

Other Gods and Altars

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If you are a Christian, you should be concerned with Bible study and with prayer. And Wednesday is an all-day and evening time of prayer and Bible study here. The women meet in the morning at 1030, and while that's only a women's meeting, it is for every woman and all women, not confined to members nor to any age group. It is for all women. And then in the evening, we are going slowly and reverently through the Sermon on the Mount.

Next Wednesday evening at 730, we begin promptly at 730 and have our study with discussion. Then we separate into groups for prayer. We'll be dealing with swearing of oaths, and whether it's proper that we should swear an oath. Quakers don't believe in it, and lots of other people don't, and we respect them very highly. At least, we respect those who first took this position very highly. And we don't claim to know everything, and we're trying to make the word of God teach itself as far as we can, and let our opinions be as few as possible. But we invite you.

Now as you know, we are dealing with the general topic theme, The Angel Before Thee, from Exodus the 23rd chapter. This is the fifth talk I will have given, where the Lord says to Moses and to Israel, Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee in unto the place which I have prepared. Beware of him and obey his voice. And thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and to all that I speak, I'll be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine angel shall go before thee and bring thee in unto." Then are named the nations.

And verse 24, Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works. But thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve Jehovah your God.

The Rotherham translation is called an emphasized translation. And this great English scholar claims, and I think that what he claims stands up under scholarship, that the construction of the Hebrew is such that it throws its own stress. And he translates such passages as this. Instead of translating it, Ye shall serve the Lord your God, which he admits weak. He translates it like this. The Lord your God shall ye serve. There's strength there. And he claims that's in the original. And he was a great English scholar and Bible expositor. The Lord your God shall ye serve, and he shall bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

Now, a little review. It is, it's so good that it won't lose any flavor by repetition, that God's loving plan for His ransomed ones is that He might bring them out of the land of bondage, that He might bring them into the land of promise. He brings them out that He might bring them in. And this is always the way of God with man. We are in the bondage of sin, and He brings us out of sin. But that isn't enough.

He doesn't save us to live in a vacuum. He brings us out that he might bring us in. And in order to bring us in, he says, I bring you by an angel. And we read elsewhere, by a cloud and fire. And he brings us straight into the land of our enemies. He told Israel, I bring you straight into the land of your enemies. He didn't skirt them, and he didn't find a spot for them comfortably separated from their enemies. He brought them straight into their land of their enemies.

Now, he deals with the attitude that they must take toward their enemies, particularly toward their enemy's gods and their religion. And that'll be the talk tonight. And if you want to know how Israel was to deal with the gods of the various groups here, the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Hittites and the Amorites and all the rest, and they were replete with gods and altars and religions; if you want to know how God said we were to deal with them, you don't have to read five books to discover it. The Lord is capable of being very blunt and down-to-earth and direct.

So he says, thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, but thou shalt utterly overthrow them and quite break down their images. I like that old English expression. Thou shalt quite break down their images. When you talk to an Englishman now and you ask him a question, is this true, often he'll answer, quite, quite. That's his way of laying emphasis. And he says, thou shalt quite break down their images.

Now, the principle underlying this for us today is simply this. If you would conquer your enemies, you must not imitate them. I wish that I could make that voice heard all around this world, but there just isn't any use of trying, I'm sure. We go through a period, the Church of Christ goes through periods of decadence and degeneration and finds its way back out of it only by reformation, revival, storm, and thunder.

And we happen to be in one of those periods when nobody listens to you much except the rare few. But the Church itself is not going to listen, but I'm hoping that as the Hebrew writer says, I am persuaded better things of you, my people, and things that accompany salvation.

But I wish I could make it heard around the world that if you would conquer your enemies, you must not imitate them. Your victory lies in being different from them, not in being like them. And in being contrary to them, and even hostile to them, you manage to destroy them.

Now, of course, in the Church of God, our enemies are not to be thought of as people. We are not to think of the neighbor next door, or the Catholic down the block, or the Jew across the street, or the Christian Scientist around the corner, or even the communist hidden somewhere in a crack, ready to call out when night settles. We are not to think of people as our enemies.

Our enemies, as I said last week, our enemies are the various and sundry kind of fleshly sins. Those are our enemies. And inasmuch as they get incarnated in people and organizations, sometimes it's necessary for the Christian to take his stand against people and organizations. You can't shadowbox in the Kingdom of God. This is not a gymnasium, this is a battlefield, this church of Jesus Christ. So, we are not practicing.

That's one thing I'd like to tell you about the church of Christ. In the Army, and as our friend down here knows, in the Navy, they have boot camp, and what else do they call it in the Army? I went through it and forgotten. But they have a period where you train before you fight. But in the church of Jesus Christ, there is no boot camp nor pre-training period. You get your experience right out there in the battlefield. You have to learn to fight by fighting, just as you have to learn to swim by swimming.

So, we conquer our enemies not by imitating them, but by being contrary to them and even hostile to them. This day of compromise is a day of spiritual langer and spiritual decadence. But if we were more sharply opposed to our enemies, we'd find our enemies go down before us. But you can't tie on 14-pound boxing gloves and hope to kill an enemy. You have to strip down to the bone to destroy an enemy.

So, we are told here what to do. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods. You're going into the land of promise. God said to Israel and to us, he says, I have a place, a spiritual land of promise for you, a place of victory and deliverance, a place of high and exalted spiritual communion, a place of self-mastery, a place of temperance and discipline and worship and power. I have this place for you, but it's full of enemies. But I'm leading you right in there, and it'll be your business to drive out your enemies. And you don't begin by saying comrade to them. You begin by letting them know whose side you're on and what you've come for. And He says, thou shalt overthrow and break down.

Now, many tender-minded Christians demur here. They don't like this idea, and some don't come back to this church because we believe in that here. They come and sniff around, and then they don't come back because they want me to pet them and to scratch their blessed canine or feline backs. They want to be petted, and God never said to me, go ye unto all the world and scratch the backs of all the catty Christians and pet them and purr over them and make friends of them.

He never told me to do that, and not only that, he never told anybody to do that. Those preachers thought of that themselves. They thought that up. That's why we have these pussycat reverends, so many of them, God bless them. I'm a reverend, have been since I was 23, so I'm not speaking against the reverend, but I'm just pointing out that we've got so many soft reverends. The French say there are three sexes, men, women, and preachers. In other words, you don't know what the man is. He looks like a man and acts like a woman, and so God help him. But he says, overthrow and break down.

Now I say many tender-minded Christians don't like this. They're too tender. They withdraw from it and pull back. They want spiritual victory, all right. They want to have the place of victory. They want to live in the place of overcoming. They want to live in the place of high communion and holy worship. They want that. Thank God they do. They've got that, but they shrink from this command to be iconoclastic. Iconoclastic or iconoclasm is a long, ugly word. It's not a nice word. It doesn't sound nice. You couldn't sing it very well.

But of course, an icon is an idol, and the clasm part of it is your business. That's yours, to destroy them. And an iconoclast is somebody whose business it is to break down idols. They said that, you know, about the great man who took over at the time of the

Charleses in England. Can't for the moment even think of his name. Yeah, Cromwell. I should have known it. But they called him an iconoclast.

He went up one time, they tell me, into a Catholic church, and he saw twelve statues lined around on little shelves all around the wall made of pure silver. And he said, who are these? And they said, They're the twelve apostles, he said, what are the twelve apostles doing up on that shelf? Get them down out of there. Melt them up. Mend them into money and send them out to bless the countries. Well, there are so many that are satisfied to leave the twelve apostles done in silver. But Cromwell wasn't. He was an iconoclast.

I don't stand for everything he did, but I point out that God said we were to be iconoclasts, break down idols. You see, the reason these tender-minded saints shrink back from this is, they conceived Christianity as a gentle, yielding thing. A soft and gentle and yielding thing. Possibly this is as a consequence of the artist's conceptions of Jesus.

I've never seen one picture of Jesus in my life that I ever want to see again. Not even Sallman's head of Christ. Now, write him a letter and say what I say. I've got such nice friends that when I say anything about anybody, somebody writes or calls up. But it's all right, my brother. I never say anything that I'm not willing to back up. And if I'm wrong about it, I'll apologize. But mostly I'm not. And I'm not here.

And I think that these pictures of Jesus, the soft-bearded, curly Jesus, I never heard but one man who ever characterized that kind of thing rightly. And that was the sharp-tongued English evangelist, Leonard Ravenhill. He said the pictures of Jesus the artists draw makes Him look like as if He didn't die of crucifixion, He'd die of tuberculosis. A weak, pale, anemic fellow who has no life in him. I don't think Jesus looked like that at all. But they've given us that kind of a feminine Jesus, just one jump removed from His mother. His face just as feminine and tender and soft as hers.

Well, my brethren, Jesus was a long way from being that kind of man. And yet some people have thought of Him like that. And you know that the Christ you worship is the Christ you think you worship. You think, whatever you think Him to be, that's what He is to you.

And it's possible to make an idol out of your thinking and worship that idol, just as the Jews made an idol out of gold and worshiped that idol. You can think yourself a savior who isn't the true Savior, and then worship the savior that you have thought into being. And you may find at the end that you haven't been worshipping the true Christ of God at all. You have been worshipping an image made out of your own head. That's entirely possible. And you can even fall in love with that kind of Jesus and feel very tender about him and sing tearfully about this Jesus. And yet He's not the Jesus of the New Testament nor the Christ at all.

But these tender-minded Christians I speak of are too weak to consider these five truths. One is that Christ was a revolutionist. Now, He was not a political revolutionist, and Christ has never led any political movements. Some movements have been led in His name, but He never had anything to do with them. Christ is not a political

revolutionist, but He was a moral and a spiritual revolutionist. And that was why they crucified Him; you know.

They didn't crucify Jesus for doing miracles, though they grumbled about his doing it on the Sabbath day. They'd like to have had Him around to be a kind of a general doctor for everybody. They didn't mind that. But He was a revolutionist. He came and told them where they were wrong and showed them that they were upside down and had to be turned over, and inside out and had to be straightened out and gotten right side out. Now, being a revolutionist, He was crucified for it.

And then the second thing, these weak Christians are too weak to face is that the apostles all died martyrs, but one, and they tried to martyr him, and he wouldn't cook. That was John. They tried to boil him in oil, and he wouldn't boil. You believe that? I have no hesitation in believing it. I know it isn't found in the Scriptures, but I also know that things just as wonderful are found in the Scriptures.

I don't believe in miracles that are told me unless I have reason to believe they happened. But I can see where they could try to boil John, and he wouldn't boil. He was just too good a Christian. God wouldn't let him die that way. He had slept on the bosom of Jesus and listened to the great heartbeat before it broke, that later broke for him. And so, God sort of said, John, I'm not going to have you die like that. I'm going to let you die in bed. So, John died in bed, but all the rest died martyrs.

And another thing is that the early church defied the Roman empire. The early church didn't go out to try to make friends of the Roman empire. They didn't go to Rome and get to know senators and meet them and call them to breakfast and try to win by praying with the big shots. They went out and stood up against the Roman empire and said, no, to the Roman empire.

When they used to come, a parade of soldiers down the street with the Roman eagle high up, everybody knelt down and worshiped the gold of the eagle and worshiped the emperor, whoever was apotheosized, deified at the moment. They worshiped him, but not, not, not the Christians. They said, no, we worship one God and Jesus Christ, His only Son and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. And these three glory equal and honor and wonder, and they're all alike. We worship this one God in Trinity and unity. And they said, you'll worship the Roman emperor, or you'll die. And they died by the tens of thousands.

Then, the fourth thing that these soft-minded Christians forget is that the reformers were all Protestants. And a Protestant was somebody that protested. That's where we get the word Protestant. He's a protester, somebody that stood up there and said no to the abuses.

And they forget this fifth thing, that the cross stands forever as a judgment. Oh, if we only knew this. The liberals, some of them evil, know it. And we who claim to be evangelicals have forgotten it, that the cross stands for judgment. The cross, the cross is not a beautiful thing. The cross is not something to do in gold. The cross stood for judgment.

The only reason the Roman cross existed was because, at least theoretically, because there were people in Rome that didn't deserve to live, so they made them die on a cross. And the only reason that cross stood on Golgotha's hill, those three crosses stood there, was that there were two men who were sinful, and they received judgment. And between them there was another man who received judgment, Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, keep this in mind, my friends, that the cross stands forever as a judgment against human flesh. You and I try to comfort our carnality and in some way compromise with our bad nature. But the cross of Jesus Christ is a judgment against humanity. And the only reason that it doesn't mean everlasting judgment against humanity is because God, who was man, man who was God, went out on that cross.

And when he stretched out those hands on the tree, He took God in one hand and man in the other. And He there neutralized the poison and bore the spear point and the nails and received the moral judgment from the throne of God like a stroke of lightning out of the blue. And when it was over and He was dead, God and man were reconciled.

It was not by compromising with wrongdoing, but by judging it. And that same cross comes into the life of a Christian as a judgment, not to be worn on your watch fob or done in gold and kept somewhere as a beautiful thing, but it is a judgment against mankind. If God's people could only see that they're not fit to live, if we could only see this, but we're too kind and courteous with each other.

And the ministers of the sanctuary are too afraid of hurting people's feelings. So, we leave the impression with the people that they do us a great favor by listening to us. And that they do us a great favor in attending our places of assembly and that they're most wonderful people. I listen, the wonderful people they say everybody is.

If you are all as wonderful as you think you are, Christ would never have had to die for you. But you're as bad as God knows you are. And therefore, Christ came and died for you. You're not fit to live, and neither am I. And neither is Francis Chase. I mentioned him because we all hold him. He's not here now. He's in his mother's 89th birthday. Can you imagine that? He got a little chance to run out to his mother's 89th birthday celebration.

But I mentioned him because he probably is one of the finest men any of us have ever met. And yet he's not fit to live. And you're not fit to live. And I'm not fit to live. And McAfee's not fit to live. We're not fit to live, and we deserve to die. And the cross stands there as a judgment against us. But because Another took our place, God raised Jesus from the dead and now it's peace and help and forgiveness and deliverance from all bondage for his people.

Now he says, Jehovah your God shall ye serve. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods. That's my talk tonight, in this series on the angel before thee. God leading His people out that he might lead them in. Leading them out of the house of bondage that He might lead them into the land of promise. Right in where their enemies are.

You know, we open our churches, and we light them dimly and we say come in and meditate. And people come in to escape their enemies and sit down and meditate. And

it's all right, I suppose. I don't object to it. But that's a sort of a psychological approach to religion. We want to comfort ourselves and stroke ourselves. But there's a cross here.

And I say the reformers were Protestants, Protesters. The early church defied the Roman empire. The apostles died a martyr, and Christ came as a revolutionist against the abuses in the church of His day. Not as a political revolutionist, I repeat, but as a spiritual revolutionist bringing to light another and more wonderful truth than they had ever known before.

Now he says, Jehovah your God shall ye serve. And this is the highest moral imperative, Jehovah your God shall ye serve. And all else depends on this. Remember it. Other gods and other altars must go down. Remember that no man worthy of the name would ever share his bride with another. And remember that no nation worthy of the name would be willing to allow citizens to have dual citizenship. We want them either to be either or. And a man wants the woman either to be his or not. But no sharing.

And God, the great God, says, I'm a jealous God and thou shalt worship no gods beside Me. And God will not share the heart of any man with another god or another altar. He will not. So he says, Jehovah your God shall ye serve. And thou shalt not bow down to the gods of the enemy, but thou shalt overthrow their altars and quite break down their images.

Now really what I want to talk about tonight is the other gods and the other altars that you and I have to face if we're going to have the victorious life, the overcoming life, the communing life, the worshiping life in this land of woe between the world where we used to be and the heaven where we're going.

Now we can have a land of promise right here. These other gods and other altars, will you do me the favor of taking them down? This is taken on tape, I know. But most of us don't have any way of reproducing it and it's a problem. And if you want to check on it, take down these notes. I've got eight little gods here and altars which you're going to have to quite break down and destroy. God is not going to let you get away with anything.

No father worthy of the name of father on this Father's Day would ever consider allowing a 10-year-old boy to defy him with impunity. He won't allow it. If he allows him to defy him when he's 10, he'll disgrace him when he's 20.

So, God isn't going to share anybody's heart with any other God, nor he's not going to smell the fragrance from any other altars.

The first one I want to speak of is the God of worldly pleasure. It was said of Israel in one low moment of her history, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. But this God is being worshiped today without shame. They are God of worldly pleasure. People have taken to it, modern evangelicalism has taken on the way of world's pleasures, has sprinkled them a little and put a little Protestant holy water on them and sanctified them and called them by another name and then said, well, we've got to do something. You have to have something to do. Particularly among youth

groups, they say this. They say, well, you can't have young people praying all the time. You've got to give them something to do.

So, they sanctify worldly pleasures. And the people sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play. And if one Christian out of a twenty-five actually get on fire, determine they're going to serve God and become a saint in the right sense and proper sense of the word, they're looked upon as being a little bit queer and maybe even cold shouldered by those who have accepted the God of worldly pleasure as being a God they can with impunity worship. But you can't do it, my friend. You can't do it. The God of worldly pleasure is not for the Christian.

Now, if you want worldly pleasure, there's only one thing to do, and that is to come to me, shake my hand and say, Mr. Tozer, this is too tough a doctrine. This idea of the cross being judgment and that I've got to defy my enemies, such enemies as you're naming here, and that I've got to live a separated life, I can't take that. I don't want that. All right, all right. Jesus turned and said, will ye also go away? And they went away from him in droves. And when He said, will you go, Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? If you can't take this young fellow, where are you going to go? Tell me, where are you going to go?

We had a young fellow in our church one time here. A young man came to us from out of the city, got acquainted with our young people and stayed around a while and then decided that he was going somewhere else and join a certain church that shall be nameless. I don't think I even know which one it was, but it was a church somewhere in the neighborhood.

And somebody said, why are you leaving us? Why are you not staying with us? Well, he said, I'll tell you, it's just too strict for me. I can't stand it. I want fun along with my Christianity. And he said, the young people over there dance, and I want to dance. I'm not objecting. Let him dance. If it's all right with him, it's all right with me. And if a man wants to do that, let him do it. Jesus said, will ye also go away? He wasn't going to object. Let them go if they would. But thank God there are some that won't. There are people of the burning heart from coast to coast and from around the world.

This de Jesus, who spoke to us this morning, this gentleman from the Philippine Islands, when he came to Winnipeg to Council some weeks ago, my wife and I and Ray were up there, and after I had spoken the first night, he came all smiled, that great smile of his. And he handed me a package. And he said, this package I brought from Japan. And I opened it up. It was the pursuit of God translated into Japanese and printed. And he gave me one of the first copies off the press.

And then in addition to that very lovely, beautifully bound thing, there was a paper with typical oriental decorations on it. I opened it up, unfolded it, and here was a sheet of paper. And on it, on that sheet of paper, there were the autographs of 30 persons who worked for the printing company that had printed the book.

And they were, some of them written in the Japanese script, which I take it's Chinese with some modifications, and others written in English. And somebody had written in English up at the top, Mr. Tozer, even in Japan, there are some whose hearts are athirst

for God. We want you to know it. For the theme of that book is the heart's thirst after God. There are those who are still athirst for God. And they'll listen. The rest won't.

Second, God is the God of carnal flesh. We remember that Israel was to eat manna, angels' food. God sent it down to them from above, angels' food, as the Bible says it is. If angels eat, that's what they eat. Manna, that strange, mysterious, supernatural nourishment that had no Hebrew name. And when they saw it, they said, manna, what is it?

And so it was called manna. And they lived on that manna for a while, and then some of them got bored with God. And they said, we're bored with God, and especially we're bored with His manna. We want flesh. And they kept on insisting until finally God gave them what they want.

Remember this, my brethren, if you insist, God may give you what you want, even if it isn't good for you. If you're praying in the will of God, he'll give you what you want, and it will be glory to him and blessing to you. But if you're praying out of the will of God and you insist, He may let you have it, and it may carry its own curse with it.

So, the Lord sent flesh, flesh in the morning and flesh at night and flesh all day. And they died with flesh in their mouths. And the God of carnal flesh is the God of the day, the God of self-love, the God of self-aggrandizement, the God of arrogance, the God of pride, the God of self-will, the God of self-confidence. These gods are everywhere. We've built Christianity around it.

We have so constructed the Christian creed in the modern hour, or at least the working Christian creed, that it incorporates the flesh instead of crucifying the flesh. Instead of letting the flesh die, we let it live as Israel let the sheep, as Saul let the sheep, and the cattle live. So with flesh in their mouths, they died, and that's what's the matter with the church today. Instead of crucifying our carnal flesh, we pet it and excuse it.

Man has a temper, and he laughs and says, I got that from my Irish grandfather. And your Irish grandfather got it from the devil. And then you're boasting about that. A birthday present from the devil is what you got. But everybody else is very proud, and she paints herself like a flagpole or a Christmas tree and tries to laugh it off. You can't laugh it off, honey. You can't laugh it off. The flesh is the flesh even when it's pretty flesh. It's the flesh even when you inherited it, and we did all inherit it.

Then there's the altar of popular religion. Now I suppose I might just, well, go home, because people don't listen to you when you say these things much. You become after a while a kind of an old, sort of an old fellow people look to, but they don't pay much attention to.

Now popular religion, even popular Christianity today, is a long way from the Christianity of the New Testament, if you want to know it. There was a day in Israel when a woman came in by the name of Jezebel. She was a Zidonian.

She was herself a queen, a princess, the daughter of the king. And she married Ahab, and Ahab was supposed to be the head of Israel. And he was, but his wife was the head of

Ahab, and there was the trouble. This woman painted until the dogs wouldn't eat her hands, her feet, because of the layers of enamel she had on. You'll read that in the Bible, and you'll find it there. And she was so wicked and so sinful that she brought in all of these altars of Baal everywhere until she met a man who was a Protestant.

She met a man by the name of Elijah, an old fellow from up in the hill country. He came walking down there, taking long four-foot steps, swinging his big boney arms. And he ran up, banging against Ahab and Jezebel. When it was all over, the altars of Baal were down, and the priests of Baal were dead. And they were crying, Jehovah, He is God, Jehovah, He is God! And Ahab the coward died, and the dogs licked his blood. And Jezebel the worldling, who introduced popular religion, died, and the dogs ate all they dared and left her painted hands and feet for the worms.

Now, there is an altar you don't dare worship at, sir. Don't imagine that because it's popular, it's right. Always remember that ninety-nine times out of a hundred, if it's popular, it's wrong.

Then there is the altar of comfort. I'll hurry up, I have not much time now. The altar of comfort, there is an expression of ease in Zion, and Amos, the old herdsman, paints the picture of Israel stretching on beds of ease and lying on her ivory couches, and drinking wine out of golden bowls and inventing new instruments of music. She was well off and comfortable and cared not for the woes of Israel.

Jesus said, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. The trouble with us, you see, is we're too comfortable. That's our problem. We're comfortable, and we allow our comfort to determine how we live. And if any act we're called of God to perform shows any likelihood of disturbing our comfort pattern, we reject it, or we say no to it, or we hunt a compromise around it.

We are not going to live at our inconvenience. The church of God is carried on at the convenience of the people, instead of at the inconvenience of the people. My brother, it was not a convenient thing to be nailed on a cross. Jesus died on a cross, and it certainly wasn't a comfortable way to die, but he died on that uncomfortable symbol of death. And he said, if you follow me, take up your cross and come after me.

And then there's the God of intimidation. I think I'd better skip that, because you'll find that in the Old Testament, too. These priests rule by fear. They warn and threaten, but they'll run into people occasionally that don't matter, don't care. They'll run into people that you can't scare. There are some of God's dear children you can't scare. They're nice, and they're not nasty, but you just can't scare them.

Then there's the God of mammon. When I was going over this sermon with the intention of preaching it, I thought the only time Jesus ever picked up a whip was when he found money and religion all mixed together. He found that the people of the temple had worked out an economic scheme so they could serve God and make money on the deal.

And He picked up a whip and lashed them out of the temple and overturned, overturned their benches, which is the old and proper root meaning of the word bankrupt, turning over a bench. And they went out of there bankrupt with a few welts down their backs.

And the cattle went lowing out and down the streets of Jerusalem, not knowing where they belonged. And all Jesus had in mind was, between mammon and Jehovah there's a great gulf fixed. And whoever tries to harmonize religion and money never succeeds.

Of course, it takes money to send out missionaries and keep them on the field. Of course it takes money to keep a church going. Of course, he that tramps out the corn should also live off his labor. That's perfectly all right. We all understand that. But it was, this was a case where mammon was in charge and Jesus would have no truck with mammon. So He picked up the whip. The only time he was on earth, he picked up the whip, was when money got into the holy place.

Then there's the altars of culture. And with that I'm finished. Are you taking these down? The altars of culture. Now I'll say first that Christianity is a cultural force. It is an elevating force. It is a refining force. It refines a man as the hot furnaces refine iron and make steel out of it. It refines a man as the summer refines a meadow by filling it with fragrant flowers. Christianity is a refining influence.

We've all had the experience of seeing the skid row derelict converted. And after a while he dropped his D's and O's, and he got rid of his old shirt he'd had on for six months and got a white one somewhere, or at least a clean one. He got rid of his old clothes and somewhere got a haircut. And he got, he started refining him.

Christianity is a refining thing. And I will say this to you, my friends, that if you are a Bible lover and you read even our plain King James English Bible sufficiently and with meditation and let it get into your bloodstream, it will have a culture, an effect of giving you culture. The Bible is a book that educates the heart.

Woodrow Wilson, when he was President, made a speech in which he said this. Perhaps it was when he was president of the university, he said it, but he said, The Bible is so important that no man who hasn't read it can be considered educated. And no man who has read it with care may be called uneducated. Now that was a college president. The university president said that.

And then another thing is the hymns of the church. Anybody who will go close to the Bible and live in its Psalms, bathe his soul in Isaiah, read the Song of Solomon, get the beautiful teachings of Jesus and the strong theology of Paul and the history of the Old Testament with its symbolism and its wondrous figures and pictures. Nobody who will read the Scriptures can be said to be uncultured.

And then, if he wants to help himself still more, let him read the great hymns of the church. Let him carry around with him, as I do always, a great hymn book. And I don't carry around a song book. I carry around a hymn book. Either I have the old Methodist hymnal, or I have the Moravian hymnal, or I have the Presbyterian hymnal, or I have the United Church of Canada hymnal, or the Baptist hymnal. It's not so good, I might say. It's more modern, and they left out too many good ones and put in too many that weren't, but was a gift to me, so you can't look a gift horse in the mouth.

But I carry around one of these good hymns with books with me all the time. And when I'm riding along in an airplane or on the train, I flip it open and bathe my soul in the great poetry and great worship of the hymns.

So I say that Christianity has a power to refine and elevate and—make cultural, do the cultural job on you. Well, brother and sister, that I say to start with.

Now I come to this. There is a culture of the world which is traitorous and destructive. Such a culture, for instance, they say, oh, we should keep an open mind, go to the art galleries and love everything there. You go to the art galleries, and you see obscenities hanging on the wall, but you don't dare object because you wouldn't be cultured if you did. Or they stick John Steinbeck into your hand or some other fellow who's a specialist in what Pegler called gents' room journalism. And they say, now that's classical, that's classical, that's the finest thing written.

So filthy that a man can't read it by himself without being embarrassed. But that's culture. And so they say, read it, it's good for you, read it. How many pure minds have been sullied trying to wade through a filthy book? There are some books called Peep's Diary, Peep's Diary. I got a hold of it, of course, when I was trying to get some education. I was reading everything that I could get my hands on.

So, I got a hold of Peep's Diary. I was a young fellow in my late twenties, middle twenties, and I was reading Peep's Diary. And it was supposed to be classical. It is classical. Every list of a hundred great books should have Peep's Diary on there.

So, I had one volume book of it. And every time I'd read it, he always ended his entry for the day by some filthy, suggestive thing, and it bothered me. So, one day in prayer I was talking to God, and that came to my mind. So, I'd just reach over, and this is the first and only time in my life I ever destroyed a book.

I reached over and I got a hold of that thing, and I pulled it into a dozen or more pieces and put it in the wastebasket, and I've never seen Peep's Diary since. Why should I force my mind to listen to the record of adultery and fornication and all the rest day after day?

Well, they say it's cultural, it's classical. You can have it. And Boccaccio and the rest of them, Zola, de Maupassant, they're cultural, and I've read some of their filth, Balzac. But I absolutely refuse to have to keep housecleaning my brain. No, no, no, no, brother.

The Bible is a book that talks about real things, but the difference between the Bible and these so-called classics, the classics love their filth. The Bible hates it. The Bible tells about David's sin, and the Bible tells about the iniquities of Israel, but the attitude of the Bible toward it is always one of stern disapproval.

But the attitude of the classical writers very often is that one of approval and sly grinning, a smirk. Don't read it. Culture indeed, culture indeed. The Bible gives you culture, but it's the right kind. Listen over here in Genesis. When the woman saw the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and the tree to be desired to

make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also her husband with her, and he did eat.

So there you have the first sample, so far as I know, of someone who was trying to get cultured up. Pleasant to the eyes, she said, isn't that beautiful? She said, look at the line and the design there, isn't that charming? So, she ate it.

And then John said, let me read a little from John. He 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. For all that is in the world, and now he gives the three things we found in Genesis 3. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. The word, lust, here, of course, means desire. The desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, these are not of the Father.

My dear friend, choose ye whom ye will serve. But God says, I am lovingly taking you into the land of promise. I have ransomed you by blood, and I am leading you in. But to get in there, you are going to have to walk straight in where your enemies were. And as I told you last week, he will take temper, he will take many other evils of our disposition, and cleanse them and use them, purge the evil out of them, so that the thing that was before an offense to you now becomes a steppingstone to higher spiritual things. But to do this, you can't compromise. The only way to conquer your enemies is to be different from them. You can't conquer your enemies if you imitate them. And so you've got to get rid of these gods and altars.

I'll name them in case you missed any. The god of worldly pleasure, the god of carnal flesh, the altar of popular religion, the altar of compromise, the altar of comfort, the god of intimidation, the god of mammon, and the altar of carnal culture. Well, I wanted to go on, but I won't. That's the end. I want to talk next about how He'll bless your bread and water and take sickness away from the midst of you. And whatever else lies close there in that text, that will be next Sunday night.

So next Sunday night I really promise you that I'll talk about how to keep from starving in a depression. And how you preachers, young preachers and embryonic preachers, if you serve God right, you can put yourself where nobody can starve you to death. God has promised you, and we find it here in the book.