

CHAPEL January 15 1930

-President Wright

Scripture reading 6th chapter Book of Matthew from the 19th through the 24th verse.

I want to talk to you this morning with reference to the conditions which confront us in this country as a people, and especially with reference to the conditions that confront us in this particular state, and particular part of the state. I am not sure that my conclusions are correct, but I believe they are. I am not going to ask you to accept them as the truth, but I am going to ask you to take them as food for thought. I selected this passage this morning because it clearly sets forth that we have two classes of values in this world. There are spiritual values and temporal. Jesus, in talking to the people at the time he delivered this so-called Sermon on the Mount, said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Do not put too much stock on the things of today. Do not throw your life entirely into the things temporal, because the thieves do break through and steal, and take away from you these things temporal, but lay up for yourselves things spiritual--that is what Jesus was saying to these people. Then he says you cannot serve two masters. It makes no difference what they are. You will hate the one and love the other; or else hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. If you put your mind on acquiring wealth, if you make dollars and cents the big thing in your life you are laying up for yourself treasures on earth. If you put the emphasis on spiritual values then you are worshiping

God. When people make a big sacrifice, how rich the spirit is. When a man has the spirit of being willing to sacrifice <sup>his</sup> life for others he has reached a very high point of spiritual value. I have never lived through a period in my life when people reached quite so high a point of spiritual values as the American people attained just before we sent our large army across the waters to help make this world safe for free government. I think anyone will agree with me in the statement that President Wilson brought the American people to the highest point of spiritual life ever attained as a nation. Somehow we felt that we were doing the right thing and that Jehovah was with us. We reached an exceedingly high point in spiritual life when we were offering up thousands and thousands of our young men for the good of humanity. After the world war, and after the boys came back home we began to take up life where we had dropped it. We struck a period for a year or two of marvelous prosperity. In 1819, about ten years ago prosperity was the thought uppermost in all minds. From that day to this, as I see it (I am not asking you to take this as I see it, but only to think upon it) from that day to this the people of America have been worshipping the God of riches. In my opinion there is no question about that.

Go before the legislature of the American people, state or national, with almost any kind of proposition and the first thing they do is to place the dollar mark upon it--to ask what it will cost. The worthwhileness of things today is being measured in dollars and cents.

Men, who before had not stood very high in their community because of the life they had lived, have, during this period of prosperity amassed wealth and become ~~one of the~~ leaders. People

of the United States have gone on the basis of doing everything they do for its economic value. The United States has gone on what is known as a business basis. North Carolina has gone on a business basis. Practically every state in the union has gone on a business basis.

Now, it is allright. I am not objecting to this if it carries on its spiritual value, but it is not carrying on that spiritual value. We are measuring everything by the American eagle that is placed on the dollar, and have done that until all the nations of the world realize that we are a <sup>money making</sup> ~~commercial~~ people. This is the accusation that all the nations of the world ~~are~~ making against America, and Americans realize it is true.

I don't know, but I believe that the things we are going through today are due to the fact that we have been worshipping the god of riches. I may be wrong, young friends, but it looks thate way to me, and has looked that way for some time, and by some time I mean four or five years.

Mammon makes tremendous demands upon those who worship him. The nerve tension of the American people today is at the highest point it has ever been. Therewere more suicides in North Carolina in the last few weeks than I have ever known before in a period of years. More people have dropped dead. More people who have gone out unexpectedly. In this particular community there have been more deaths than I have ever witnessed before in any two years, and it seems not to be only here, but everywhere in our state and the United States. Pick up a newspaper, and enumerate the number of deaths recorded daily. It is absolutely shocking. I don't mean that all these people are worshipers of mammon--don't misinterpret me. But nerve tension has reached the point where it is breaking.

I understand that newspapers are telling how poor we are down here in the East. Of course, we have had a crop failure, but the newspapers would make one believe we are starving to death, and asking organizations and individuals to help relieve the suffering. But many of these organizations have found cases like the one I know of. A family was reported suffering and in great need. When the man on whose farm the family lived was asked about the situation he said "Give those people clothes? They will always be poor. If you gave them clothes they would burn them to get someone else to give them more." He may have exaggerated but most of the suffering is by those who are absolutely unwilling to work, and thriftless, and they will always be poor. I am not talking about the things caused by crop failure. I am talking about things outside our community, things that are going on <sup>all</sup> over the world.

I believe it is because we have stopped worshiping the right God, because we have stopped laying up treasure in Heaven, because we are worshiping mammon, and I am saying these things this morning, young people, because I want you to think about them. It is true you cannot serve two masters--You cannot serve God and mammon. The road lies right out before you, you, who are going out to teach in the North Carolina schools, teach the children of our country to put the emphasis on the spiritual side of life; get them to see that happiness comes only when we serve Jehovah, to realize that their safety and the safety of the future and temporal existence upon this earth is dependent upon the cultivation of the spiritual side of this life; to realize that God is in Heaven; that he rules over the children of this earth and that he loves those who follow him.