is called "justification." It is a legal, forensic, judicial term which simply means that the demands of the law have been satisfied and we are free from guilt, condemnation and penalty. This is a great, mighty, tremendous experience—a sinner forgiven of every sinful act, the slate wiped clean, the record of transgressions expunged, "remembered against us no more forever." This is man's initial experience with God—one of pardon, one of forgiveness.

One part of the problem of sin is now settled. My *sinful acts* are forgiven. I am now justified in the sight of God.

But what of the other part of the sin problem? My *sinful acts* have been forgiven but my *sinful nature* still remains. And that is where the glorious truth of entire sanctification comes in. Now don't be frightened by the word, remember it simply means, according to the dictionaries, two things, (1) consecration and (2) purification.

Here is the correct procedure—first, I come to God and confess my sins—He forgives me. I now offer myself to Him—my talents, my time, my self, my all, this is consecration. In a real sense I humanly sanctify myself—that is man's part. I yield all to Him. God's part in sanctification is to purify, to cleanse. God cannot and will not purify a rebel, a criminal—no, first that sinner must repent and be forgiven. That is the first work of divine grace. But God *will* purify a forgiven, pardoned person. This is the second act of divine grace. The first deals with my *sinful acts* and the second deals with *my sinful nature*.

Yes, it is as simple as that. But let not its simplicity deceive you. It is all important, because—

1. It is *commanded*—"Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16).

2. It is *required*—"Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

3. It is the *will of God*—"Even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3).

All churches believe a man must be holy to enter heaven. There is no dispute on this point. All are agreed.

St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. Augustine, John Wesley, George Whitefield, John Fletcher, all taught and experienced not only forgiveness but cleansing.

In closing let me raise the three questions in your mind.

1. Is this experience Scriptural?
2. Is it Practical?
3. Is it Possible?

Yes, it is *scriptural*.

I Thessalonians 4: 3—"For this is the will of God your sanctification."

I Thessalonians 4: 7—"For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness."

I Peter 1: 15, 16—"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Colossians 4: 12—"That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

I Thessalonians 5: 23—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

Jesus prayed in St. John 17: 17—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Furthermore—it is the most *practical* thing in the world. Why live with constant internal strife? Why be victimized by carnality, upset by anger, fear, hatred, jealousy? Why suffer the heartaches of a sinful nature driving one to sinful acts necessi-

tating constant forgiveness. Why be a weak, ineffective Christian? Certainly it is practical to be free from this internal disturber of life.

But the wonderful truth is that it is not only scriptural and practical, it is *gloriously possible* in this present life.

That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life (Luke 1:74-75).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

To be a candidate for this experience you must first know that your *sinful acts* have been forgiven. If you are still a sinful rebel you are not qualified to receive anything but pardon or penalty. But if you are justified you are now ready to present your all—to *consecrate*—and receive from God His great gift—the cleansing of your *sinful nature* by the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit.

In a future sermon I shall consider the relationship of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to En-

tire Sanctification. It is sufficient to say here that God purifies the heart when a person has made a complete consecration. Peter testified concerning the Day of Pentecost when *he* received the Holy Spirit that his heart was purified.

If this truth is new to you let me make a suggestion. If you are honest and sincere and desire God's best, do this—study God's word, pray earnestly, lay your need before Him and "ye shall know the truth." He will send the Holy Spirit to your heart. If the thousands now listening will follow the above formula—never mind involved theological dogmas—search the scriptures, follow the urge of your hungry heart, and your sinful nature will be purged.

God bless every one of you.

Let your supplication be:

*Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to live in my soul;
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow;
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*

God can do this mighty act for you now. You make a complete consecration of your all. You do your part and God will do His part. He will purify your innermost nature. Let your heart reach out as follows:

*Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,
I wait blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet;
By faith for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow,
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*

PRAYER

Let us now pray—O God, we have endeavored to preach the inspiring truth of Thy great plan of salvation—*complete* deliverance from sin. Thou canst and wilt forgive repenting men for their *sinful acts*. But in addition Thou wilt cleanse *sinful natures* of consecrated followers by the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. We earnestly pray that scores of honest, sincere people may consecrate their all this very minute and realize the greatest experience a finite soul can know. Send Thy Holy Spirit to their hearts this very hour. Amen.

THE GREATEST DANGER CONFRONTING THE CHURCH TODAY

SCRIPTURE READING — St. Matthew 24: 3-13,
Revelation 2: 1-7.

Are you a church member? If so, what, in your opinion, is the greatest danger confronting the Church today? To bring the matter a little closer, what is the greatest danger facing your own denomination? And still a bit closer and more personal—what is the greatest danger confronting you? And to apply the question to myself—what is the greatest danger confronting Russell V. DeLong.

Such is the problem of this sermon. The answer given by Jesus is shocking, disconcerting, and startling. Let us explore it together for a few minutes.

I have selected two texts for the sermon today—the first, the words of Jesus from the first book of the New Testament, St. Matthew 24: 12: *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

And the second, the words of God himself from the last book of the New Testament, Revelation 2: 4: *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

The first of my texts today is taken from the address of Jesus to His disciples regarding conditions

as they will exist prior to His Second Coming and the end of the world. The second text was lifted from the address of God himself to the Ephesian church.

In the first century the seven churches of Asia Minor played a great part in the early propagation of the gospel. The most prominent of these was the church in the great metropolitan city of Ephesus. This organization started as the result of a Home Missionary Campaign conducted by that great evangelist, Apollos. Twelve men repented of their sins and were baptized. A short time later, the Apostle Paul himself, being in that part of the world and having heard of the revival of Apollos, went to Ephesus and used as his first text these words: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2). At the close of that sermon all twelve men received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second epoch in their Christian experience. Thus the members of the Ephesian church were converted under Apollos and sanctified under St. Paul. They had a wonderful beginning.

The history of the Ephesian church is that of glorious conquest. One of the letters St. Paul wrote to this church has been included in the sacred canon. It is thought to be the most deeply spiritual of all the Pauline epistles. In this letter St. Paul refers to them as: (1) saints, (2) holy, (3) forgiven, (4) redeemed, (5) sealed by the Holy Spirit, and (6) fellow citizens of the household of God. It was a wonderful church. And then—God himself adds many commendatory things to the

credit of this magnificent church when He says, Item A—"I know thy works," good. Item B—"and thy labors," excellent. Item C—"and thy patience," splendid. Item D—"and thy hatred of evil," a sin-hating church. Item E—"that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes," in other words, you are Orthodox and fundamental.

And then—after that mountain built to their credit—God says, "*Nevertheless*" in spite of all these items to your credit—"I have somewhat against thee." What possibly could God have against such an admirable, exemplary church? He gives the shocking answer, "Thou hast left thy first love."

Here is the startling, disconcerting news—unless I possess that passionate love for God in my heart, all these other admirable traits are worthless. In the scales of God, my personal love for Him outweighs all that I might do for Him minus that love. In brief, if God has *me*, my love, He has all I can give or do. But if He does not have me—I can't buy my way in with money or works.

Have you ever pondered on the question, "Why did God create man?" Did He want money? No. He could have created that. Did He want things? No. He could make those. The only satisfactory theodicy to me is that God wanted a free creature—not an automaton, nor a robot, nor a machine. No, He wanted a person with the power of free choice who could choose God or Satan, right or wrong. When man chose God's companionship and "they walked together in the cool of the day," God had what he wanted—man's love. This truth runs all

through the Bible. Note the Ten Commandments—which is the greatest? Jesus said, “Love the Lord thy God, is the first and greatest commandment.” In reality, then, the man who refuses to give God his love is a greater sinner than a liar, thief, adulterer, or Sabbath desecrater. *Religion is more than what you don't do.* It is a positive, affirmative giving of oneself to God.

“First love”—an interesting figure of speech. Have you ever been in love? Do you remember how you'd go through any adverse conditions to be with that sweetheart? Yes, you had something within that made long distances short; cold weather, warm; and difficult conditions, easy.

Church member, do you remember when you were first converted, when the love of God was first shed abroad in your heart? Do you remember some of the effects of that initial love? (1) Joy, (2) Interest, (3) Liberality, (4) A love for everybody, (5) A love for private communion with God, and (6) A spirit of supreme sacrifice for Him. Your entire being was wrapped up in God and His will. His love completely possessed your personality.

A few years ago I became suddenly ill, was rushed to a hospital and compelled to remain there for several weeks. The first morning doctors and nurses gave me all kinds of tests—metabolism, blood, lung, heart—a thorough check-up.

After completing these examinations, the doctor said, “It is fortunate that you stopped just when you did, for if you had gone on it would have resulted in shock and premature death.”

Thus it is with thousands, yea, millions, of church members—possibly not spiritually dead, but in poor, anemic, dangerous health.

What are some of the signs or indices of lost love? Here are a few spiritual health tests. Apply them to yourself. Be honest. Evaluate your real spiritual life accurately. You know and God knows.

Test number one—possibly metabolism.

If you have lost *joy* in serving God, if you go to church out of a sense of duty, if the romance has gone, know this you have lost love out of your heart. Nehemiah said, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." When you lose joy, you lose power.

Test number two—maybe heart.

As you analyze yourself do you find little or no interest in the church, no interest in the Sunday school or Young People's Society, no concern for spiritual awakenings? It is a psychological fact that when you lose interest in one thing you shift to another. What is taking the place in your life of your former interest in Christ and His kingdom? Movies, dancing, society, athletics—the world in general? Remember St. John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Test number three—If you have no burden for your loved ones, no tears for the lost, no concern for the salvation of men for whom Jesus died—you have lost love out of your heart.

Test number four—This is very subtle. If, as you analyze your consciousness, you note that there

is a tendency to find fault, be critical, caustic, censorious, and sarcastic, know that the love for the family has departed. Love covers a multitude of faults.

Test number five—Do you recall how when first converted you had power with God and influence with people? When you prayed, heaven and earth kissed each other and when you exhorted people were moved Godward? Have you lost that power?

Test number six—If you find there is a growing spirit of worldliness—a desire to talk like the world, act like the world, dress like the world, and be like the world—that is a grave danger signal.

Lost love—that is the greatest danger confronting the Church, your denomination, you and me, personally. In the rush of events, the demands of business, the attractions of the world, and the pull of iniquity there is the constant peril of gradually losing one's love for Christ and His kingdom.

Conditions are appalling. Leaders of all denominations, educators, statesmen, jurists, are alarmed! Something must be done! What? More education? More entertainment? No! What America needs is a return to the moral and religious principles of the founders of our nation. We can't go farther on the present road without more ruin. We must stop! We must return! We must repent!

If our nation is rescued the change must begin in the hearts of church members. Sin-loving, pleasure-mad, card-playing, drinking, Sabbath-deseccrating church members will never save our civilization.

Church members who think more about pleasure than God; church women who think more of bridge parties than saving the souls of our youth; church members who attend divine worship Easter and Christmas and spend other Sundays on the golf course or elsewhere making the Sabbath a holiday rather than a holy day; church members who drink occasionally, smoke incessantly, and dance more often than they attend church, must repent and return to God or lose their souls.

A lukewarm, indifferent, anemic church is in a great measure to blame for our national crime wave, juvenile delinquency, and moral debauchery. When the church has more members in the movies Sunday nights than in the church Sunday mornings it is time someone stood up with prophetic earnestness and in impassioned soul and cried aloud and spared not.

Isaiah cried out:

*For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace.
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest
Until the righteousness thereof go forth as bright-
ness
And the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

God said to the Ephesian church, "Repent, and do the first works over or I will remove thy candlestick out of its place." What does this mean—apostate forever.

It is time we repented. It is time ministers and laymen alike came back to God. It is time, as the prophet cried out that we "humble ourselves and

seek God and turn from our wicked ways." The hour has struck! It is either a return to God or a march to hell. It is either save our nation or contribute to its speedy damnation.

What is our greatest danger? That in the midst of business, rush, pleasure, iniquity, we will forget God, omit personal devotions, absent ourselves from divine worship, put something ahead of God and lose that dynamic, passionate love of God out of our hearts and ultimately lose our souls.

With a burdened heart, a stirred soul, and an intense desire, I appeal to church members, ministry and laity alike, get on your knees, humble yourselves, let God's love come back into your life with power. Let's save America! But first let's save the Church. To do so we must save ourselves by returning to the Saviour in true repentance.

Repent and return to God. He is your greatest need. Let His love go surging through your soul again.

Fanny Crosby stated the need of thousands when she wrote:

*Saviour, more than life to me,
I am clinging, clinging close to Thee;
Let Thy precious blood applied,
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.*

CHORUS:

*Every day, every hour,
Let me feel Thy cleansing power;
May Thy tender love to me
Bind me closer, closer, Lord, to Thee.*

Yes, that's the secret—to feel His cleansing power every day and every hour.

*Let me love Thee more and more,
Till this fleeting, fleeting day is o'er;
Till my soul is lost in love,
In a brighter, brighter world above.*

PRAYER

Let us pray. O God, we are living in difficult days. It is a fight to keep spiritual. Appeals and allurements on every side pull us away from Thee. Pleasure-seeking and business-demands have crowded Thee out of our lives. We pray that Thou wouldst help hundreds, yea, thousands of church members who are in poor spiritual health to let the vital, vibrant blood of Christ go surging through their spiritual blood stream. We would also pray for sinning church members that they might repent as Thou didst command the members of the Ephesian church. O God, save the Church and thus enable the Church to save our nation from moral and spiritual ruin. Amen.

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