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The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Pastor and Editor.*

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"PUT A RING ON HIS HAND."

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, June 13th, 1926.
(Stenographically Reported.)

"Put a ring on his hand."—Luke 15:22.



LET us bow together in prayer: O Lord our God, we seek this morning the illumination of the Holy Spirit that we may learn something of the treasures of Thy grace. We thank Thee for Thy Holy Word, so full of exceeding great and precious promises, so full of the wisdom and knowledge of God. We pray that we may have ability this morning to enter into its treasure-house, and that we may have the capacity to receive that which Thou would'st bestow upon us. We would go from this place this morning wiser than when we came; we would go away stronger, in the strength which Thou dost supply; and we desire also to go from this place richer than when we came. Thou hast said in Thy Word that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." It is Thy delight to give, Thou art always giving, Thou dost give more grace. Thou hast promised that we shall be anointed with fresh oil; Thou hast said that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Therefore we pray Thee to help us by Thy grace, that we may make some progress in the divine life to-day, that we may get a little nearer to God, that we may become a little more like Christ, that we may more perfectly do the will of God from the heart, and that in greater measure we may exemplify the great truths of this gospel. Make this an hour of great joy to Thy people; open our eyes that we may survey our inheritance in Christ. If any are cast down this morning, be Thou to such their glory and the lifter up of their heads; help us to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Be Thou the health of our countenance this morning; send us from this place with happy hearts, and with a song of joy and of triumph upon our lips; bring us out of the darkness into the light, and from the shadows of the valley to the clear sunlight of the mountain top, and from

defeat and discouragement bring us to victory and triumph. So take this service and use it for Thy glory, and all other services where the unsearchable riches of Christ are proclaimed. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

I have chosen a very short and simple text, "Put a ring on his hand." It is a part, as you know, of the story of the prodigal's reception in his father's house, and the father has commanded that they should bring forth the "best" robe and put it on him. What can a man have better than God's best? When He has ordered the best robe, what yet remains for even God Himself to bestow? The difficulty is, we do not know what is God's best. He is able to give us that which we ask; He is able to do for us that which we think, and which defies expression, the dreams which cannot command words, the desires that are inarticulate—He is able to give us that which we think; and many of our best and most effective prayers are, perhaps, our thoughts, what we think in our hearts more than what we say with our lips. But we read that He is able to give us above that which we ask or think; He can go beyond our asking, beyond our thinking. In this realm, imagination's utmost stretch in wonder dies away: His plans for us are so much higher and deeper and broader and richer than anything we could ask or think.

Then you remember in the text to which I have referred it is said that "he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." It is like a man who has just got a glimpse of the infinite treasures of grace; and the idea, the conception, of the unsearchable riches of Christ is struggling for expression—"exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and that not objectively, not something apart from ourselves, but "according to the power that worketh in us." He is able to bring us into harmony with that world of infinite wealth beyond. How wonderful it is!—"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." We are so often contented, not only with the second best, but with something less than that. What a meagre, impoverished life many of us live! How many there are who are fond of asking, What is essential to salvation? How little will do? What is the sine qua non? What is the least possible measure? How little faith can I have? How little obedience is expected of me as a Christian? Oh, my friends, the Lord never taught us such little prayers as that. The prayers that are divinely-inspired are large and rich and comprehensive. You can measure a man's spiritual growth, very largely, by his prayers: the man who can use one prayer for ten years is like the man who can wear one coat for ten years—he is not growing at all; his spiritual life is of the same dimensions. But if we are climbing the mountain-side, getting up to the highest reaches of life, then we shall begin to pray large prayers, we shall be asking for God's best. This prodigal, you know, did not expect anything like that: he wanted salvation, and he thought of salvation as a place inside his father's back door. He said, "If I could get somewhere among the hired servants so that I might have enough to eat, for the hired servants have bread enough and to spare, if I could but have a little share of that surplus in the servants' quarters, I should be satisfied, I would not even ask to sit at the table with the family." And he came home with no larger view of his father's hospitality than that, that he would probably find a place among the servants. You will remember that he had made up his prayer, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." A great many of us take rank among the hired servants; we still think we are paying for our bread and butter, and that we are getting the little that we ask for: we have not learned the meaning of the Father's bounty. "Bring forth the best robe"—not a robe—he needed that; not a good robe—he needed that; not even a beautiful robe,—"but give him the very best the house can provide." And that is the measure of God's purpose for everyone of us, He desires that we should have His best.

But even then we have not reached an adequate view of the Father's purpose: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; . . . and shoes on his feet." Poor fellow, he is tired and footsore, give him shoes that he may walk—and food: how hungry he is! Bring forth the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry, give him plenty to eat.

But, after all, these are the necessities of life. You cannot do without a robe, you cannot do without shoes, and you cannot do without something to eat, can you? But the father said, "Put a ring on his hand. I am able to give

him not only the necessities of life, but the luxuries as well." Jesus Christ came not that we might eat crumbs in the kitchen when the servants have finished, not that we might be shut up to the bare necessities of life: He came that we might live luxuriously: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"; "Put a ring on his hand." ("Amen!" "Hallelujah!")

Now that is my subject this morning—I cannot preach on it; I can only take you down to the jeweller's window and say, "See that? Would you not like to have it?" I can show you the menu and tell you some of the good things that are there for you to eat, but you will have to get them for yourself. And even then, it is like those big menu cards that you see in some large hotels in the United States. I go to a good many of them, and I can quite understand that story that is told of a certain English divine. I think it was in New York that he was being entertained by a friend, and he went to one of the big hotels where they put before you a great menu card—about the size of a newspaper—there are hundreds of things on it. The visitor put on his glasses, and looked at it and said, "What is that?—Oh here, friend, order for me. I do not understand it." When we talk about the unsearchable riches of Christ, about the superlatives of grace, it is rather hard to get it into a few minutes, so I shall try only to suggest to you some of the great things that God has in store for those who love Him.

I.

This suggests THE PLACE to which the prodigal is restored by divine grace; the ring on his hand was an indication of the fact that *he was restored to the father's confidence*. The ring was, in some respects, significant of the father's name and honour. The father did not put him on probation and say, "I will see how you behave for six months, and if you don't fall into disgrace again then I may receive you as my son." He did not say that; but instantly he said, "Give him the best robe; and lest there be any doubt about his place in the family, put a ring on his hand; so that everybody will know that I have received him back to my heart; that I have reposed in him my fullest confidence; that I believe he has come home to stay; and that he is to occupy a position in the family for ever—"Put a ring on his hand."

My dear friends, it is thus our gracious God restores us to confidence. Oh, how often we have been disappointed in each other! I have had so many people come to me and tell me stories, and I have been deceived again and again. Sometimes I have said, "Well, I do not know whether I will ever trust anyone again after this"—and then I go and do it the next day, and sometimes get caught again. We cannot know what is in man, but Jesus does know. You remember it is said, "When he was in Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto men, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." The same word is used really,—they committed themselves to Him, they confessed their faith in Him, they said, "We trust Thee"; but Jesus did not trust them "because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." But He does trust us when thus we really come to Him; for when He puts a ring on our hand, He puts His Spirit in our hearts, and He receives us into full fellowship with Himself—He counts upon us, He depends upon us, He expects us to behave as children of God. He actually believes our prayers; and if the Lord can believe your prayers, then you ought to believe His promises; if He calls you a son, you ought to be able to call Him your Father; if He trusts you in any measure, how much more ought we to trust Him! He restores us to confidence. It would help us to pray, it would help us to live, it would help us to rejoice, I think, in the presence of the Lord, could we each remember that He has put a ring on our hand.

Then again, the ring was a *token of affection*. The father might have given him something to eat, as he gave the servants food; I suppose the best robe was necessary if he would live in the father's presence—I fancy that even the servants were clothed with due propriety when in the father's presence—he needed a robe. But he did not need a ring: that was a special token of affection; it showed that he had a place in the father's love: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the

sons of God." My dear friends, to me it is very wonderful that the Lord has not kept us in the vestibule, or in the outer courts of the temple; but that He has afforded us access even to the Holy of Holies, into His immediate presence; that He has privileged us to abide in His love. There are a good many of us who are willing to live on shorter rations, on poorer fare: we do not take full advantage of our privileges in Christ Jesus the Lord; all we ask is:

"Some humble place among His many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
Where flows for ever through heaven's green expansions
The river of His peace."

That is the picture of heaven some of little faith have drawn, but could such a place be "home"? Have you not learned that grace gives you a place in the love of God? There was nothing about us which was of value to Him—we had "spent all", but He loved us for ourselves alone. Jesus has given His heart to a poor bride. What is our interest in Him? Do we love His streets of gold, and jasper walls, and gates of pearl, and many mansions—or do we love Him? Salvation is not heaven—it is Jesus. This prodigal could never have been happy among the servants, nor could he have been content with the best robe; he never could have felt comfortable in his father's home if there had remained the possibility of his suspecting that his father felt toward him as his elder brother did. Therefore his father said, "Put a ring on his hand that he may never be in doubt concerning the place he holds in my affection." And nothing less than such assurance will satisfy any one of us. The highest merely human joy that we can know is, not to be assured that we are rich, or honoured, or feared, but to know that we hold a place in somebody's heart which nobody else can fill: the highest joy is the joy of loving and being loved. I do not pity the poor in health, in mental requirements, or material wealth—poor in all these things, they may yet be supremely blessed with a wealth of affection. He or she is the real pauper who loves nobody and whom nobody loves; millions of gold and silver cannot enrich the loveless soul. And, similarly, no mere hope of heaven as a place where the flames of hell cannot reach it can satisfy the human soul; though John's picture of the New Jerusalem, with streets of gold, and walls of jasper, and gates of pearl, be literally true, there could be no real heaven if God did not love us:

"Sweeter far than music
Quivering from keys
That unbind all feeling
With strange harmonies.
Thou art more and dearer
Than all minstrelsy;
Only in Thy presence
Can joy's fulness be.

"All earth's flowery pleasures
Were a wintry sea;
Heaven itself without Thee
Dark as night would be.
Lamb of God! Thy glory
Is the light above.
Lamb of God! Thy glory
Is Thy light of love."

Then, my friends, I am sure that *that ring was significant of heirship*; it showed that he had been restored to his place in the family like the other son to whom the father said, "All that I have is thine." And do you not remember that this same son once said to his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. And when he had spent all"—the last farthing of it, when he had absolutely nothing left—"he began to be in want." And when he came home, he came with empty hands and empty pockets—if, indeed, there were any pockets in his ragged clothes—but he came home without purse or scrip, in filthy garments, in filthy rags, nothing at all

to commend him to his father's presence: he had forfeited everything. And yet his father said, "Come in, my boy—get him the best robe, and put a ring on his hand; because I want everyone to know that everything in this house belongs to him. The moment he becomes a son, I want the world to know that he becomes an heir."

We are children of God, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"—all the wealth of the infinite God is ours. Why do we not use it? Why do we not claim it? Some of us imagine that we have to go begging mercies at His hand all the time. We do come seeking mercy when we ask for the forgiveness of sin, but have you not read that He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"? You sometimes read in the paper an extract from somebody's will, some rich man has died and you read of the disposition of his property: he has left so much to his wife, and so much to the different members of the family, so much to charity, so much to his servants—it is all distributed and everyone is remembered in his will. And if it happens that there is one prodigal son and he is forgotten, what capital is made of that,—there is one son to whom nothing was left, there was one son who was disinherited! My dear friends, in the last will and testament of our Lord, when He made His will and signed it with His own precious blood, giving His life a ransom for many, He laid up a store of wealth for everyone of His children which can never be exhausted. We are blessed—not, we shall be, but *we are even now* blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; He has provided us with all things that pertain to life and godliness. Listen: every solitary thing, every grace that is necessary to enable you to be the man or the woman, or boy or girl, to be the Christian that God wants you to be, every solitary thing necessary to your growth in grace, to the enlargement and enrichment of your life, until at last you come to stand without fault before the throne of God—every single grace is already provided for you in Christ; it is in the heavenly places. All that He has is yours, "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." It is for us to appropriate, and the ring is significant of that fact.

Then the ring meant that *he had some authority in his father's house*. Among Orientals, the ring was significant of authority: when Pharaoh promoted Joseph to the position of ruler over all Egypt, he took the ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and he said, "Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt"; and when Ahasuerus promoted Haman, son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy, to be chief of his dominion, he gave him his ring, and when Haman issued the decree authorizing the destruction of the Jews, he sealed the decree with the ring that was upon his hand, which signified the king's name, and the king's authority—and no one might change that which was sealed with the king's ring. And then when Haman's treachery was discovered and he was deposed, the king took the ring from the hand of Haman and he put it on the hand of Mordecai, and he authorized Mordecai to issue another decree reversing the decree of Haman, and bade him sign it with the king's ring, that no man might change anything that was issued in the king's name, and signed with the king's ring.

I think it was something like that our Lord Jesus meant when He said, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." We share the authority of Jesus Christ Who gives us His name, and Who says, "Whatsoever he shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." The father not only made the prodigal his heir; but he put a ring on his hand, a symbol of that authority which qualified him to appropriate his inheritance. I can fancy that when he came home, the servants would look at him somewhat doubtfully and say to one another, "I wonder just how long he will behave himself?" Probably they would have given him a very reluctant service, and if he issued his commands they would have obeyed with some hesitation—but the father said, "Put a ring on his hand. I want all the servants to know that they are his servants as well as mine, that they will serve him as they serve me; I want it to be known that he has authority in this house, and that all the past is forgotten." How blessed it is that the very angels are our servants; and that when we come into the presence of God we come with the authority of the name of Jesus

Christ. I do not think of myself as an ex-convict—yet we were convicts. We have sinned to the lowest depths, and yet when He forgives us, He forgives us freely. ("Hallelujah!") The very remembrance of sin will be blotted out when we get to heaven, and we shall walk the golden streets as though we had never sinned, except as our experiences will enable us to magnify the grace of God all the more,—“Put a ring on his hand.”

II.

I had a great deal more to say to you: I wanted to talk about THE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE as represented in this ring, the obliteration of the past, the fact that the Lord would have us live without care. Did you ever have to count your pennies? Did you ever have so much that you did not have to count them—did you? I read last night of that discussion going on in England between Lloyd George and Lord Oxford, and their complaint that Lloyd George did not release enough money. And he said, “We had to cut our coat according to the cloth.” Did you ever use that phrase? Did you ever have to cut your coat according to the cloth? And did you ever find that the coat was rather small? You mothers, in your family affairs, did you ever have to plan a little bit to see how you could turn things inside out and upside down to make them last a little longer? Oh, the anxiety of it all! Would you not like to live without anxiety? Would you not like to have just about a month anyway when you would have so much that you would not have to trouble about anything, when you could just go on spending as much as you liked, drawing on the bank for all that you needed, ordering everything that you wanted on the table; and if you did not like this coat, you could throw it away and get a new one; and if the shoes did not fit, you would not need to go along limping but could get a new pair? Would that not be glorious for about a month?

That is how the Lord wishes us to live in His house, to live as those who have good clothes, and good shoes—He desires we should live like princes. “See my ring?” Oh yes, I have known people to say that—“See my ring?”—a particular kind of ring, you know! Have you ever noticed some young ladies when they get a ring on their hand? How they lean their head on their hand—because they want everyone to see it. But in this ring there is the pearl of peace, there is the ruby of love, there is the flashing diamond of joy—I cannot tell you all the jewels that are there. But He puts a ring on our hands, and He wants us to live in the infinite, without limitation. We are not straitened in God, the apostle said, we are straitened in ourselves: there is no straitness in God, there is absolutely no limitation in God. “With God all things are possible”—and all things are possible to him that believeth if he uses his ring and claims what is in God for him (“Amen!”).

There was a day when people used to wear poke bonnets, and they objected to neckties—anything used for adornment—they seemed to find a virtue in being plain—and a great many of them did not need to be any plainer than they were by nature, they did not need to dress themselves up to make themselves unattractive; nature had done enough in that direction! But I do not believe that the Lord wants us to live after that fashion, even in the material realm. Of course, our moderation must be known to all men, but I confess I have a liking for pretty hats—I mean, on other people's heads—and for pretty things in general. I like to see people make the best of themselves—it is a hard job sometimes, but I like to see people make an attempt at it anyhow.

Do you not think the Lord likes to see us well dressed—I mean in the moral and spiritual sense—when we sit down at His table? Is it any wonder that He decreed that we should wear the best robe? Nothing is too good for His presence. There are some people who wear jewels, but they have two sets: if they have very valuable jewels they have the real thing and the imitation; and generally they wear the imitation for fear someone will steal them; but when they are received at Court, when they go into the royal presence, then the royal jewels are brought forth and put on, and when they stand in the presence of the king, nothing is too good to wear. Do you know that we are to have audience of the King every day? We are not strangers to be occasionally presented at court; we are members of the Royal family, if you please, and we are to live in the King's presence, and sit at the King's table every day. Therefore we ought always to be wearing the best robe—and the ring beside. The Lord has made it possible, by His wondrous grace, that we should be redeemed from our native ugliness—and how ugly the old man is!—but He has made it possible

that we should be redeemed from all that. I think the Psalmist got a glimpse of this truth when he said, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be on us." He will make us comely with His comeliness, and beautiful with His beauty; so that we can stand in His presence without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Would you not like to be a Christian? Why, there are some of you who need a pair of shoes. You are going to have a rough road to travel to-morrow, my dear friend, it will be a steep hill you will have to climb; and you will need shoes of iron and brass, and strength according to your needs. Will you not come to get the shoes? And you need the best robe. When you look into the glass, when you really look into the glass, into this perfect law of liberty, you are a bit ashamed of the coat you have on, and you say, "I could not stand before God like that. He knows me for what I am, and I need the best robe. I need something to cover me." The robe of Christ's righteousness will do that. And would you not like to have the ring, so that you can go into heaven's bank at any time? You do not need a pen, you know, just take the promise and stamp it with the ring; claim it; say, "I want help for to-day. I want grace for to-day. I want a legion of angels to help me through to-day"—and you may always have them. Some of us would not be here to-day were it not for the angels. Dr. Fosdick, like the ancient Sadducees, says there are no angels—but some of us know better.

I have given you but a glimpse into the glory. Will you come, any of you who have not received Christ, will you come and receive the ring as well as the best robe? Supposing we all go out of this place this morning millionaires, would that not be fine? How would you like to go home a millionaire ("Hallelujah!") Why don't you all say, Amen? I was in a home some years ago in which there was a little girl of about three and a half years, perhaps four, and she and I got to be very great friends. (I am very fond of little girls about that age). One day I said to her, "Do you know, I think you would be cheap at a million! I think anyone would give a million dollars for you." Her eyes brightened and she said, "Cheap at a million!" When her father came home she ran to the door and said, "Daddy, Daddy, I'm cheap at a million." Her father picked her up in his arms—and I really think he believed it, that she would be cheap at a million. But our Lord loved us so much that He paid more than a million for us, even His precious blood; He emptied heaven's exchequer to save you and me; and instead of being in the wealth of His house and living in the luxury of His love, some people are still outside, hungry and cold and desolate. Why not come in as we sing our hymn this morning, just as the prodigal came home, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son"?—

"I've wandered far away from God,
Now I'm coming home;
The paths of sin too long I've trod,
Lord, I'm coming home."

THE TORONTO BAPTIST BIBLE UNION.

A meeting was held in the Lecture Hall of the Jarvis Street Church, Friday evening, June 18th, for the organization of the Toronto Branch of the Baptist Bible Union of Ontario and Quebec. The Lecture Hall was crowded from front to back, the company overflowing into the galleries. It was a meeting that was great in numbers and enthusiasm. After half an hour's prayer, brief addresses were delivered by Rev. Clifford J. Loney, of Hamilton; Rev. W. E. Atkinson, Christie Street Church, Toronto; Dr. A. T. Sowerby, Toronto; and the Editor of this paper.

The following officers were elected: President: Mr. Thomas Urquhart; Vice-Presidents, Rev. G. W. Allen and Professor P. S. Campbell; Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. Alex. Thomson; *Executive Committee*: Mr. W. G. Boadway, Parkdale; Rev. W. J. H. Brown, Annette Street; Pastor A. J. Fieldus, Fairbank; Pastor W. S. Whitcombe, Second Markham; Rev. W. J. Thompson, Long Branch; Rev. D. N. Cameron, Bedford Park; Rev. J. H. Peer, Yorkmills.

A large number of new members were added. The Executive Committee will lay plans at an early date for an aggressive campaign of work.

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE "MOVIES"

About five years ago we remember reading that the chief of police of one of the largest cities on this continent had said that he believed the "movies" were the greatest crime-producing agency of the present day. We believe that every pastor who seeks the spiritual well-being of the people and the church under his charge will acknowledge that he can never depend upon frequenters of the "movies" for any kind of definitely spiritual service. Christian parents are nowadays often at their wits' end to know how to keep their children from frequenting places of amusement and entertainment which exercise a demoralizing influence upon young minds, and not the least baneful in their influence among these places is the *movie*. Surely mothers and fathers have a right to expect that the Christian Church at least will co-operate with them in their endeavour to promote the spiritual interests of their children. But are not such parents often disappointed?

The Watchman-Examiner of New York is authority for the following which appeared in the issue of that paper for June 10th:

"It has been announced that a great moving picture film, depicting the struggles and victories that have been the outstanding events in the glorious history of the Baptist denomination, is about to be made. This gigantic scheme will be sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance, and it is planned that the picture will be shown for the first time when the Baptist World Alliance meets in Toronto, Canada, in the summer of 1928. Dr. E. Y. Mullins, the president of the Alliance, will have the co-operation of Baptists the world around in the production of the scenario and the scenes. Hon. Carl E. Millken, well acquainted with the moving picture industry, has promised his hearty co-operation."

The Hon. Carl E. Millken referred to is an ex-President of the Northern Baptist Convention and presided at the Seattle meeting of that body in 1925. He is President of the Foreign Missions Society of the Northern Convention, and is also at the same time an executive officer—we believe—Secretary, of the Moving Picture Trust of America. Whither are Baptists drifting when this sort of thing is possible?

And now the Baptist World Alliance under the Presidency of Dr. E. Y. Mullins, is to sponsor a gigantic moving picture that is to be essentially Baptist. Of course the film itself will be unobjectionable, and we shall expose ourselves to the charge of being "narrow" by daring to put a question mark after the project. But will it help the spiritual life of our churches, will it strengthen the hand of our pastors who are endeavouring to purge their churches of worldliness and to lead their people to fuller consecration, will it reinforce the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Baptist parents concerned for the welfare of their children, for the World Baptist Alliance thus to sponsor and advertise the movies?

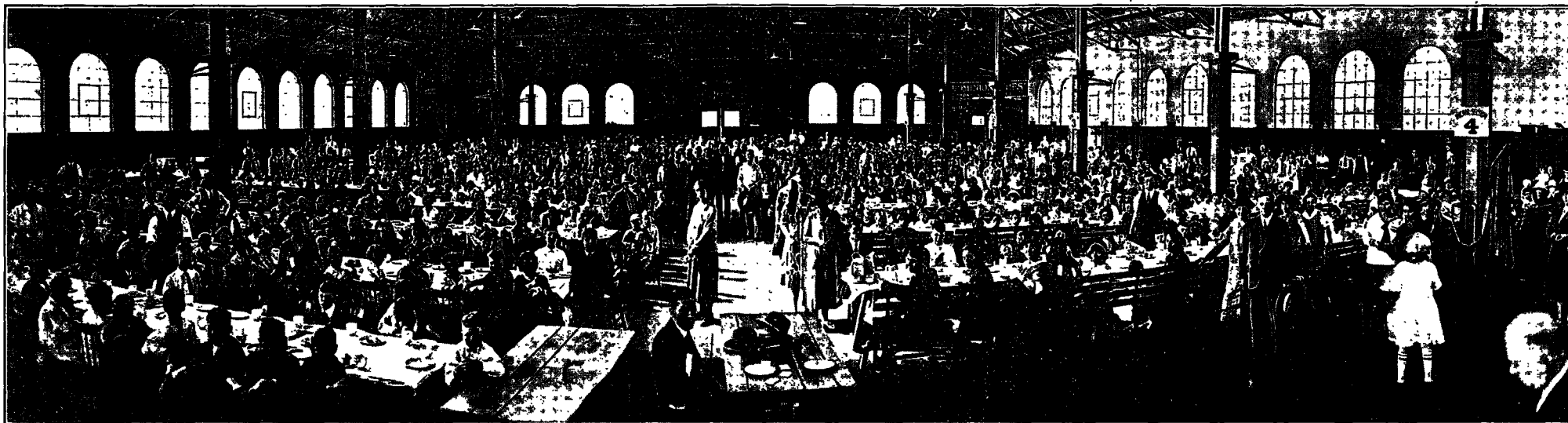
At one evening session of the Northern Convention at Washington one of the Boards put on a theatrical performance in illustration of their work. We at least find it difficult to believe that the Holy Spirit uses such means as these. And the Mullins-Millken Baptist movie is to have its "first night" in Toronto!

MEETINGS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ONTARIO AND QUEBEC BAPTIST BIBLE UNION.

The Executive Committee of the Ontario and Quebec Union is now busily engaged laying plans for the holding of meetings throughout the territory of the Ontario and Quebec Convention. It is expected that meetings will be held in twenty-five or thirty different centres, and from fifteen to twenty speakers will be engaged. Thus there is likely to be a "certain liveliness" on all fronts throughout the summer.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION MEETING AT WINGHAM.

Under the auspices of the Baptist Bible Union of the Walkerton Association, a meeting will be held in Wingham, Friday, June 25th. The meeting will be addressed by Students W. G. Brown, A. J. Fieldus, W. S. Whitcombe; Rev. C.



Jarvis St. Baptist Bible School at Tea. Transportation Building, Exhibition Park, Toronto, June 22, 1926.



Part of Jarvis St. Baptist Bible School at Annual Picnic. Outside Transportation Building, Exhibition Park, Toronto, June 22, 1926. (A large number of others were still at tea inside, while many others were scattered over the grounds. These would have added, it is estimated, about 300 to this company).

J. Loney, the President of the Ontario and Quebec Branch of the Baptist Bible Union; the Editor of this paper, and others. It is expected that a company of thirty will journey from Toronto to Wingham in a Toronto Transportation bus on the day appointed. We hope to give a brief report of this meeting next week.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION MEETING IN OWEN SOUND.

The Editor of this paper has accepted an invitation to address a meeting under the auspices of the Baptist Bible Union, to be held in the Savoy Theatre, Owen Sound, Tuesday evening, June 29th. He will be accompanied, it is expected, by the same speakers who will address the meeting at Wingham. It is expected that large numbers of Baptists from outside points will attend both these meetings. We shall give a report of this meeting also in next week's issue.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION MEETING IN HAMILTON.

The Editor of *The Gospel Witness* will address the Baptist Bible Union meeting to be held in Hamilton, Tuesday evening, July 6th. In all these meetings the present attitude of McMaster University toward Modernism will be the main subject of discussion.

TRUE EDUCATION.

A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS.

By the Editor.

Delivered in connection with the Commencement Exercises at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., June 16th, 1926.

Without flattery, but with the utmost sincerity, I feel constrained to express my deep gratitude to God—a sentiment which I know is shared by a great multitude of people—for Wheaton College. When so many institutions of higher learning have become culture-beds for the breeding of ideas which are destructive of all Christian faith, evangelicals of every name must rejoice that there yet remain a few colleges, of which Wheaton is one of the most conspicuous, in which the Bible is still believed to be the Word of God, and Jesus Christ is worshipped as the Son of God, and God the Son; and where the cardinal principles of Evangelical Christianity are taught and defended. Such institutions are fortresses of truth; and are doing much to hold the line against the enemy in the long war between Revelationism and Rationalism.

I beg also to be permitted to express my own hearty felicitations both to President Buswell and to this College: to the President, that he has been honoured by having been selected for a position in which he may freely exercise a great evangelical, teaching ministry; and to the College, that it has found a man so able and determined to maintain the evangelical and educational traditions of Wheaton.

My words this morning, however, will be directed especially to the members of the graduating classes. I venture to offer you, young ladies and gentlemen, my very hearty congratulations on having reached what, perhaps, has long seemed to you to be the peak of your ambition; or, what some of you possibly may have regarded as the ultimate haven of your desire; or, as the end of a long and arduous journey of exploration in quest of a new world of knowledge; or, what some of you may have anticipated as the achievement of the final victory in the war that must be waged for the possession of Wisdom's treasures.

I congratulate you, I say, on having reached what, in the beginning of your course, you may have regarded as the goal; but it must be my task this morning to endeavour so to define and identify the place at which you have arrived in life's great adventure, as to show you that you really have not reached the highest peak, but have only put on your shoes in the early morning for a long, long, day of mountain-climbing. Your intellectual ship has not reached her haven, but is now weighing anchor and unfurling her sails, like Solomon's ships of Tarshish, to go to Ophir for gold; and though you have made a toilsome journey, your feet have touched but the fringe of the shores of the great continent of Truth whose interior no mortal has yet explored; while such victories as you have achieved have been only the slaying of a lion and a bear in the wilderness in preparation for life-long battles against the

giants of Philistia who would bar your passage to the possession of a kingdom and a crown.

I shall not apologize in this Christian institution for bringing you such counsel as I have to offer from this divine treasury of wisdom which we call the Bible; for all that is noblest in art, and truest in literature, and sublimest in music, and just in law, and equitable in commerce and industry, and beneficent in education, and vital in religion, have found their spring and inspiration in the Bible.

What is the Bible? From Genesis to Revelation, it is the record God has given to us of His Son. For, bear in mind, the Old Testament is just as truly a record of Jesus Christ as the New. The Bible is an inspired and infallible biography of one Person, and that Person is the Author of Truth, and the Creator of all things, "for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Therefore if we hold before our view the whole sweep of Time—the past, the present, and the future—it has been, and ever will be true, that in languages, in literature, in history, in all branches of science, in mathematics, in philosophy, in religion, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report", whatsoever there is of virtue or of praise in all the universal domain of Truth find their beginning and ending, their Alpha and Omega, in Jesus Christ.

Before I suggest to you certain biblical principles which we shall turn over for the guidance of our thought this morning, I would pause to enquire, What is education? What is it in itself? What is its function? What is its ultimate purpose? Why have you spent these years in Wheaton, and what are you now advantaged by your stay? Education must never be regarded as a finality; for it knows no terminus, it is never static, it is never finished, it is never complete. Education is not a possession, but a process; not an achievement, but an art; not a sword, but swordsmanship; not a box of tools, but skill to use them; not a pen, but a mind to inspire it; not a kingdom, but wisdom to govern it; not a chariot to ride in, but wings to fly with. Hence, education is subjective rather than objective; but it is a discipline which effects a subjective state which is in harmony with objective truth. That is to say, it is not in books, but in the man himself; it is not that which is written on tables of stone, but that which is written on fleshly tables of the heart. And I venture to affirm that no man is being educated in the truest sense unless the principles of the Bible, which really emanate from the Author and Source of Truth, are being applied for the discipline of the whole man, and for the definition of truth in all realms.

One of the proofs of the divine character of the Bible, for me at least, consists in the fact that its principles are in accord with the nature of things; for the Bible is supernatural in the sense that it is the Word of the Sovereign of nature, and that it reveals that which is beyond the reach of unaided human reason. But there is a sense in which it is never contrary to nature, for it is the Word of the Author of the nature of things. As an illustration of its accord with the nature of things, I call your attention to two biblical principles which are a part of the warp and woof of life. In Galatians the Apostle Paul describes certain people as desiring to be under the law: "Ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" But he also describes a kind of life that is subject to no objective law: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

I.

Let us look, then, at these two principles in juxtaposition and contrast. Paul was writing to certain people who desired a ceremonial mould for the regulation of their religious life. And that attitude of mind, in a certain carnal or natural state, is common to us all. One who is not master of his steering wheel may desire to have flanged wheels to his car that it may run on prescribed tracks. This attitude indicates a desire to be subject to environment, to lean upon others' opinions, to transfer responsibility to another's will, to dive a

life which may lazily slip into a ready-made mould. Those who exemplify this attitude toward life, do not choose the hat which is becoming but that which fashion prescribes; they do not desire that which is essentially true because it is true, but that which accords with the intellectual vogue of the day. They prefer a wall at the edge of the precipice, to a mental and physical poise which would make them unafraid of that which is high; they prefer an outward law to an inward principle; they would be compelled to duty rather than impelled to voluntary service.

The second principle belongs to the nature of things. There is a nature which has an inherent right of self-expression; there is a life against whose full and free expression "there is no law." We hear much nowadays about the right of "self-expression". The justification of that contention depends upon the nature of the self to be expressed. There is a self which merits crucifixion; and there are principles against whose expression there is no law. If you go into the orchard in the early summer and find on the tree a tiny apple, and put about it a glass mould the shape of a pear, the apple will grow into the mould, and when you break the mould, the apple will look very much like a pear; but if you give it to a boy to taste, he will say, "You hypocrite, you were only an apple after all." But if you leave that apple on the tree with only the free air for its environment, it will express the law of its own inner nature and grow into a larger apple.

That is a simple illustration of the difference between these two principles, between law and grace, between Sinai and Calvary—between the compulsion of the first mile, and the impulsion of the second.

Let us look now at a few illustrations of these principles. You may see an illustration in one's physical deportment. Have you observed the difference, for instance, in the way in which two ladies enter a drawing-room? One comes in like a knight in armour. She is very precise—she knows exactly how she ought to enter a drawing-room: she has learned all about it from the columns of some ladies' journal devoted to the propagation of the principles of the proprieties. Notwithstanding, she is almost as stiff and conventional as a marble statue. But the other? She comes in like a bird on the wing; there is music and poetry and grace in every movement; her poise, her walk, her conversation, sets everyone at ease, and in a moment she becomes the centre of attraction; while the lady in armour who is regulated by the laws of propriety is neglected, or is noticed only as a courtesy. What is the difference? It is an illustration of the principle, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Objective law, external law, must give way to inward grace always.

I have somewhere read that at one time during the days of the good Queen Victoria, the Mayor of Cardiff, in South Wales, was a man who had begun life as a pit-boy in the collieries; but his native ability and force had made him at last a wealthy mine-owner, and the people of Cardiff elected him to the chief magistracy as an expression of their esteem. During his term of office Queen Victoria was to pay a state visit to the city. The Mayor, a man of humble parentage, was utterly unacquainted with courtly ways; he had never been received at Buckingham Palace. How then was he to know how to behave himself becomingly in the presence of royalty? He did not send to London for a tutor to tell him how to deport himself in the presence of the queen: he was a loyal subject and one of nature's gentlemen, and he determined to conduct himself as his own innate sense of the fitness of things might direct. When the queen came, his every word and act expressed his inward feeling for a noble queen; and it is said that when Queen Victoria left Cardiff she remarked to one of her ladies-in-waiting that the Mayor of Cardiff was one of the most perfect gentlemen she had ever met. It is not law but grace which makes a gentleman.

These principles find many illustrations in mental development. There may be said to be laws of spelling, of grammar, and of syntax; but the great masters of literature did not produce their master-pieces while laboriously striving to obey these laws: they wrought in perfect obedience to the laws of that realm of expression in which they were so perfectly at home; but theirs was a subconscious and instinctive obedience: the objective law had become to them a subjective impulse. The same principle governs one's reading as

well as his writing. You cannot enjoy a book written in a foreign tongue while you are under the necessity of spelling out its words and consulting a dictionary for their meaning: it is only when the reader's enlightened understanding responds to the author's suggestive thought and inspiring fancy, as two electric currents come into flaming contact, that the realm of literature becomes a paradise, ablaze with glory.

Similarly, we may say that there are laws of music. There are principles which are fixed and invariable which govern the rhythmic relation of tones, the violation of any of which must result in noise rather than music; yet one can scarcely conceive of the masters of music producing their master-pieces by a slavish obedience to any theory of music. For example: when Handel wrote his glorious "Messiah", and particularly the "Hallelujah Chorus", he could scarcely have been conscious of any theory of music at all; his soul was raptured into the very heavens; and while his master-piece obeys, in letter and spirit, the laws of that realm of harmony, his obedience was instinctive and automatic. There are musicians so-called whose title would be recognized by any genuine musician only as a courtesy, and they have no more right to it than the man who turns the handle of a street-organ.

The truth is, we do nothing well until we do it automatically. I remember when first I attempted to drive a motor car. I was ready to lead a deputation to the Government Department of Highways, demanding that every road be at least three times as wide: I have since learned that driving can become as automatic as walking. Look at a carpenter driving a nail, or sawing a board. Ask him to instruct you how to do it, and, having received his instruction, take his hammer or his saw and do as he does; and you will discover there is a world of difference between theory and practice: the one is objective and the other subjective.

The same principle holds in the production of a picture. In some of the great art galleries of the world, as in London or the Louvre in Paris, I have seen aspiring artists labouring to copy some of the works of the great old masters; but even an untutored eye could see that the great pictures could really be duplicated only as the master's spirit could possess the copyist and re-express the inner vision.

These principles operate especially in the moral and spiritual realm. Religious ritualism is really an expression of a desire to be under law; it is often indicative of a kind of spiritual indolence which, desiring a religion of form, asks for a crutch to walk with. A religion of idealism, of mere ethical standards, and even the conception that Christ is an example only and is wholly objective to ourselves—all these conceptions fall within the same legal category, as merely external regulators of life.

Some years ago I went camping in one of our forest reserves known as Algonquin Park, a section of forest about fifty miles square, and perforated with many lakes, the area of the reserve being a game-preserve. While paddling over the surface of one of those beautiful lakes in the heart of the forest miles from the haunts of men, my guide, a young man as native to the forest as the creatures with which it swarmed, said to me, "You come from Toronto, don't you?" And when I replied in the affirmative, he continued, "I was there once; and I went to the Zoo. I saw some things there they called 'deer'; but", he added with fine scorn, "bless you; them ain't deer! I'll show you a real deer some time before you leave this place." On another day we were paddling along over the placid surface of another lake. It was a warm summer afternoon, and suddenly my guide, almost in a whisper, said, "Put up your paddle and leave the canoe to me. Don't speak a word, or utter a sound of any sort. There is a deer at the far end of the lake, and I am going to get as close to it as I can, that you may see it." I focused my eyes upon the end of the lake, the point to which he had directed me, and I observed that coming down from the forest to the lake there was a run-way, a track made through the woods. Across that track a great tree had fallen; the branches were still intact below, but above they had been broken off so that there was no getting under the tree. Whoever, or whatever, would go by that path must go over the tree-trunk. Drawing toward the end of the lake I noticed a beautiful fawn that had come down to the water to drink. Gliding silently over the water,

we got within perhaps fifty or sixty yards of this lovely creature, when suddenly it scented us, or heard us. Lifting its head from the water, its ears extended forward, it lifted its right foot and for a fraction of a minute presented such a spectacle of physical alertness as I had never seen: it seemed to hear us and feel us with every part of its body. Only for a second it looked upon us; and then, in the twinkling of an eye, it wheeled about and with lightning speed it took the run-way, and coming to the great tree, it shot over it with perfect ease, and disappeared among the trees of the forest with a cry of alarm almost like the cry of a child. Recovering myself from my rapture of admiration, I found my guide with folded arms leaning upon his paddle which he had put across the canoe, and a smile of satisfaction rested upon his face as he said, "Say, mister, that is what I call a deer!"

What was the difference between the deer of the forest and the deer of the zoological gardens? They were the same in outward form, but utterly dissimilar in spirit. A deer was not made to live behind iron bars: it was made to enjoy the freedom of the field and forest, to be fleet of foot, as birds are fleet of wing.

And so you cannot produce educated people in iron-barred cages of law; and certainly true Christians were not made to live in legal enclosures. Education is a process which reaches the inward man; and true education reaches the whole man, even as it is written, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

III.

Whoever is wholly subject in any department of life exclusively to external regulation is in bondage to superficiality. To desire to be under law is to live superficially, whether the principle be applied educationally, as relating to the intellectual life only, or religiously as relating to life in its entirety.

A lady called on me one day to consult with me about some matter, and brought her little girl, a child of perhaps six or seven years, with her. While the mother and I were talking the child climbed upon the piano stool and began to play, or at least, to strike the keys. Presently she asked for a book that she might play a tune. To this her mother answered, "But, Mildred, good players can play without a book;" to which the child replied, "I know, mother; but I'm not a good player, so I need a book." So saying the child acquiesced in a great principle. When the objective score is transferred to memory, or deeper still, when it so enters into the subconscious that its reproduction becomes automatic, the mechanics of the reproduction is obscured in the expression of a musician's soul. Until then, the player is in bondage to his book—just as some preachers are in bondage to their notes. On returning from church one morning a preacher asked his little boy what had been the subject of the morning sermon. The boy had to confess he did not know. Asked to repeat the text, he had to acknowledge his ignorance of this also. His father, with the suggestion of a rebuke in his tone, asked the boy what he went to church for, when the lad replied, "You ought not to blame me, Dad, because you couldn't remember it yourself without reading it." In the beginning of my ministry, in a small town where I was pastor, there was a certain ministerial gentleman who lamented the fact that there were so many "meeting houses" in town that it made it difficult for "the church" to get on. One day as we were engaged in a friendly discussion which he had begun, very abruptly he terminated the discussion by saying, "I prefer that we should not pursue the subject further here, but I should like to have you call upon me in my study, for I have a very large library, and there are many books I should like to consult."

He had entered upon the discussion of a subject concerning which he was but ill informed, and he was in bondage to his books. I never called to see his very large library. The only library that mattered was the library that was under his hat, and that, I discovered, was very small.

This illustrates the defect of much that is called education in these modern times: "education" consists, very often, in little more than a nodding acquaintance with a library. In our country, among Baptists, it has become the rule for the candidate for ordination to read the statement by which his fitness for ordination is to be judged; and I have observed that the statements of different candidates are often, in part, word for word the same—which of course means, the statements were not their own, but were copied from a common source.

I recall a student who said that in his academic course he had been unfortunate in his teacher in mathematics, so that in university he was especially weak in that subject. But when examination time came, as he had a good memory, he stored his mind with pages of the text-book and remembered it long enough to transfer it from his memory to paper. "But", he said, "I had not the remotest idea, then nor now, what it all meant." Yet he passed with honours in mathematics! The thing had never become a part of him; and he left the university, mathematically, wholly uneducated.

And there are people whose morals and religion are as much apart from them as that student's mathematical knowledge. Their conduct is determined, and their characters fashioned, by their religious environment. During the Great War there were many men who, when removed from the associations and influences of home and church, suffered a moral collapse. But the collapse was not a fall: it was only a revelation; they had been religious crammers; their religion had never laid hold of heart and conscience and will. Oh, the tragedy of it, that so much that goes by the name of Christianity is nothing but an outward mould, a mere objective standard!

III.

In contrast with this, I set before you this worthy ambition *to rejoice in such freedom as results from a deep and true culture of the soul*. Even in physical and mechanical activities the principle of such freedom finds many an illustration. I referred to my early experience of motor-driving. I suppose others have fared no better in the beginning; yet I am told there are young men who become so expert, and to whom driving becomes such an automatic exercise, that many a young man can drive his car with one hand—especially when he is not alone in the car! The truth is, knowledge attains its highest value when, so to speak, it becomes incorporated in the man, when it becomes a part of him, and so completely possesses him and dominates him, as to determine the quality of speech and action. It is when knowledge is thus translated into life and action that it becomes wisdom.

Thus the capacity of the mind is enlarged, and its aptitudes are developed, until the mind absorbs what it reads and observes as easily as the lungs put oxygen into the blood. Hence a disciplined mind delivers a man from intellectual bondage and sets him free.

This principle is conspicuously true in the moral and religious realm. The Christian religion does not manufacture glass or wax flowers and fruit: it grows them. The true church is not a noisy factory, but a beautiful, fragrant, and fruitful garden. If you grow dandelions on your lawn, your neighbour may invoke the law against noxious weeds, lest your garden should corrupt his. What if one should say, "Well, then, I must examine the law to find out what it is"? A better way would be to grow flowers—against such there is no law.

Before the war a Syrian called at my door one day with a pack upon his back, endeavouring to sell me something. He was a traveller from a far country, and I determined to learn what I could from him. So I bought a handkerchief to pay my tuition fee. (Incidentally, let me remark: a man determined upon the acquisition of knowledge will make every man he meets his professor, for something may be learned from everybody—and much from the newsboys on the street.) So, having paid my fee, I sat down at the feet of my Syrian professor. When I asked him whence he came, he said, "From Damascus, in Syria." When I asked him of his country, he said it was the finest country in the world. And then I was impolite enough to ask him why he left it, to which he replied, "No good law in Syria; where Turkey rule, no good law." He had travelled through many European countries, including Germany. I asked him how he had got along in Germany, and he answered reflectively, "Oh, Germany? Germany? In Germany too much law. Germany all law." Evidently he had no happy recollections of his stay in that land! Then I asked him if he had ever been in England, to which he replied in the affirmative. When I asked him how he managed there, he said with a smile, "England? Oh, in England, no law at all." When I asked him for an explanation, with a characteristic oriental gesture he said, "Oh, in England—mind your own business, no law at all!"

And that, in the political realm, is an illustration of the principle before us. The reason for the victory of the Allies over Germany lies in the same

principle: "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

And the triumph of Evangelical Christianity is equally inevitable: it is a religion of the Spirit whose fruit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." And as these divine qualities find expression and exemplification in a human character, the soul finds perfect freedom in a life against which there is no law. This is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

One word of caution, however, let me add: mere subjectivism, when finished, spells anarchy. Self-expression, without limitation or control, cannot wisely be permitted in a child. Objective standards must be translated or transmuted into the subjective. Thus the alphabet, the multiplication table, and the scales, must be studied objectively if they are to become part of the child's mental constitution. The same is true of religion: we cannot dispense with the objective: the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Modernism, in its ultimate expression, is always subjective; authority resides within the man's own consciousness,—in short, he becomes a law unto himself, and thus becomes utterly lawless. But where shall we find the norm, the objective standard? There can be but One: Christ is all and in all; all truth is in Him, and must be identified as truth in relation to Him.

Thus sin is objectively atoned for, and put away in Him Who is the end of the law for righteousness. The blood of Christ represents His perfect life in solution, "the just for the unjust to bring us to God." But the sin which is crucified for us must be crucified in us. The objective Cross as a ground of faith must become a subjective experience through the obedience of faith. Is Christ an example only? No, that would involve a reversion to Law. What is our hope of ultimate perfection and glory? Christ in history, on the cross, at the Father's right hand? That is the objective aspect of the Christian religion. But we must know Him subjectively: He must dwell in our hearts by faith. Then the Spirit of God will become increasingly at home with you, and His life will find a natural expression in a love, divinely begotten, for things divinely loved; in a pure spiritual joy, even the joy of your Lord; in a peace based in a moral balance effected by Christ's atoning death, and a renewed nature harmonized with God's holy law,—in longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control,—elements in that divine nature for which all things were made, and against which there is no law. In that divine liberty the soul reaches its destiny, and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore there can be no true education apart from this, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON

Lesson 3.

THIRD QUARTER.

July 18th, 1926.

THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION.

LESSON TEXT: Matthew, chapter 27.

To be studied in harmony with Mark 15: 1-47; Luke 23: 1-56.

I. SIN'S REVEALING LIGHT.

1. Sin has a terrible power of self-revelation. When the fruit of Judas' covetousness had ripened into the condemnation of Jesus, Judas saw his sin in its true character and came back to his masters saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood". When Esau had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, he saw the folly of his act. Thus sin comes to us disguised as a friend but having accomplished its work, it strips the mask from its face and reveals the hideous aspect of the enemy. 2. There is a repentance which issues only in unending remorse. The prodigal in the parable said to his father, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee," but was forgiven. Judas also said, "I have sinned", but his confession, like his repentance, came too late. Ultimately every sinner will be brought to repentance, but there is a terrible

possibility that it may be a repentance which will ripen into everlasting remorse. 3. When a soul buys at the devil's counter the goods are always marked "not returnable". Judas brought back the money and hoped for some adjustment of the bargain, but those for whom he had sold his soul mockingly replied "What is that to us, see thou to that". So the sinner at last finds himself compelled to abide by the bargain he has made. 4. Judas lost both his money, his soul, and his life. To lose Christ means always to lose everything, even as finding Christ involves receiving everything. 5. Every sinner is a suicide unless grace intervenes. Certain men in the Old Testament are described as "sinners against their own souls". Sin always destroys its victim. (v. 5). 6. This incident illustrates how sin utterly warps the conscience. The chief priests and elders had no conscience whatever about corrupting a soul by bribing Judas to betray his Lord. But they were exceedingly punctilious about the use of the blood-stained money which in despair he threw upon the temple floor.

II. THE TRIAL OF JESUS.

1. Pilate the Judge. (a) He seemed to have no personal interest in the Prisoner. In the exercise of his judicial duties he stumbled upon Christ. Those men ever meet Christ in the way, in business, in pleasure, in the ordinary pursuits of life He crosses the path of everyone. (b) Pilate was persuaded of the wickedness of Christ's enemies. He knew that He had been delivered up because of their envy. Thus men meet with Christ and acknowledge there is no evil in Him and no ground for human opposition to Him. (c) This man was warned through his wife that his prisoner was a just man. Thus God sees to it always that no man is permitted utterly to reject Christ without being warned by someone of his danger. (d) It was within Pilate's power to choose between Christ and Barabbas. These two were representative of light and darkness, of good and evil, of heaven and hell, of God and the devil. Pilate had his chance as every man has his chance to choose one or the other. (e) Pilate was governed by policy rather than principle. He sought his own interests and the line of least resistance, hence sacrificed principle to policy, conviction to expediency. 2. The prosecutors, "chief priests and elders". (a) They were religious people. Christianity suffers most at religious hands, even as did the Incarnate Word. (b) They demanded the surrender of Barabbas rather than Christ, a robber rather than a giver, a mover of sedition rather than a maker of peace, an outlaw rather than Him Who was the fulfillment of all law. (c) They persuaded the multitude. (v. 20). The verse reads like a Baptist Association or a Baptist Convention when the Bible is on trial. There are always some religious leaders who stir up the multitude to ask for Barabbas. 3. There was no defense. Of all the disciples, not one was present to speak a word. Of the multitudes Christ had healed and fed and blessed, not one appeared to speak for Him. He trod the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Him. 4. The sentence. It was a sentence of death in which the multitudes agreed with their leaders. Thus by man's deliberate choice, Incarnate Righteousness and Truth and Goodness and Mercy was crucified and the fountain of life was given over to death and the one and only perfect Revelation of the divine holiness was sentenced to be nailed to a cross. 5. The execution. Here human nature is at its worst and hell is at its bitterest. (a) It was shameful. Sin shows no respect for human nature. (b) It was pitiless. So is sin always. It was cruel,—cruel as death.

III. THE REVELATION INVOLVED IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

1. It is a revelation of sin as finishing always at Golgotha, the place of a skull. 2. Viewing Christ as our Substitute, the cross is a revelation of the impartiality and inexorability of Divine Justice. 3. It is a revelation of the love of God as Infinite. 4. It is a revelation of the power of God as sovereign. An examination of all the details of the crucifixion will show that the Scripture was fulfilled to the minutest particular. Thus the cross was no accident but an exhibition of Divine sovereignty. 5. The death of Christ was a revelation of the fulfillment of the Law. As He gave up the Ghost the veil of the temple was rent in twain. The old dispensation passed and the new was ushered in. Moses gave place to Christ, the Law to the Gospel, and Works to Grace. 6. The death of Christ revealed Him to be the Son of God. The supernatural accompaniments convinced even the centurion who superintended the crucifixion so that he exclaimed, "truly this was the Son of God".