

# THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

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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

SALVATION THROUGH THE BLOOD—THE INSPIRATION OF HEAVEN'S HALLELUJAHS.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 17th, 1926.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Revelation 5: 9-13.



NE may well apologize for presuming to select a text like this. How is it possible for any human understanding to apprehend all that is involved in it? or for any human tongue to express the glory which these verses promise shall one day be revealed? But the text itself will speak to us even though we fail in any adequate exposition of it.

I believe, as I have often said, that the greater part of this book of Revelation belongs to the future; I have never been able to persuade myself that the tremendous occurrences here recorded, that the splendour and the glory accompanying these great events, could have been fulfilled so obscurely as to be known only to those who have time and opportunity to search the musty tomes of long-forgotten history. You remember how, in the opening chapter, we have this great announcement: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." I believe that the prophecies of this last book of the Bible will be fulfilled in connection with that great event toward which the whole creation moves, the personal return of our Lord. The chapter describes a scene in the heavenlies when the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne takes the book out of the hand of Him that

sitteth upon the throne. It is the day, the dawning of the day, of the redemption of the purchased possession; He Who is appointed heir of all things, by Whom also the worlds were made, is about to take unto Himself His great power and reign. And here, when the book has been taken and the mortgage on the forfeited inheritance is about to be lifted, and the whole creation is to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, all Heaven breaks forth in this inspired hallelujah chorus.

It is a good thing occasionally to take an excursion to heaven, to get away from the fogs and mists of earth, and to see things as they are seen by God Himself, and to hear things as they will be heard by those who are redeemed in that great day when the "blessed hope" shall be realized. If we could lift all our thinking to this level, if we could obtain wisdom from above so as to get the divine standpoint, if only some of us could get to the isle of Patmos, and find ourselves transported in spirit into "the day of the Lord", it would establish us in the faith; and it would enable us to regard with perfect composure all the assaults upon what Gladstone, I think it was, called the "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture".

*Here, then, is A song of Redemption*, redemption is the theme of it, it is sung by such as have been redeemed; and we may well listen, and wisely listen, to what they have to say. Oh, the songs they sing up there will not be without meaning. I wish God's people could get away from the jingle and the jazz that is so common in Christian assemblies to-day. It is well that we should sing "with the understanding also"; but how are we to sing if there is nothing in the song worth understanding? Our hymns of praise, our spiritual songs, ought to be filled with the great truths of the gospel. That is how it is that such hymns as, "Rock of Ages", "Jesus Lover of My Soul", "Abide With Me", "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood", and the one we were singing a moment ago, "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"—that is why these hymns, and many others like them, are immortal; they never wear out, because they have in them the everlasting truths of the everlasting gospel.

Now in heaven, when they sing, they sing with the understanding; and they sing of a *redemption that is altogether of grace*: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God." Oh, my brethren, salvation is an act of God; there is not an infinitesimal element of human works or human merit in it. And yonder, where redemption is perfected, where they see things in God's light, they see that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending; and that their salvation has been of God, and of God alone. How paltry, how poor, how disappointing, the so-called gospels of to-day!—when men are urged to redeem themselves; when the human will, the power of the human will, is magnified, and the doctrine of salvation by character, a philosophy of mere idealism, is substituted for the gospel of the sovereign grace of God. You had better get rid of it all, my friends, if you would get to heaven—for when we do get to heaven through the sacrificial work of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we get there in the glory of the divine presence, and see our lives in retrospect, we shall lay all the honour and glory at the feet of Him Who redeemed us, and we shall say, "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

Oh, poor sinners who are here to-night, you have tried to work out your own salvation, you have tried to mend your own way, you have been trying to pay that inestimable, incalculable debt—but all the treasures of earth could not liquidate your account; you cannot do it; you will have to come as a poor sinner to the feet of Jesus and confess your absolute bankruptcy, and accept His price, if you would get ready for that great hallelujah chorus. Then you will be able to say for yourself, "Thou hast redeemed me to God by thy blood." That is the foundation for faith. There is no use believing if we have to do it ourselves, there is no foundation for faith in the doctrine of salvation by works, or through the church: the only way by which we can be saved is through faith in the sovereign Saviour, the Lord of Heaven. He will redeem us; it is a salvation by grace.

Then the next thing is, *it is salvation through the blood*: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." That is what they sing in

heaven; the doctrine of the blood is not outworn in heaven. That will be the theme of our praises yonder, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Nobody understands what it means. We say that He was our Substitute—and so He was: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." We say that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree—and so He did: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." We love to say, as our Brother Carew quoted in his prayer this evening, that we "who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"; but when we have said it all, we do not understand the height and depth and length and breadth of the great divine achievement of redeeming our souls out of the pit of corruption by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament says, "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your soul." What is the blood of Christ? Oh, somebody has spoken of a gross view of the death of Christ, of a "bath of blood", saying that he abhorred the idea of being bathed in the blood of Christ. Who did ever interpret the Scriptures after that fashion! Who did ever believe that we are literally dipped in the physical blood of the Lord Jesus! No, there is a mystery here, but I tell you I know this, that in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; before Abraham was, He was; from everlasting to everlasting He is God; in Him resided the power which spake the worlds from naught; "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." He hath appointed Him "heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds". He is infinite in every quality of His being, one with the Eternal Father and the Eternal Spirit, over all, God blessed for evermore. And He became incarnate, took upon Him our nature, was made in the likeness of men. God!—oh, let it never be forgotten—God—God—God, infinite in all the qualities of His Being, was manifest in the flesh. No man could take His life from Him; He had power to lay it down, and power to take it again, this commandment had He received from His Father. He was not made after the power of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless, an indissoluble, life. Eternity was in Him; His blood was the wealth, not merely of all worlds, but of the Godhead, in solution.

And He died for me!—poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinner; and He died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"; He paid the price I owe, He paid the price you owe, He died for all by the grace of God. We read to-night that He "tasted death for every man." I do not know what it means, but He tasted death for every man!

"Death and the curse were in our cup:  
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!  
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop;  
'Tis empty now for me:  
That bitter cup, love drank it up;  
Now blessing's draught for me."

Oh, my brethren, it is through the blood men are saved. And I tell you frankly that I do not care what others say about it so long as I have the verdict of heaven. And when I hear by faith this glorious praise ascending to the Most High, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood", I am going to stand by the blood; as our Brother Robertson sang, "I am depending on the blood". And in the day when I cease to believe—if that were possible—in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, in that day when the blood of Jesus as the sinner's only hope should cease to be preached from this pulpit, may God close the doors, and destroy the place utterly, before it puts before men such a false hope as salvation apart from the blood. Redemption is through the blood.

Then, too, it is *redemption for everyone*: Thou "hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." There is nothing here about looking at these problems in this twentieth century through the eyes of a first century Jew; there is nothing about the bloody sacrifices borrowed from pagan Rome here; there is nothing to suggest that the blood of Christ may be necessary for some, but that in this enlightened day, when we have left the shackles of the past behind us, and we are delivered into a clearer atmosphere and an unclouded vision of the truth, we do not need the blood. No, my friends, if anyone is ever saved from India, they will be saved through the blood; and the logic is, never send anyone to India who does not preach the blood. If anyone is saved from China, it will be because they have been washed in the blood; if anyone comes up before the throne of God from Africa, they will be washed in the blood: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation". All will sing the same song, for they are all saved in the same way. No one will appear before the throne who has not been saved by the blood. Ours is not one religion among many: it is the universal religion, it is the one way of salvation for all kindreds, and tongues, and people and nations. Blessed be God, we have Heaven's judgment on this matter, that this gospel is good enough for people of all races, of all climes, of all ages; as we declare in the ordinance of the Supper, we "do shew the Lord's death"—how long? Until when?—"till he come". Until He comes, we shall need no other gospel; and when He comes, we shall want no other gospel, for we shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Observe also this great truth, that yonder that throng of the redeemed sing after this fashion: Thou "hast made us unto our God kings and priests. Thou hast made us a *kingdom of priests*". We are a spiritual priesthood, we are all Levites; in us the promise is fulfilled, "I will multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me." We are all the sons of our great Aaron, the high priest; and we are called "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." But we are not only a priesthood, we are kings as well. Now, who would not like to be a king? You know that is what we were made for, we were made to be kings. Oh, no; we were not made to grind at the Philistine mill like Samson, shorn of his locks, and bound in fetters of brass, in unending darkness; that was not God's purpose when he said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." No, He had a higher purpose, a sublimer ideal than that, when He determined upon man's creation. He made us, my friends, to be like Himself; He made us to be kings; for when He had made all that was made, last of all He made man. And when He had thus built, and established, and furnished the kingdom, He set the king upon his throne, subject only to the King of kings. Then He said to him, "Have dominion." The Psalmist caught a vision of it, by inspiration of the Spirit of God, when he looked at the heavens and saw the wonder of it all. I think we have misinterpreted, very often, that passage when we have read it, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" We have got the idea sometimes, that this inspired prophet at that time felt his humility in the presence of the wonders of creation, when he considered the heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars which He had ordained. Well, there is that element in it; he humbled himself and said, "They are so great, so infinite in number. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" But read the prophecy in the eighth Psalm, how he goes on to say, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands." Then he describes the wonders of creation: the heavens above, the earth beneath his feet, and the waters under the earth; and he says that God made man to be king over it all, "over whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas".

Well, we hear a great deal about that human kingship to-day. Oh, yes—

"I am the master of my fate,  
The captain of my soul"—

and I am nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." I was talking to you this morning

about Manasseh, of how the captains of the Assyrians came and put him among the thorns, and carried him away to Babylon, bound with fetters of brass, and took away his crown and his kingdom. That is a picture of the natural man: made to have dominion, and yet a slave, a servant of sin, for "know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants are ye to whom ye obey". But He made us to have dominion; and because that was His purpose, some day, blessed be God, we shall have dominion. ("Hallelujah!")

But we are not going to get back to the throne by works of righteousness which we have done; we are not going to sit upon the throne and rule over many kingdoms by self-effort: not at all. I will tell you how we are coming to the throne: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood"—by His blood—"and hast made us unto our God kings". "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I tell you, my brethren, there is power in this old gospel: it is the very dynamite of God—and there are a lot of things that need to be blown up with that dynamite! ("Amen!") But through the power of the blood, and all that it represents—for that means the power of the Spirit, that means all the resources of Deity at the command of men by God's good grace—He makes us kings. I read it to you this evening. You remember how the writer of Hebrews brings that eighth Psalm into the New Testament, and tells us what God made man to be. And then there is this minor tone, this minor strain, in the song: "But now we see not yet all things put under him." No, we don't see all things put under him; we see the world grinding men to pieces. Where do you find anywhere, that all things are put under man? It is of man the writer is speaking, the creature, not the Creator, but the human king; and he says he has not come into his kingdom yet, he is going to come by and by. "We see not yet all things put under him." Study it in your own lives; study it in the church of Christ; look abroad upon society generally: in the national sphere, in the international realm, with all your League of Nations, and all your societies for the promotion of international peace, and all your social betterment organizations—tell me anywhere where all things are put under the feet of man?

No; no man has come into his kingdom yet. But listen: "We see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus." ("Hallelujah!") Ah, manhood is crowned in Jesus Christ, my brother; you come to your own in Jesus Christ; you get your throne and your kingdom through Jesus Christ; you put aside the reed, and get the sceptre back through Jesus Christ. But there is no other way to the throne, to dominion over evil. Have you not read of "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world"—or, in this age—"but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Oh, that is the way to victory. Thou "hast made us kings and priests unto God."

And observe this other wonderful word, "And we shall reign on the earth." A great many people are very fond of the earth, and a great deal of emphasis is laid upon the present value of right living. The earth is to be made very attractive. I said one day in a sermon some time ago that my quarrel with the modern church is that it is devoting all its energies to an attempt to get the prodigal a better job in the far country—but they leave him in the far country! Earth has forgotten heaven, and time has forgotten eternity. But we are not to despise the earth. Oh no, it is a beautiful world. I don't wonder at a story a friend of mine, a pastor who has gone home to glory now, told me about a little girl. He said this little girl was visiting in one of his church families, and one night when her auntie was putting her to bed, and she was saying her prayers, she stopped in the middle and said, "Auntie, I don't want to go to heaven." "Why, my dear, why do you not want to go to heaven?" "Oh", she said, "this is such a beautiful place, so full of birds, and music, and flowers, and sunshine, and lots of lovely things—I don't want to go to heaven."

And then that Christian woman told her that the flowers would fade, and the birds would cease their singing, and the sun would lose its warmth as the wintertime came on, and all the beauty would fade away, that the things here and now are temporal, "the things which are seen are temporal"; but the little girl could not be persuaded, she could not see into the future. "Well, anyway, Auntie", she said, "I don't want to go to heaven just yet. This is such a beautiful place." And it is a beautiful world: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." It is a beautiful world, full of witnesses to the grace and power and matchless love of our God, verily a place where "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." But the thorns are there, and the blight is on the flower and fruit, and "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now . . . waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

And some day these poor bodies are going to be changed, fashioned like unto the body of His glory; and, wonder of wonders! we shall reign on the earth. No, God is not to be defeated in this world; our God never lost a battle, and He never will be at rest until He has finished it. Do you remember that sweet story of Ruth and Boaz, how Ruth came home with her day's gleanings, and her mother-in-law said, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" And she told her of how the lord of the harvest, a rich man called Boaz, had instructed the reapers, and they "let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her", and her mother-in-law, with a woman's true intuition, said, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." I do not know of anything more beautiful than to see a young man preparing the place to which he is to take his bride. And, do you know, our Lord made this earth for us, furnished it for our habitation; and we, in our sin and folly, have spoiled it, and marred it. But He is coming back to clean house some day ("Hallelujah!"), and the whole creation will be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God". We shall reign on the earth—and it will be all through the precious blood. That is what they sing in heaven.

Would you not like to sing that song? How wonderful it is! It is all the more wonderful to me, dear friends, because up there they see things in their true light, and still they sing that song. At one of our Conventions—I am glad it did not meet with approval—but in Ottawa, in 1919, a man got up to speak on what we ought to do for returned soldiers. One of the things he thought we ought to do was to delete from our hymn books such hymns as, "There is a Fountain filled with Blood", saying that no one was interested in that any more. I am glad to say that it did not meet with favor by any means; Baptists do not believe that nonsense. But some people have said about this church, respecting our services, that certain things are all right for missions, but out of place in the church! I say that every church ought to be a mission or go out of business. I have believed that for years, and believe it now. But there are people who think these hymns about the blood are all right to sing down in the mission, but in the stately church, in some great cathedral, we ought to have something else!

Let me tell you what they sing about in the presence of God, up there in the palace of the King. They sing a new song specially composed to be sung in the King's honour, up there they sing the praises of the blood. And I am quite willing to keep on singing songs down here that are fit to sing in heaven! ("Amen!") And, my friends, I am sure of this, they know—those redeemed ones seeing in vision the last days—they know the meaning of redemption as we do not.

Read what follows: the day of judgment is coming, judgments are about to descend on the earth as the seals are opened, for the day of vengeance of our God is proclaimed. And here are the redeemed apart from it all! They see the judgments fall—but not upon them, they see the fruit of sin from which they have been delivered, they see the awful peril from which, by divine grace, they have been snatched; and with full hearts they sing the song of praise to the Lamb Who has redeemed them by His blood. Oh, if you and I knew the fruits of sin, if we could really know what is involved in that Scripture I quoted—listen—listen, think it over, the very word of God, "Tasted

death"! "Tasted death"! I read a sermon by Spurgeon some years ago in which he said, "The damned in hell have not yet tasted death." What is the second death? Why, it is the judgment, not upon the spirit only, but the judgment that follows after the resurrection unto condemnation, when soul and body are reunited, and when the whole being, guilty of sin, is punished according to the works done in the body. I don't know what it means—and I pray God that no one who hears me may ever know what it means. But from that place of privilege and of clearer comprehension of the awfulness of sin and its consequences, when they saw from what they had been redeemed, they praised the Lord for saving them by the blood.

And then I wonder what they saw in heaven? Oh, what will it be to see Him face to face, and to be like Him when we see Him as He is. What will it be when we discover all that is involved in that great saying, "Made nigh by the blood of Christ"? How nigh? How near? His fellow; He is not ashamed to call us brethren. And when we see that instead of felons of the pit, instead of being made companions of demons, we are brought into personal fellowship with the Son of God, every hindrance removed, and there amid the splendour and the ineffable glory of the heavenlies to see Him face to face, and to know in our hearts that it is all through the blood—I think we will have to sing then, I don't think we can help it. ("Hallelujah!" "Praise the Lord!") The values of life will then be properly appraised, and we shall know what they mean; we shall know the value of the blood of Christ when we see what He saved us from; from outer darkness to light, from death to life, from hell to heaven, from likeness to Beelzebub unto the image of His Son. Praise His name for ever for a salvation like that. ("Hallelujah!")

You will have to elaborate the text yourselves, although I would like to talk to you for an hour or two yet. But when they thus sang, when they thus sang in the heavenlies, John said, "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders"—listen—"and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." Now get your adding machine! Ah, they won't need any scrutineers up there! They won't need anyone to count the votes for Jesus Christ up there, it will be absolutely unanimous ("Amen!" "Hallelujah!"), "Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."

Do you know what they will say? They will say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive"—what—"Power", or authority. There won't be any question about the authority of Jesus Christ up there: by unanimous consent they will ascribe all authority in heaven and on earth, in time and eternity, to the Lamb that was slain. Well, begin now. Do it now. He is my Lord and my God, and I am going to have a controversy for ever with anyone who would limit His authority. ("Amen!") Let all authority be ascribed to the Lamb who is worthy.

"Riches"! He is the heir of all things; the Prince enters into possession of His inheritance; and all heaven said, "He is worthy of it. Let Him have all the wealth of the universe, for He has deserved it; He has redeemed us by His blood." Would you like to have a multi-millionaire for your friend? Well, get on good terms with Jesus Christ; for all the riches of the universe are ascribed to Him. "And wisdom"! Wisdom! Dr. Driver says that we have no means of knowing what Jesus would have said if the question of the authority of Jonah were submitted to Him—He did not wait for it to be submitted to Him: He said what He knew was true. But, my friends, up yonder they will ascribe all wisdom to Him. The Gospel is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, to such as are redeemed; and I believe it will be one of the joys of heaven for ever and ever—when millenniums have been multiplied and millions of years have passed—to still stand in reverent wonder before the manifest wisdom of our God in Christ. Oh, the pity of it, that little men whose breath is in their nostrils, whose life is but a span, and at best who see but through a glass darkly, that they should sit in judgment upon the Incarnation of eternal Wisdom, Jesus, the Lord! Praise God, the time is coming when all wisdom will be ascribed to Him.

"And strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!" I wish I had time to go on. How mighty He is! How strong He is! And I think we will sit down some day and say, "You remember how we read, 'When a strong man armed

keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils"—when we have seen evil at the flood, when we have seen hell itself vomit forth its opposition to God, when we have seen the conquering Christ take to Himself His great power and reign, we shall ascribe strength to Him. Mighty! All Mighty! For ever more! "Strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

And then—oh, hear it—"And every creature"! We hear a great deal about the conflict between science and religion. Sometimes I feel like laughing at the whole business. I think a lot of these professors are like some little boy who comes home from the kindergarten class: he has just learned to spell c-a-t and d-o-g, and some other words, and he wants all the family to assemble, to sit down and listen to this incarnation of wisdom—for now he has learned something! But when Jesus takes the throne, and all heaven acclaim Him as the Lord, then, John said, "I heard"—first we see the inner circle, the elders and the living creatures with the multitude of angels, and the song went out in ever-widening circle, until at last John said that he heard "every creature which is in heaven", and their songs and hallelujahs rang through heaven's halls; every creature in heaven was praising the Lamb. And then—listen—all the suns and stars, a myriad worlds, and the earth suddenly became animated and vocal, "and on earth"; the flowers, the fields, the beasts—all of them joining in the great chorus. And then, "under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Always the Lamb! Always the blood! Always the Redeemer! As long as eternal ages roll, that glorious hallelujah chorus sweeps on, and on, and on, the universe proclaiming the wondrousness of Him Who died for sinners.

Oh, don't you want to be saved, unsaved man? What is the use of talking about heaven if you don't love the Lord Jesus? What is the use of asking, What is essential to salvation, and what is not essential to salvation? Cannot you see that the very essence of it all is to be on terms of agreement with Jesus Christ? There is no other way. It is not the gold, nor the gates of pearl, nor the jasper walls: it is Jesus Christ that is heaven itself, Jesus Christ Who is your Saviour. And He is salvation itself. Do you not see that He died for you, paid all your debts? Oh, I wish that this evening we might have—I know it is late, and if you blame me for talking so long, try to be grateful that I did not talk twice as long!—I wish we might have this evening a great consecration service. Those of us who have been washed in the blood, may we not have our voices re-tuned to sing His praises, may we not have our hearts surrendered to Him. And if any of you who are not Christians, who came into this house without Christ, yield to Him now. It is just as simple as that. You saw this ordinance to-night, you know what it means: it means that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, you died on the cross in Him; that when He was buried, you were buried in Him; and that when He was raised from the dead, you came out of prison with all debts paid, a free man in Christ Jesus the Lord. That is just His way for you to make confession of your identification with Christ in death, and burial, and resurrection.

Let us bow in prayer: Thou glorious Lamb of Calvary, Thou Lamb Who art in the midst of the throne, we yield our hearts to Thee, we are constrained to say,—

"Nay, but I yield, I yield,  
I can hold out no more,  
I sink, by dying love compelled  
To own Thee Conqueror."

Oh, help everyone to yield to Thee. Are there not many unconverted people, or people who were unconverted at the beginning of this service, Lord, to whom Thou hast spoken, wilt Thou speak to them still, and constrain them to put on the uniform, to identify themselves with Christ. Thou hast taught us to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; and if we can say no more, we can say that, and we can rest in the assurance that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Lord, bless us for Jesus' sake, Amen.



## Editorial Notes

### THE CONVENTION OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

This week has been Convention week for the Editor. He was unable to take a vacation during the summer, but the Educational Session of the Convention, while physically wearying, was as entertaining and mentally diverting as a visit to a zoological gardens where all the funny creatures of the forest sport themselves. The Convention was supposed to be engaged in serious business, and, indeed, in its far-reaching effect, the business was serious to the extent of being tragic; but seen from another angle it was as ludicrous as the latest book on evolution, which is always the last word in human absurdity. When human hatred puts on a religious dress and assumes the role of high priest, it invariably plays the clown. We supposed the story told by the Chancellor of McMaster University at the Toronto Association last June was the ultimate word in vulgarity which "Christian" education could produce; but the Educational Session of the Convention suggests that McMaster University may not only destroy the Baptist denomination, but may also rob Billingsgate of its pre-eminence as the world's ultimate school of vituperation and vulgarity.

Nothing could justly describe the Educational Session of the Convention short of a verbatim report of the speeches delivered. This we shall give in our next issue, except for a few "vacuous" addresses whose only contribution was to the weariness of the audience.

Wednesday and Thursday evenings, great meetings were held in Jarvis St. Church, the attendance on each occasion exceeding by some hundreds the utmost capacity of the Convention church, particularly Thursday, when the building, so far as we could see from the platform, was completely filled. The plate collection for the two meetings amounted to over six hundred dollars. We shall report these meetings also next week.

### UNITED STATES NEWS.

After the Convention issue is disposed of, we shall hope to give more attention to the immediate interests of our United States readers.

### LAST SUNDAY'S SERVICES.

The attendance at Bible School last Sunday morning was 1,226. The church was as full as usual in the evening when the sermon appearing in this issue was preached, and three believers were baptized.

### REV. T. I. STOCKLEY'S SERMON.

The second sermon in this issue on, "The Root of the Matter," was preached in Grand Rapids, Mich., in the Wealthy St. Church in connection with the meetings of the Michigan Orthodox Baptist Association. The sermon was such a blessing to our own soul that we prevailed upon Mr. Stockley to allow us to print it in *The Gospel Witness*. When we knew him first, Mr. Stockley was pastor of the great West Croydon Tabernacle, London, England, being successor to Dr. James Spurgeon, brother of the famous and incomparable C. H. Spurgeon. Mr. Stockley is now representing the work of our Jamaican Baptist brethren.

### NEXT SUNDAY EVENING IN JARVIS ST.

Sunday evening the Pastor will preach on "The Leaven of the McMaster Pharisees and Sadducees."

## THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

A Sermon by Rev. T. I. Stockley,

Late of West Croydon Tabernacle, London, now of Jamaica, W.I.  
Preached in Wealthy St. Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.,  
Friday, Sept. 28, 1926.

"The root of the matter is found in me."—Job *xix.* 28. "Rooted . . . in Him."  
—Col. *ii.* 7.

Job, the man of God, was bitterly persecuted because he was so grievously afflicted. His so-called "friends" said the most bitter things against him; but Job knew that "the root of the matter was found in" him, and that he was no hypocrite. So he remarked to his "friends", seeing that the root is found in me "ye should say 'why persecute we him?'" I want to lay hold of that phrase—"the root." Then in Colossians, Paul speaks of the Christians to whom he wrote as having been rooted in Christ. Our Lord is the soil of the soul, and every true Christian is rooted in Him.

I propose, therefore, to speak of root matters; not now of the root *doctrines* of the Christian *Faith*—though that subject is very necessary at all times and especially necessary now—but the great root *principle* of the Christian *life*. And first we will give

### I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROOT.

*It is the hidden thing.* It is easy for us to see the greater part of a tree. We can see the stem, the branches, the foliage, the flower, and in the season the fruit; but the root is out of sight, buried in the earth. So the root principle of the Christian is hidden. Therefore, it does not consist in the *ordinances*. It is quite possible to be baptized, and to go to the Lord's Table, and yet to know nothing of the root. The observance of ordinances is an outward visible thing, but the root is hidden. George Whitfield, who along with John Wesley, was the instrument of the mighty revival in England in the eighteenth century, tells that when he was a student at Oxford University, and was a member of the "Holy Club", he took the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day, fasted twice every week, and said his prayers nine times every day; and yet knew nothing of the great root principle of the Christian life. So one fears that there are many who observe the ordinances reverently, and devoutly, and who yet are entirely without the root of the matter. And as the root is not found in the observance of Christian ordinances, neither is it found in *church membership*. It would be a joy indeed if all church members had the root; but it is very evident that many have it not. As church members they may be outwardly consistent, and correct in their lives, and yet be entirely destitute of the root. So many think that it is quite the correct thing to be a member of a church, and when they have been accepted as such they think all is well. And yet they may know nothing of the hidden, vital thing which is called the root. It is serious to think that a person may be a church member for many years, and yet be without this hidden principle. Nor does the root consist in *religious talk*. There are many who can speak quite freely about religious matters—ministers, churches, methods of work, etc.—and yet be utter strangers to the great principle we call the root. It is possible, too, to understand intellectually much of the great *Christian creed*—the Deity of the Lord Jesus, His incarnation, His perfectly holy life, His rich, atoning death, His glorious resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the Father's right hand, and the hope of His return. One may have a fairly clear view of these great facts, and truths, and yet be far away from the root. There are many persons who have quite a strong grasp of the great doctrines of the Gospel, and yet no experience of the root. Once more, it is quite possible to be engaged in what is called *Christian work*, and yet to be destitute of the root. You may be a Sunday school teacher, a member of a church choir, a deacon of a church, and even a preacher, and minister, and yet be without the root. One of the dearest friends I ever had was a clergyman who once told me his experiences. He began his life as a clergyman in the days when he was a strong high churchman, and thorough ritualist. He thought he was quite right, and in his spiritual blindness went on to fulfil his duties as a clergyman for a number of years. The day came, however, when under the

wonderful illumination of the Holy Spirit, he began to see his false position. The convicting power of the Spirit grew until he "went through a very hell" in his soul. But one day, walking on a country road, he talked with an old woman who was sitting by the roadside, and this old woman led the high church clergyman to Jesus! All those years of his ministry up to that day he had been utterly ignorant experimentally of the great root principle. So one may observe reverently the Christian ordinances; be a member of a Christian church; hold firmly the Christian creed; talk much on religious subjects, and be engaged in the highest form of "Christian" work and yet know nothing whatever of the root. All these things are on the surface, they can be seen; but the root cannot be seen, it is hidden.

*It is the living thing.* The root is a living principle wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God. It is not a habit of mind, nor a philosophy; but it is a *living trust in the living Saviour*. It is the whole inner man going out of itself, and reposing its entire confidence in the Lord Jesus. It is "believing with the heart". The Lord Jesus is the Soil of the soul, and by a vital trust we are rooted in Him. In Gal. ii. 20, St. Paul says—"the life that I now live in the flesh (i.e., in the body) I live by the faith of the Son of God." The experience of Martin Luther is to the point here. Being under deep conviction of sin, and yearning for the knowledge of forgiveness, he was advised to go to the "holy" city of Rome. He went, and was led to seek the blessing he longed for by climbing the *santa scala* (the holy stairway) on his hands and knees. He began to do this, and after climbing some distance, the Spirit of God sent a great flashing message into his soul—"Martin Luther, the just shall live by FAITH!" It is said that Luther sprang to his feet ashamed of endeavouring to win by toil, and effort, what could be his only by faith. This heart confidence in the Lord Jesus that we call faith, is the great root principle. Have we got it? Is our religion all external; or have we the hidden vital reality?

The living root *does many things*. For example, it *unites the tree with the earth*. And a living faith unites the soul to the Lord Jesus. This is a wonderful truth, and so many metaphors are used in the New Testament to set it forth. We read of the vine and the branches; of the body with its head and members; of the Bridegroom and the bride; all telling us of the same Divine fact: the trusting soul is vitally united with his Lord. How our hearts should rejoice in this! What a sense of certainty this fact should impart, and of dignity too! One with Christ the Eternal Son of God; "heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ": this is a fact so sublime that if it were not stated so clearly in the written Word we dare not dream of it. But it is gloriously true that heart trust in the Saviour makes us eternally one with Him. But the root does more: it *appropriates the nutriment in the soil* for the tree's growth. The little tasters push out into the earth ever searching for the richest, and the best, and then appropriating it. So our personal trust in the Lord Jesus appropriates from Him all that we need. His fulness is limitless, and infinite in variety, so that whatever the soul's need may be at any hour it can take in, to its utmost capacity. Is it forgiveness that we want? He can "abundantly pardon". Is it rest of soul we need? He bids us come to Him and have it. Is it life that we desire? In Him we can have it "more abundantly". Is it peace of heart? We can know a "peace that passeth all understanding". Is it joy? We may have "joy unspeakable and full of glory". The richest and best that the heart can crave is in Him, and we may appropriate all that we have capacity to receive at any hour. Shall we not do it now? So the root is the hidden thing, and the living thing. And

*It is the fixing thing.* The root fixes the tree in the earth. You may gather a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and give it to your child in the morning, and before the day is passed those flowers may be scattered over the district—they have been separated from the root. But any tree that you may have in your garden, you know remains in the same place. You don't find that tree changing its place. So is it with the man who is rooted in Christ. Now, to some persons, religion is a mere matter of dress, they can put it on to-day, and take it off to-morrow: it is a mere creature of circumstances. Some people are just what their company is: they, chameleon-like, take on the colour of their surroundings. Not so with the man who is rooted in Christ—he is the same everywhere. He is a man of God in his private life—his inner being is not the "cage of

every unclean and hateful bird". He is a man of God in his home—his wife and children know that. In his business life he is known as one who can be trusted utterly. And in his social, and church, and public life he is the same—a man of God. Being rooted in Christ has given him fixity of character. He is in Christ; always in Christ; everywhere in Christ—a fine reliable character, known actually to be what he professes to be.

*It is the rest-giving thing.* By means of the root the tree has rest. The heath in the desert may be at the mercy of every wind that blows; but the rooted tree rests. And the living trust of the soul in Christ gives it rest. Through faith in the Lord Jesus the whole man finds rest. There is rest for the conscience in the peace-speaking blood of the cross. As Bunyan's pilgrim lost his burden of sin when he gazed upon the cross, and never saw that burden any more; so the soul that trusts in Him who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself enters into perfect rest of conscience. There is also rest for the intellect in the certainty of our Lord's Word. The mind is not tossed to and fro by the uncertainties of men, and the guesses and perhaps of human teachers, but can lean in absolute confidence upon His sure, eternal truth, and so find continual rest. His Word settles everything. Then there is rest for the heart in the infinite loveliness of the Saviour's person. The affections do not need to be searching for an object worthy their regard, they are more than satisfied in the indescribable beauties of our Lord. He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the Altogether Lovely One. The trusting heart is enthralled with His beauty. What rest this brings! Yet again, there is rest for the will in His supreme lordship over the soul. To have His all-mastering control—the control of perfect love, and perfect wisdom and perfect justice, means the most delightful peace and rest that the will of man can know. And thus the whole man finds fullest rest in the Lord Jesus. The root is the rest-giving thing.

*It is the productive thing.* Everything is produced from the root—the stem, the branches, the foliage, the flower and the fruit. Without the root there could be none of these. The one productive thing in the life is a living trust in our living Lord. Unbelief produces nothing. It is the man who believes who does something. Faith works. Turn to Hebrews xi, and see the story there of works done, the victories won, sufferings endured, and wonders wrought, and then remember that all these things were carried through by faith. Faith was the mighty power by which every victory was won. Faith produces. This invisible root is the secret cause of all the outer manifestations of religion. Let us therefore ask again: Am I rooted in the Lord Jesus? Am I reposing all the confidence and trust of my being in Him? Thus the root is the hidden thing, the living thing, the fixing thing, the rest-giving thing, and the productive thing. This leads us to our second consideration, viz.:

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROOT.

*We see the importance of its presence.* If what we have already said is true, then how tremendously important is the presence of the root! It is essential to the *life of the tree*. "Without faith it is impossible to please God". "Apart from Me," says our Lord, "ye can do nothing." Faith is the hand that grasps the Unseen, and that hand is of supreme importance. Wm. Romaine, a minister of the eighteenth century, began a New Year's message to his people by saying: "Let this year be famous—*famous for believing*." The present period seems to be famous for doubting; and doubt means death. Faith on the other hand means life—vigorous, fruitful life. The root is also *essential to fruitfulness*. There can be no fruit where there is no root. When one carefully surveys the professing church, one is impressed with the vast amount of barren Christian profession in the world. It is impossible to yield the fruit of the Spirit without the root of a living trust in our Lord. What is fruit? Is it not the overflow of life that pours up from the root into the stem, through the branches, and then expressing itself in fruit? There must, therefore, be the root if there is to be fruit. The root is also *essential to endurance*. All life is tested, and our spiritual life is supremely tested. In the tropics, where I am serving the Lord, plant life is tested in two ways at least. It is tested by the *tropical sun*. In our Lord's wonderful parable of the sower, He tells of seed which fell upon stony places, and He says, "When the sun was up it was

scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away." Now, the sun was not placed in the heavens to wither up plants and trees, but to develop them and, given sufficient routage and moisture, this is what it does. In interpreting His own parable, our Lord tells us what the sunshine is. Speaking still of the stony ground bearer He says, "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by (or immediately) he is offended." So "tribulation" and "persecution" are God's sunshine. If we are well rooted in Christ this sunshine will develop the life wonderfully and beautifully. But if there is no root the sunshine scorches and burns up the plant. It is well to remember what is God's sunshine—what it is which unfolds the Christian life into its full beauty. It is not ease and comfort. These do not make beautiful characters. The man who quickly and easily springs from comparative poverty to comparative wealth is not usually a noble character. It is rather the person who has passed under the hot rays of tribulation or persecution who becomes beautiful in character. The testing by sorrow and distress under the sanctifying power of the Spirit of God, wonderfully enriches the life. But if there is no root, then tribulation and persecution will soon wither up the plant. The rootless professor falls away in the day of testing. The other form of testing in the tropics is *the tempest*. When the hurricane comes there is no chance for a rootless tree. It is often a hard task even for a well-rooted tree to stand up against the blast. I have, in Switzerland, seen a tree standing out on a rocky crag, knarled and uncomely in form, but to me a handsome thing, because it stands, and has stood, against many a tempest, and holds on still—indeed, grips the rock below all the more firmly because of each winter's storms. And it is a noble sight to see a man or woman severely tested by storms of temptation standing firm through all because deeply rooted. But without root how can a tree hold up against the hurricane? And so we often see young people who have been brought up in the midst of religious surroundings, and who themselves seem to be religious, go out into the larger towns or cities away from home, who, when the storm of temptation sweeps their way, are hurled into the mud in awful numbers. And why have they been swept down so? Because their religion was only superficial—there was no root. If they had been rooted they would have been able to stand. Years ago Sir Charles Warren went out from England to Jerusalem to do some excavation work there, and by much labour uncovered the foundation stones in the south-eastern corner of the wall of the city. He found that they bear the marks of the Tyrian builders who helped Solomon in his day; and further he found that those foundation stones were not laid on the rock, but laid right *into* the rock. And so, although the city has known some twenty-six sieges, and experienced countless storms since Solomon's day, the foundation stones are not moved, they are still in their place, because they are laid *into* the rock. And the soul that is rooted into Christ can face any tempest and abide unmoved; but the rootless tree cannot stand when the tempest beats. How important, then, is the root if we would endure unto the end!

#### *The importance of the cultivation of the root.*

If we have the root we should give earnest thought to its cultivation. Root growth is much needed, for the enemy's aim so often is at the root, seeking to dislodge us from our place in the Lord Jesus. Sometimes with a gardener the care of all cares is the root of a plant; and God, the Great Husbandman, takes great pains with our root. Moses was forty years in the wilderness when he fled from Pharaoh. He was there growing roots. Paul was three years in Arabia growing roots; and sometimes we are put aside in the quiet, away from the rush of daily life, in order that we may grow roots. And roots grow chiefly in the winter.

Now, in order to cultivate our roots we need to *remove all hindrances*. Sometimes there are things allowed in the life that hinder the growth of our faith: these things need to be dealt with. Miss Smyley, in her pretty little book called "Garden Graith," tells of some Easter lily bulbs which she planted and all the lilies of which grew beautifully except one: She wondered why this one did not grow like the rest; so she gave it special attention; yet there was no growth, so after a while she put her hand into the earth and brought up the

bulb to see what was amiss. She discovered that the bulb of the Easter lily was encased in the roots of a wild clematis which grew nearby. Now, the clematis was all right in its place; but its place was not round the bulb of the Easter lily. What did Miss Smyley do? She had no mercy on those clematis roots, but tore them off one by one, until the bulb of the lily was entirely free, and then she placed it back again in the earth. Then this bulb grew beautifully like the others. Sometimes things which are quite right in their place, get round the secret of our life and hinder our growth. Business is quite right in its place supposing that be an honourable business; but if a man gets absorbed in business, so that he has little or no time for secret prayer, or the quiet study of the Word of God, or for real spiritual service, then that business has got into the wrong place. Or recreation, or reading, or politics, or social service, or other things that may be quite right in their place, if they are allowed to steal away the time that we should give to prayer and spiritual ministry, then they are in their wrong place. What must we do? We must do as Miss Smyley did with the Easter lily bulb. We must free our life from every enchaining thing. Every thing that hinders our highest life must be torn away; for our faith must be free to grow entirely unhindered. In Job we read, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." The clean life is the growing life.

Then sometimes a flower or plant cannot grow *because it is pot-bound*. There is not room enough for the plant, and so it is stunted. There is great danger to-day of many souls becoming pot-bound. They are planted into some man-made christ, who is neither perfect God nor perfect man—a small human christ with all the limitations and failures of man. There is not room enough in a christ like that for any soul to grow. We need the great Christ of the Word of God, the One Who is God, in whom "dwells all the fullness of the God-head bodily"; the One Who is also perfect man; the infinite Christ Who can satisfy the yearnings of every human soul. This Christ of boundness, fulness, and boundless love, and power, has ample room for all men who are rooted in Him to grow to all eternity. No soul can ever become pot-bound in Him.

Moreover, in order that our roots may grow *we should feed them*. Many persons seem to take great pains to feed their doubts; let us feed our faith. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." So if we drink in more and more of the Word of God, as God's Word to us personally, our faith will grow exceedingly." We should also *exercise our faith* if we would have it to grow—that is, we should take the promises of God and use them. Paul sets us a fine example here. When he cried to God to remove the "thorn" from his flesh, the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul did not say as many Christians do, "Lovely words!" and then leave them. Paul took them at once to himself, and resting upon them, said, "Much rather therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Let our faith be in constant use like that, and it will grow.

We may well cultivate our faith, *for therein lies our power*. "This is the victory that overcometh, even our faith." Sir J. D. Hooker, in one of his books on Botany, says that there is more destruction of property by the power of growing roots than by any and every physical catastrophe. Many of us have probably seen huge masses of rock split in two by the power of a growing root which started as a very tiny thing. Here is the church's power to-day—her firm, deep, growing faith in the Lord Jesus. Let this fail and she fails; because faith is the channel through which the mighty fulness of God's power flows into her life. Oh, have faith in God!

### III. THE SACREDNESS OF THE ROOT.

If we have the great root principle of faith, how sound a thing that root is!

*See its possessions*. Are you really rooted in Christ? Then all that is in Christ is yours. "He is made unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The whole wealth of grace in Him is yours. It is great, indeed, when you *possess* your possessions. What a pity it seems that the life of many of us is so poor and frail when all the fulness of Christ is for

us. Why do we live in the outer porch when all the riches of the King's Palace are ours? Oh, how infinitely wealthy we are in Christ if we are really rooted in Him! We do well sometimes to try to go over all our possessions in Christ, and then turn and see how many of these possessions we have in actual experience. More and more let us *possess* our possessions.

*The soundness of the root is seen in its possibilities.*

These are perfectly beyond our loftiest dream. We have no conception of what is possible in character and in influence if we are rooted in Christ. With such perfectly boundless supplies of grace and blessing in Him, none can tell the heights of character possible or the marvellous influence possible to any of us. At Hampton Court Palace in London, England, there is a wonderful vine whose roots are so near to the river that when old father Thames comes along with his rich overflow, he lays all along over the roots of that vine his wonderfully rich deposits: and thus virtually the vine has the fullness of the Thames to draw upon for its support. No wonder it is able to yield such wonderful bunches of magnificent grapes. Oh, what is possible to us with all the fullness that is in Christ to draw upon! Let us gaze again upon His infinite fullness, and then lift our head to see what we may become by drawing upon that fullness to the utmost of our capacity. Let us gaze again upon that fathomless supply, and then look out and see how marvellous our influence may be. Oh, let us "dwell deep" and send out our roots unto the River, until we grow into the full splendour of the likeness of our Lord, and are used by Him in blessing to others beyond our wildest dreams. Oh, be sure that you are "rooted in Him."

## BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Lesson 7.

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T. T. SHIELDS, Editor.

No. 4.

### THE TRUE VINE.

Lesson Text: John, chapter 15.

Golden Text—"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15: 4).

#### I. THE PARABLE OF THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES:

1. The vine and the branches are one: "The vine of the Lord of Hosts" (Ps. 86) brought forth wild grapes (Is. 5; Ezek. 19:10); Israel became 'an empty vine' (Hos. 10:1). The failure of Israel to realize the ideal leads our Lord, as the true Israel of God, to say, I am the veritable (or, ideal) Vine, including (as the context shows) in the idea of His complete Personality all the branches that derive their life from Him. I with the branches, I involving My relation to the branches and theirs to Me—I as the Life-principle of humanity, together with those who are living in Me—constitute and are the veritable vine of prophecy, the true Israel of God. So that this passage, from vs. 1-10, denotes and expounds with all detail the idea elsewhere expressed by the head and members of a body. Sometimes the idea of the parts predominates over the idea of the unity, and sometimes the unity triumphs over the parts; but in the relation between Christ and the people of His love they are often lost sight of in Him, and He becomes the only Personality. The "I" of this passage is not that of the eternal Logos, nor is it the mere humanity, nor is it simply the Divine-human Personality, but the new existence which, by union with Him, formed one personage with Him,—the believer being united to Him as He to the Father. 2. There are branches that appear to be grafted into Christ, they may even have some sap, be green; and yet fruitless. The same principle is set forth in the parable of the sower: the seed that fell in "stony places" and "among thorns" bore no fruit (Matt. 13:5 and 7). What a picture

we have here of the professing church! How many fruitless branches there are which profess to be part of the Vine! Such branches the Divine Husbandman will take away. 3. But he will prune the fruitful branch also "that it may bring forth more fruit" (vs. 2). We do well to remember that the Scripture is full of teaching to the effect that the Lord subjects His children to stern discipline (Heb. 12:4-13; I Peter 1:6, 7; II Cor. 4:15-18). 4. A suggestion of the Divine method of purging the fruit-bearing branches is given in verse 3; "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." The Word is represented as a sword or knife which cuts (Heb. 4:12); it is represented also as water (Eph. 5:26): "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Thus if we submit to the authority of God's Word, it will often come to us as a pruning knife, cutting away even those things which are legitimate, removing not only the sin, but every weight, in order to our increasing fruitfulness. And as we submit to it, it will also come to us with the cooling refreshment of a cleansing stream. 5. The soul's commerce with Christ must not be occasional and spasmodic but continuous: whatever fruit we bear is from Him: what sap is to the vine, the Holy Spirit is to the believer: He is the very life of God in the soul; and we can accomplish nothing but by His abiding, but as we abide in Christ we shall bring forth much fruit. What that fruit is appears in Gal. 5:22, 23. In contrast with this, severed from Christ, our fellowship with Him broken, we can do nothing. 6. There is even a human judgment passed upon a fruitless professor: "Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (vs. 6). Nothing is more dishonoring to God than a fruitless orthodoxy, than a lifeless profession; and nothing is more disgusting even to men of the world. 7. The relation of fellowship to prevailing prayer is taught in vs. 7. It is a matter of experience that the study and application of God's Word has a direct relation to the life of prayer, that each acts and reacts upon the other; and our Lord here tells us that the condition of prevailing prayer is that we abide in Him and His words abide in us. 8. God is glorified, not in little, but in abundant fruitfulness. If there is a little fruit on the tree, a small cluster of grapes here and there—and, for the most part, hidden under the leaves—it will not attract much attention; but when the branches are bowed down with fruit, it challenges inspection and brings honor to the vine-dresser who cares for it. So an abundantly fruitful life will bring glory to God. 9. In obedience consists the secret of fullness of joy. His commandments are not grievous, His law is not made up of arbitrary prohibitions; it is a transcript of His own nature; and He speaks to us that we may know His way of life, and that His joy may remain in us.

## II. SUNDRY TEACHINGS AND ADMONITIONS.

1. Christian love is to be sacrificial. How tremendous the implication of this teaching, that a Christian should love to the point of laying down his life (vss. 12, 13)! 2. We are called the friends of Christ because we are taken into His confidence (vs. 15). This is illustrated in the life of Abraham who was called God's friend (Gen. 18:17-22). 3. We are divinely chosen that we may be fruitful in life and effective in prayer (vs. 16). We are actually called into fellowship with Him to be His remembrancers. 4. The believer is warned what to expect from the world (vss. 18-21). It is very important to make this clear, especially to young people who are subject to so many temptations from the allurements of the world about them. Nowadays, too often the church of Christ makes all things according to the pattern seen in the world instead of according to the pattern seen in the mount. Our Lord teaches us that the world is no friend of His. It hates Him; and it will hate all who are true to Him. See also I John 2:15-17. Christians therefore should be separated from the world: while in it, they should not be of it. 5. The world's condemnation consists in this that it has rejected the utmost revelation of God. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause." See also John 3:18-21.