

The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor.*

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

CAN GOD FORGIVE SIN WITHOUT ITS BEING PUNISHED?

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, Nov. 21st, 1926.
(Stenographically Reported.)

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Romans 3: 24-26.



SHALL try to discuss with you this evening, in the simplest possible way, the significance of the death of Christ. The death of the Lord Jesus is an indisputable fact of history: He lived, He died. Why did He die? What did He accomplish by His death? John introduced Him as "the Lamb of God; which taketh away the sin of the world". A certain supposedly great scholar—a theologian too—says that the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world: he says we used to have slavery, and under the influence of the gospel slavery has died out; we used to have a great deal more child-labour than we have, and under the influence of the gospel that is diminishing! This world used to be a very bad place, according to this gentleman, but the gospel has cleared things up!—there is still much to be done, of course, but that is Dr. T. Reaveley Glover's view of the effect of the death of Christ: it has its influence upon society, upon the institutions of society; but is related to the individual only in that indirect way.

I dare say I might be able to talk to you in an interesting fashion this evening about other people's sins—that is always a matter of great interest. If I were to discuss the sins of society, you would be interested; and if I were to propound some theory as to how these evils might be mitigated, you might regard it as a very interesting speculation. But the important matter is to deal with your sin and my sin, and to find out what can be done with that, and what particular bearing the death of Christ has upon our sins. I shall not confine myself to this great text that I have read—if I did, instead of preaching one sermon, I might write many volumes, for it has in it a divinely inspired

statement of the atonement—but I shall quote a number of passages of Scripture this evening, and let the Bible speak for itself.

I.

I begin by asking WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN SIN. In the very beginning it says, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The New Testament says that sin is the transgression of the law, or, sin is lawlessness; sin really is anarchy, the old man, the carnal mind, is an anarchist; it "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." In its whole nature and constitution, the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is opposed to the divine rule; sin is the lifting up of the human will against the divine government, it is a protest against the absolute sovereignty of God.

But sin is more than the transgression of an abstract law. You know that our laws are enacted in the name of his Majesty the King, and the statutes read something like this: that his Majesty, by and with the consent of his counselors, enacts as follows. The law, therefore, theoretically, is the law of the King; and yet there are many laws upon British statute books that have no direct relation to the person of the King—the King may not, indeed, personally approve some of them, they are put on the statute book in his name because he is a constitutional monarch; whether he likes the law or not, there it stands in his name. That is not true of the laws of God: every law of God is a transcript of the divine nature. God's laws, in any realm, are what they are because He is what He is; and you cannot violate a law of God without violating the nature of the divine Law-Giver. If you break a law of God, that transgression actually wounds God. He is infinite, and He expresses Himself in the law which He has made; which means to say, that the law of God, in any realm, is not a mere arbitrary enactment. He is not like a father, who arbitrarily says, "Thou shalt not",—merely for the sake of saying, "Thou shalt not": God's laws are based upon the nature of things, and God is the Author of the nature of things; and you can no more change a law of God than you can change the nature of God, because God's law is a part of Himself.

Now, anticipating in part what I may later say, as an illustration of this principle: Calvary is a revelation, it is a revelation of sin, of what sin is. God is a spirit, we do not see Him, "No man hath seen God at any time"; but in the person of Jesus Christ, God was manifested in the flesh, and He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". If you want to know what God is like, you are to think of Him as He has been revealed in the Person of His Son, for He is said to be "the express image of His person." When God appeared among men, touching them with His healing hand, speaking to them with His gracious words, teaching them the spiritual character of His laws, what did men do? They took the Ultimate, the Last, the One and only complete Revelation of God, they took Him to the cross, they put a crown of thorns in mockery on His brow, they nailed His hands, by His divine permission, to a cross of wood, they drove their spear to the very heart of God—THAT IS SIN! Sin never stops, even the smallest sin, until it registers its protest in the Person of God Himself. Sin is a spear driven to the heart of God, for sin, were it permitted to do its full work, would overturn the very throne of God; it would reduce the universe to a state of anarchy. In our day men make light of sin, "Fools make a mock at sin"; and the prevailing evolutionary notion makes sin but the residue of some lower state from which we are emerging, and really compliments men that they are not as bad as they might have been, that they are gradually progressing, and getting nearer to God! That, however, is the very antithesis of the teaching of Scripture: sin is rebellion against God; sin is, in its very nature, lawlessness, and it is of the Lawless One who is the adversary of God Himself.

Sin is described as death: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Death is not extinction of being; when a man dies, he does not cease to exist: there is a change of relationship, certain correspondences are broken, interrupted. And in the day that man sinned, his fellowship with God was broken, he was separated from God: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Man was driven from the presence of

God, and never can he come back again but through the shed blood—whatever that shed blood may mean—of its meaning I shall speak in a few moments. Furthermore, man began to die physically in the day that he sinned, he became mortal—you are dying now. If you did not begin to die long before you are actually dead, the dentist would go out of business; but there are signs of decay in all of us, we are going downhill.

In the New Testament we are told, "The wages of sin is death." Death is defined as the "wages of sin"—that is, something you earn. The man who gets so much an hour is paid according to the number of hours he works: there is a direct relation between the reward and the service he renders. That figure is used in the Scriptures, death is said to be earned by the sinner, it is what he is paid for what he does.

Then I quote to you several great passages where the word "punishment" is used,—but perhaps before I do that, I should remind you of the apostle's words where he says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." That passage postulates a reign of law in the moral realm which is just as inexorable as any law in the physical realm. If you want wheat, you sow wheat; if you want oats, you sow oats—and you get back what you sow. So the apostle tells us that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. In that realm there is no accident, you cannot prevent things bringing forth after their kind, and the harvest partakes of the character of the seed sown. Keep that in mind, will you? We are taught that there is a law in the moral realm, always operating, just as inexorably as the law of gravitation, or the laws which govern the production of the fruits of the earth.

The Apostle Peter, in his second epistle, says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." The unjust are divinely reserved, just as a man is kept in jail until the day of trial, that he may come before his judge and receive his sentence, so we are told the Lord knows how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. "Punishment" for sin is there definitely promised. Then there are two or three verses in second Thessalonians I want to read to you: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"—actually for the rejection of the gospel we are told men are to be "punished." You are familiar with the passage in Hebrews: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" And again in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew and the last verse; "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Recall also the terrible revelation our Lord gives of the future in that sixteenth chapter of Luke when He draws the veil and shows us Dives in the life to come: "The rich man . . . died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." He suffered. Why did he suffer? He suffered for his sin, and the law was fixed, and between him and a state of bliss a great gulf was fixed which was impassible. This argues, not only a reign of law in this life, but it draws the veil and shows us that the same law is operating in the life that is to come, and Abraham is represented as saying, "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." The astronomers are fond of giving us their staggering distances, and talking about hundreds of millions of light-years,—I confess I am entirely bewildered by their estimates, it is quite beyond me; but even those who boast so much of science, are fond of emphasizing the inexorability of law in the physical realm: they tell us they can actually weigh a planet, and tell us something of its constituents,

on the assumption that laws which obtain here, operate yonder. Well, I believe they are right thus far, that law is universal, and God is one; and that God's laws are everywhere operative, and that the law that we see operating here in this life will be effective in the life to come; and men will reap as they have sown.

Thus we have had a glimpse of what the Bible says about sin and its consequences—sin is to be "punished"; that is the teaching of Scripture.

II.

WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST TO HUMAN SIN? First of all, the death of Christ involved great physical pain. He must have suffered excruciating agony when nailed to the cross; but no one will say that it was by His physical suffering only He atoned for our sin. That was an element in it, beyond doubt, for He provided a salvation for spirit, soul, and body, and doubtless the whole person of the God-man wrought in that redemption: He suffered physically, but He suffered more in a mental and spiritual sense, there was a spiritual element in it which was entirely beyond human understanding. A passage in one of Spurgeon's sermons was quoted recently by one who denies practically everything for which Spurgeon stood. Spurgeon was speaking of the mystery of the three hours' darkness, and insisted that there was more in the atonement, in the sorrow and sufferings of Christ, than any mortal could understand. Surely everyone will be prepared to grant that. How it was possible for God to become incarnate by a virgin birth I do not know—I only know that He stooped to take upon Himself our nature; I do not know how it was possible for Him to endure in His Person the equivalent of the punishment of uncounted millions of men—but here we come upon the infinite, something that transcends all human understanding. But that does not mean that we are forbidden to accept the explicit teaching of Scripture in respect to these great facts of the infinite, made known to us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus was forsaken of God, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the utter darkness into which He entered in our behalf, fellowship with God was broken, and He was separated from His Father; He became conscious, somehow or another, of that great gulf which is fixed between heaven and hell, and Himself guiltless, He cried, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" I do not understand that, I do not pretend to expound it; I can only take the words of Scripture, as I shall presently do, to show that God says He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God". But because there is an element of mystery in it, and because the atonement cannot be set forth with mathematical exactness, that does not mean that it is not sufficiently clearly revealed for faith to rest upon it, and to know that our sins are atoned for. He entered into the outer darkness. He was forsaken of God, and you will remember that as the darkness was approaching He said to His disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here." But He went a little further, and He was alone with God. I do not know what He meant when He said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" No mortal has ever analyzed the ingredients of that cup. It is written: "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." I do not understand it, but I know,—

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

He tasted death for every man! I do not know what it means, but I rejoice in the fact of it because it is here revealed in the Word of God.

Again: the death of our Lord Jesus had some relation to the physical universe: when He died the sun put on sackcloth, the very heavens went into mourning, the earth shuddered at the awful agony of the Incarnate God, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the very earth quaked.

"When Christ the Mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin."

There is mystery there—who dare say there is not? But oh, I am glad the veil of the temple was rent. He Who thus died, and Whose Deity the whole universe acknowledged, is my Saviour.

Now let us look for a moment at what the Scriptures have to say about the death of Christ in its relation to human sin. What did the Lord Jesus say? He said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many"—or, instead of many. There is the figure of the payment of a price, we have Scripture for our hymn,—

"Jesus paid it all—
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow."

He came to give his life a ransom instead of many, to pay the price, He died in our room and stead, whatever may be involved in that great sacrifice. In our Bible lesson this morning I quoted a Scripture which I am going to quote again, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"—that is, Christ knew no sin—"that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There are Scriptures which say that our sins were laid upon Him: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"; "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"; "With his stripes we are healed." But this is a stronger word: "He made him to be sin for us." I have never met with anyone who could expound that passage. I quoted to you a Scripture just now about the carnal mind. The Bible says it is "enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"; in its very warp and woof, in its nature and constitution, it is a mass of enmity against God; there is not a thing in it that is for God—it is all against God, enmity against God. Our Lord Jesus was "made sin for us", though He knew no sin; He represented in His Person the sin of the whole human race; He was infinite in all the qualities of His being. Had He been a man only it would have been impossible for Him to have borne the sin of the world; but being infinite in all His capacities, His capacious soul became, as it were, the world's sin in the mass: "He hath made him to be sin for us." The man who denies the substitutionary work of Christ, the infinite value of the precious blood, is already on the high road to Unitarianism. The two are wrapped up together. If I reduce Jesus to the dimensions of a man, then He cannot die for everybody's sin; but if He is to us the Incarnate God, it is possible to believe that His nature was a nature of infinite capacity. He was made "to be sin for us". As Spurgeon once said, "His Deity gave Him an infinite capacity, and infused a boundless degree of compensation into all the pangs He bore." "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

It is the duty of the pulpit to give instruction as well as exhortation. Here is a passage from a great theologian:

"Punishment is something which can only exist in and for a bad conscience, and the sufferings into which Christ's love led Him, and in and through which His reconciling work was achieved, do not come through a bad conscience and therefore are in no sense penal. That the innocent, moved by love, should suffer with the guilty and for them is in line with all we know of the moral order under which we live. It is the triumph of goodness in its highest form. But that the innocent should be punished for the guilty is not moral at all. It is in every sense of the term impossible. As an incident in the divine administration of the world it is simply inconceivable."

So says Dr. James Denney! But what does the Scripture say? The Scripture says that is exactly what took place: that He Who knew no sin was made to be sin for us—and I would rather take that than the judgment of ten thousand Denneys ("Hallelujah!" "Praise the Lord!"). The Scripture says, "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."

Peter says that Christ "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God"—Himself, the Just for, or, instead of, the unjust, taking our place, to bring us to God. We have that in first Peter, and then we come to the great text that I read to you in the beginning, one of the most wonderful texts in the Bible—please give me your special attention. I would like to make you all theologians, if I could. Do not be content with a superficial knowledge of these things, go to the Bible for yourself; there is nothing more interesting, more challenging, than the Word of God—this text that I read to you says that Jesus Christ was "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood"—now mark this—"to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."

What do these words mean? At our Hamilton Convention a graduate in Arts and Theology of McMaster University said to one of our pastors, "What is the use of talking about people being saved through the blood? Don't you know people were saved before Christ died? How could they be saved by His blood while His blood was not yet shed?" Think of a theological graduate talking like that! What is the problem here? Go back through the Old Testament dispensation, and uncounted thousands, millions, have died. The epistle to the Hebrews calls the roll of some of them and says, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." They were sinners just as we are, but God "passed over" their sins, He did not visit them with judgment; and now the question is asked, Where is the righteousness of God? How can He be a just Judge, when for all these centuries He has passed over the sins of men who were just as great sinners as we are? Paul says, He is now "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." The Lord Jesus had given a promissory note before the foundation of the world, He said, "I will pay their debt; I will die in their room and stead. In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God. And I will go and pay the price, and then I will come with My own blood into the divine Presence and cry, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.'" And so by virtue of that promise, God "passed over the sins of men done aforetime," when they looked forward to the Christ Who was to come, and believed dimly, not as clearly as we do, but they believed dimly in One Who was to come. Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, "he saw it, and was glad." I do not know when, perhaps when he stretched forth his hand to slay his son, and a voice cried, "Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." Perhaps when the blood flowed he said, "It is only a picture, a promise, a prophecy, of the Lamb of God Who some day will come and bleed for me, and by His blood I shall be saved." The world did not then know it; but now He is "set forth"—what for?—"to declare his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." In other words, the cross of the Lord Jesus justifies God as well as justifying the believer.

There is one other great passage that I must refer you to in Hebrews—your students who are here this evening, theological students, and you are told about the "example" of the death of Christ, the "moral influence" of the atonement, and all that sort of thing—He is an Example, there is a moral influence in the atonement, all these things are there, but they are only part truths: there is very much more than that. Now listen: "And for this cause"—that is, He has died and has taken His blood into the holy place, and has obtained eternal redemption for us—"and for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." There is a retroactive value, if I may so say, in the death

of Christ, "that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Do you see that? The "example" theory can not stand on that text, for He died for the redemption and benefit of those who died before He came, for the redemption, for the payment of the price which their transgressions had incurred, that they with us might together receive the promise of eternal inheritance. So you will readily see that "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

Now I come back to that quotation from Denney, when he says, "That the innocent should be punished for the guilty is not moral at all. It is in every sense of the term impossible. As an incident in the divine administration of the world it is simply inconceivable." Well, if that be true, the transfer of righteousness is equally "inconceivable": if you cannot transfer guilt, you cannot transfer righteousness; if the sinner's guilt cannot, in keeping with God's moral rule, be imputed to Jesus Christ, then His righteousness cannot be imputed to us; if He was not made sin for us, then we cannot be made the righteousness of God in Him. And what follows upon that doctrine? For what did Luther plead? Upon what great doctrine was the Reformation established? "The just shall live by faith", the imputation of divine righteousness—it was for that Luther contended; and the whole cause of Protestantism rests upon that central doctrine. The substitutionary death of Christ has made possible the imputation of the divine righteousness to penitent and believing souls.

Now I am concerned only for the spiritual interests of men—but listen to what our new Professor says, "If Denney is a modernist and heretic, I will throw up my hands and surrender straightway and say I am one." He objects to the idea that Jesus was "punished" for sin. Well, if Jesus was not punished for me, I have a terrible future before me—and if He was not punished for you, you have a terrible future too. We may all be terrified at the very thought of judgment, if it be not so that our sins were laid upon the Lord Jesus. The acceptance of that doctrine, that it is "not moral" and "inconceivable" for the innocent to bear the sinner's punishment, which was openly declared in our Baptist Convention, and by our Convention endorsed,—that doctrine absolutely destroys the very foundations of Evangelical Christianity; there is nothing left if you take away that great fact, that Christ died "the just for the unjust to bring us to God."

If that is not worth contending for, I do not know what is. And, my friends, what is the use of discussing these things if you and I do not get the benefit of them? What does it mean to be saved? It means to accept God's estimate of His Son. That is what it means. We have committed many, many, sins, but the Lord will forgive you all your sins if you will accept His estimate of His Son: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men", but He will never forgive you if you reject His testimony concerning His Son. And His testimony is that He is the Lamb of God; and that when He died, He died instead of you; that when He cried, "It is finished", the utmost farthing of your indebtedness to the holy law of God had been paid; and the moment you come into agreement with God on that point, and look into the face of Jesus, and say, "My Saviour, Thou didst die for me,—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come"—

the moment you say that, all controversy is at an end, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, shall cleanse you from all sin. You may go out of this place this evening with a great song of peace and praise in your heart, saying, "As for me, all judgment is passed, my sin was laid upon Jesus, it was nailed to the cross, He carried it with Him into His grave, and He came out again, and ascended to the Father; and I am in Him, I died with Him, I was buried with Him, I was raised again with Him; and now He has gone into the glory, and He is mentioning my name to-night before the throne of God." Oh yes; He is saying, "I know he is a great sinner, I have a record of his sins; but he

has believed on Me, he is trusting in My blood, and I plead My precious blood to cleanse him from all sin"—and God never says "No", to Jesus Christ. How wonderful those words in His high priestly prayer: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them." Oh, that many this evening would yield themselves to Christ and find eternal life!

Let us bow and seek His blessing: O Lord, as we think of Thy cross, we are lost in wonder, love, and praise. We have no words with which to worship Thee. We bare our hearts before Thee, and we come in humble penitence to say, "Thou knowest, Lord, that we love Thee." It may be that there are some here to-night who through weary years have been seeking to pay off old scores, to put themselves right with God. Help them to see that the debt is already paid; help them to accept, to rejoice in its cancellation, to open their hearts to the incoming of the Holy Spirit Who comes to testify of Christ. Lord, wilt Thou not sovereignly have Thy way in this congregation to-night? Bring many a man, and many a woman, who has been disputing about these matters, to Thy feet. Thou hast said, If we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We humbly confess, and we accept the promise of Thy Word that if we confess Thou dost forgive. Wilt Thou now, by Thy Spirit, put into the hearts of men and women the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner"; and as, inaudibly, it rises and reaches Thine ears, wilt Thou give back the witness of the Holy Spirit, saying to such as have thus prayed, "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven." In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

AN EPOCH-MAKING DAY IN TORONTO

Thursday, November 25th, will be remembered for many years to come as the beginning of new things in the Baptist denomination. When The Call to the women of the Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec was issued through the pages of this paper last week, it was impossible for anyone to estimate what the response would be.

It was planned that the first session of the Convention should be given to prayer. The first meeting was to be held in the large Parlor which will seat two hundred persons; but at the time announced for the beginning of the meeting, this was crowded out, and the meeting was transferred to the large Lecture Hall upstairs. This rapidly filled, and a spirit of prayer came upon the meeting, which marked it as being stamped with God's favour from the beginning. Not counting the great company of waiters, three hundred people were entertained by Jarvis Street ladies at lunch.

Following the lunch, the meeting re-convened in the auditorium of Jarvis Street Church. We have had various estimates of the number present. Deacon Greenway, who always conducts the opening services at the Pastor's Class, where the attendance is counted, insists that there were five hundred present; others have put the figure as being "at least four hundred". We are sure the latter figure is quite safe. The total number of women who registered was three hundred and thirty; the total number of charter members of the Society who signed the doctrinal basis was two hundred and thirty-one; the outside points represented numbered seventeen, including Stratford, Guelph, Hespeler, New Toronto, Mimico, Long Branch, Willowdale, Erin, York Mills, Hamilton, Orangeville, Stouffville, Oshawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Scarboro Junction, Islington, and Acton.

No one could doubt from the temper of this meeting that the Lord was in the midst of His people. So far as we heard, the meeting was not concerned about matters of dispute in the Denomination: it was a great company of women who had come together with a passion for the Lord, and for His Word, and for the souls of men, and who are intent on obeying His command to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

This issue of the paper was postponed a day in order that a report of this meeting might be included. It was by motion decided to organize a new Women's Missionary Society; a Constitution was adopted, and the following officers and members of the Board were elected:

OFFICERS.

Honorary President: Mrs. John Lillie.
 President: Mrs. C. J. Holman.
 1st Vice-President: Mrs. W. L. Kingdon.
 2nd Vice-President: Mrs. W. J. H. Brown.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

Mrs. W. A. King, College St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. C. J. Loney, Stanley Ave. Church, Hamilton.
 Mrs. D. W. McLeod, Olivet Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. C. M. Passmore, Parkdale Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. M. E. Howser, Mount Pleasant Road Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. Nathaniel Mills, Talbot St. Church, London.
 Mrs. R. E. Frid, Stanley Ave. Church, Hamilton.
 Miss M. L. Whitelock, Jarvis St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. D. N. Cameron, Bedford Park Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. E. A. Brownlee, Jarvis St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. R. K. Gonder, Memorial Church, Stratford.
 Mrs. R. McArthur, Hespeler, Ont.
 Mrs. T. T. Shields, Jarvis St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. G. A. MacBain, Oakwood Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. I. S. Clubine, Jarvis St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. F. O. Thorold, Annette St. Church, Toronto.
 Dr. F. M. Langton, Christie St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. E. J. Taylor, Annette St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. C. G. Stagg, Grace Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. Chas. Henty, Silverthorne Ave. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. Elizabeth Hyndman, Meadowview Church, Guelph.
 Mrs. Geo. Greenway, Jarvis St. Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. Allen Taylor, Runnymede Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. J. H. Peer, Willowdale Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. M. Scott Wilson, Mount Pleasant Road Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. Cornelia Gray, Parkdale Church, Toronto.
 Mrs. A. Wyse, Orangeville, Ont.
 Mrs. W. J. Thomson, Long Branch, Ont.
 Mrs. Geo. Allen, Grace Church, Toronto.
 (One other to be announced later).

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW SOCIETY.

Article I—Name.

This organization shall be called "The Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada".

Article II—Doctrinal Basis.

This Society stands upon the following principles: the Essential Deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ our Saviour; the Divine inspiration and consequent authority of the whole canonical Scriptures which we believe to be the infallible Word of God; atonement through faith in the expiatory sacrifice of

Christ Jesus our Lord "who died for our sins and rose again for our justification"—"the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"; the administration of the Holy Spirit in the church, and therefore in the work of this Society and its Board; the purity of the Ordinances with their accompanying Scriptural relation to each other (that immersion of the believer in water on the profession of his faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord should precede church membership and the observance of the Lord's Supper); and the advocacy of Scriptural giving which we believe to be regular, systematic, voluntary, yet, at the same time, obligatory upon all true believers, which latter obligation is directly connected in the Scriptures with spiritual blessing. We believe that man is by nature wholly depraved, and, apart from the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit upon the soul, is eternally lost; that it is incumbent upon all true believers who have obtained eternal salvation through faith in Christ to seek the salvation of the lost, and to spread the knowledge of that salvation throughout the world to all peoples.

Article III—Object.

The object of this Society shall be to spread the gospel of God's grace in the Dominion of Canada and throughout the world, by the dissemination of the doctrines and principles shown forth in the Scriptures, and held by the denomination known as "Regular Baptists"—and to carry out this purpose through the preaching of the Word, the teaching of believers, the building of churches, and the establishment of schools whose teachings shall be in accord with the principles set forth in this Constitution, both in Canada and in other lands.

Article IV—Membership.

1. Any Baptist woman belonging to a Regular Baptist Church, and herself accepting and practising the principles laid down in this Constitution, and holding vitally and in truth the fundamentals of the Faith, expressed in Article II, may become a member of this Society, or any of the local Societies affiliated with it, by affixing her signature to the Statement of Faith in the Constitution of this Society, or its local auxiliary Societies. Should her views on the fundamentals of the faith subsequently change, or become in process of change, she shall resign office (if such she holds) and connection with these Societies.

2. All members of this and its auxiliary local Societies are expected to study and practise Scriptural giving, recognizing the Lord's ownership of all we possess, and our stewardship in things material as well as spiritual. Each local Society shall take steps to instruct its members in the grace of giving, and provide means for offerings to be made regularly, systematically, and proportionately.

Article V—Officers of the Society.

1. The Society shall carry on its work through a Board of Managers who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Society.

2. This Board shall consist of not fewer than eighteen, nor more than thirty, regularly-elected women, who shall be elected in classes of six members each, to serve for five years. One class shall go out of office at each Annual Meeting, their places to be supplied by a new election. Any vacancy in any other class may also be filled at the same time.

3. In addition, the Society shall elect the President and two Vice-Presidents annually (but the former officers shall perform the duties of office until the close of the Annual Meeting).

4. All these officers shall be members in good standing of a Regular Baptist Church, and, by Regular Baptist is meant what was declared to be the definition of "Regular Baptist" passed in 1853 by the "Regular Baptist Missionary Society" (organized in 1851 in Ontario), declaring "that Churches which restrict their Communion to baptized believers and administer the ordinances generally through ordained elders, should be considered REGULAR".

5. It shall be the duty of the Board to seek out from among the members of the Society, women whose sound judgment, prayer life, and missionary zeal are well spoken of, and whose other qualifications are of such character as to render them suitable for guidance of the Society's affairs, and to nominate such for office at the Annual Meeting.

6. Opportunity shall also be given to the meeting to make Open Nominations, but in such case, statement must be made of the qualifications of the nominee, and her adherence to the principles set forth in the Word of God and the Constitution of this Society, the purpose of this careful selection being to secure, as far as possible, those who will carry forward the principles and purposes for which the Society was formed.

7. Any officer or member of the Board whose views or principles subsequently change, or are in process of change, from those stated in Article II in this Constitution, must resign office and connection with this Society.

8. Members whose term of service expires, if still meeting the qualifications above stated, shall be eligible for re-election.

9. The election shall be by ballot, unless dispensed with by a majority vote.

10. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election.

11. No one who has been elected shall be considered a member of the Board or an officer of the Society until she has signed a declaration that it is her purpose to carry out the object of the Society, is in accord with the spirit and aims of this Constitution, and fully accepts its principles and Doctrinal Basis.

12. After their election the Board shall appoint the following officers, who shall be members of the Board ex-officio: (These officers may be chosen from among the elected members of the Board, or may be chosen from among those outside the Board who are members of local missionary societies, auxiliary to this Society): at least two corresponding secretaries, one for the general business of the Society and its local auxiliaries, and one for correspondence with missionaries; but should the Society undertake Foreign Mission work in more than one country, there may be, if deemed advisable, a Corresponding Secretary for each different country; an Assistant Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, and two Assistant Recording Secretaries; a Secretary for Young Women's Word, a Mission Band Secretary; a "Comfort Box" Secretary; a Secretary of Literature; an Editor, Superintendent of Agents, and Treasurer for the Periodical published by this Society; and a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurers may also be appointed as the work demands.

13. As the work expands, provision may be made for regional directors in the Dominion of Canada to have oversight over the local societies in their district, such regional directors being members of the Board ex-officio.

Article VI—Duties of Officers and Board.

1. The special duties of President, Vice-President and Secretaries, etc., shall be those duties which the name of the office, which they respectively hold, clearly indicates. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to Missionaries, to furnish the Board with regular monthly or quarterly reports, as may seem wise, from the Churches, missionaries, schools, etc., under its care.

2. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, acknowledge, record and pay out all funds of the Society, as directed by the Board, and to report to the Board monthly. The Treasurer shall have all cheques countersigned by the President (or in her absence by the First Vice-President) and shall submit her books to competent auditors (as shall also all other officers who handle money for the Society) appointed by the Board before each Annual Meeting, and shall present at that meeting a full statement of receipts and expenditures. In addition to the Annual Statement, the Treasurer shall present a duly certified detailed list of securities held, and other investments belonging to the Society.

3. It shall be the duty of the Board of Managers to obtain and diffuse missionary information among the women and children of our churches, especially information concerning the mission work of the Society itself, encourage the organization of local missionary societies of those supporting this Society, decide upon methods of stimulating missionary giving (especially methods of training the women and children in Scriptural giving) and recommending same to the local societies; (Each local society, however, shall be free to decide for itself its methods of local missionary giving, but is expected to do this within the limits of the teaching of the Word of God) and to do whatever else is

necessary to promote the welfare and efficiency of the Society and to maintain its spiritual and Biblical standards and prayer life. The Board shall also have the control of the Society's periodical and shall conduct the same along lines in harmony with the purposes of the Society as expressed in Articles 2 and 3 of this Constitution. A summary of the principles embodied in this Constitution shall also appear continuously upon the title page of the periodical.

Article VII—Board Meetings.

1. This Board shall meet at least quarterly, and oftener if necessary, and nine members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The President shall be ex-officio member of all committees, and all standing committees shall be annually elected by ballot.

2. Any member of the Board who shall be absent from the business meetings of the Board, for three consecutive Business Meetings, without notifying the same of the reason for her absence shall forfeit her position and her place may be filled. Any member also who departs from the recognized standards expressed in this Constitution is expected candidly to state the same, and failing this, the Board is at liberty to call for her resignation.

3. In case of any vacancy occurring on the Board between Annual Meetings, whether by death, resignation, or otherwise, such vacancy may be filled by the Board until the next Annual Meeting, at which time her membership on the Board shall cease, unless she is regularly elected as hereinbefore provided for.

Article VIII—Executive Committee.

The President, Vice-Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurer, Heads of Departments, and four other members of the Board shall compose an Executive Committee to transact business that may require attention between the Regular Meetings of the Board, the four elected members being elected annually by ballot at the first Annual Meeting of the Board; but appropriations may not be made nor investments authorized, nor any important matter with regard to financial policy be authorized, save at a fully notified meeting of the Board. Five members of the Executive shall constitute a quorum.

Article IX—Annual Meeting of the Society.

1. The Annual Meeting of this Society shall be held at such time and place as shall from year to year be determined by the Board to hear the Annual Reports of the Board through the Secretaries and Treasurer, and transact other business of the Society.

2. (a) Each local society shall have the right to appoint voting delegates to this meeting, according to the number of its members as follows: for a membership of 20 or less, two delegates; for each additional twenty, one delegate.

(b) Those individual members of the Society in churches where there is no local missionary society auxiliary to this society, may at the Annual Meeting of this Society gather together and elect from among themselves voting delegates to represent them at that Annual Meeting, such voting delegates to be elected in the same proportion, and to represent the first twenty or fraction thereof, and one for each additional twenty.

(c) Each Mission Band shall have the right to send one voting delegate.

(d) All Baptist women and girls are invited to attend the Annual Meeting and all members of the Society and its auxiliary societies may take part in the discussion, but only voting delegates, officers of the Society and members of the Board are entitled to vote.

Article X—Candidates for Missionary Service.

1. Candidates for missionary service must satisfy the Board as to their soundness in the faith on all fundamental truths, and their hearty acceptance of the principles laid down in this Constitution. They shall be required to hand in, together with their schedule of application, a written statement of their convictions as to the Divine Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Fall of Man and his consequent moral depravity and need of regeneration, the Atonement, Justification by Faith, the Resurrection of the Body, the eternal Life of the Saints, and the eternal punishment of the lost.

2. Should the views of accepted candidates or missionaries subsequently change, they must inform the Board and be prepared to resign connection with the Society.

Article XI—Alterations in Constitution.

1. All proposed alterations in this Constitution shall be presented at the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Board and such as are recommended by the Board shall be published at least three months before the Annual Meeting, but Articles 2, 3, 4, and 10, and the clauses in Article 5, setting forth the statement of faith, the purposes and principles of the Society, and the qualifications necessary to obtain and retain membership or office in this Society, shall never be changed, as we regard them as fundamental and essential to the maintenance and purity of the Regular Baptist position.

2. Any alterations or amendments to this Constitution shall require for their adoption a two-thirds vote of the delegates present at the Annual Meeting of the Society.

3. Any new business to be discussed at the Annual Meeting of the Society must be presented in writing to the Board of Managers previous to the Annual Meeting.

BY-LAWS.

(I). The local societies and Mission Bands, auxiliary to this Society, are not expected to divert their funds to objects outside those undertaken by the Society, nor to apply their funds to objects connected with the work of this Society, not covered by the estimates of this Society, unless authorized by the Board so to do.

(II). These By-Laws may be amended at the Annual Meeting of the Society by a vote of two-thirds of the delegates present, notice in writing having been sent to the Board of Managers three months previous to the Annual Meeting, and by them published in the Society's periodical.

ANOTHER MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION IN PROSPECT.

Following the Convention, a great meeting was held in Jarvis Street Church, at which a Committee was appointed to consider the advisability of effecting another missionary organization within the Convention of Ontario and Quebec. That Committee appointed a sub-committee which has been diligently employed at its task for some time. The sub-committee is now reporting to the general Committee the result of its labour, with a recommendation that a great missionary Convention be called to meet in Toronto some time in January. This announcement may reach some members of the Committee before the official notice from the sub-committee. This will be due to the fact that we are writing but a paragraph, whereas the sub-committee are preparing copies of the Constitution and other matters for their report to the Committee; but we make this announcement merely to show that it is almost certain that within two months we shall not only have the Women's Organization above announced, but a General Missionary Organization in which churches and individuals from all over the two Provinces will find membership. We publish this for the encouragement of those who are waiting for news.

TO TORONTO READERS AND OTHERS.

Wednesday afternoon and evening is the busiest time for the Editor of this paper of all the week. We will try to respond to those who wish to see us at other times, but of sheer necessity we issue this request that our friends will be good enough to leave us alone on Wednesday. This paper has to be issued. If *The Gospel Witness* did not make its appearance at the proper time, what would happen? There are very many people, whose names are not on our subscription list, who are more interested in *The Gospel Witness* than in *The Canadian Baptist*. They would not allow us to know that they read *The Gospel Witness* for anything, lest we should be puffed up, but we know that these brethren could not sleep comfortably until they have scanned its pages. Beside all this, we really have something interesting to say! We wish we could afford a paper

three times the size every week, for we could easily fill it with interesting material. We beg our Toronto readers, therefore, to choose some other day to call upon us than Wednesday afternoon or evening, because that is the only time we have in which to get out *The Gospel Witness*.

THE ALTON CHURCH OPENING.

On Friday, November nineteenth, the new Baptist church at Alton was opened. The building itself is probably the finest structure in the village. We do not believe it could be built in Toronto for less than thirty thousand dollars. But the miracle is not so much in the building as in the spiritual work it represents. Sixteen months ago, so far as is known, there was not a Baptist in Alton. One could scarcely believe his eyes to see those five hundred people in that splendid building having come together from great distances to share the gladness of the occasion with the Alton believers,—we say it seemed incredible that this should have been brought about in the short space of sixteen months. It was most fitting that the first address should be delivered by Mr. W. Gordon Brown, B.A., pastor of the Orangeville church. He spoke with his usual selflessness and as one who was perfectly unconscious of having played any heroic part in this great achievement. His speech was a humble and grateful recognition of what a gracious and mighty God had been pleased to do in Alton. The threads of His providence were traced, and the Alton revival was shown to be directly related to two or three earnest people who cried without ceasing for revival to God. The very thought of Gordon Brown is an inspiration to this writer, and we are confident that if health and strength be given him, ere many years the whole Christian world will hear about him. It was fitting that he should be followed by Rev. W. J. H. Brown, pastor of Annette Street church, the noble father of this splendid son. Mr. Brown spoke briefly. We have a suspicion that extended speech for him would have been difficult under the circumstances, but his short address lifted his hearers into the heavenlies, and prepared them to cry in unison with him, "Hallelujah". Rev. W. E. Atkinson spoke briefly as representing other churches, expressing the delight of many in this great accomplishment. Pastor James McGinlay presided, and it was most re-assuring to observe how completely this extraordinary young preacher commands the situation. No one needed to be told that one who was every inch a captain was on the bridge. The Editor of *The Gospel Witness* had the privilege of making the appeal for the collection, and delivering an address which was intended to be short, but which we fear was somewhat otherwise. The offering of the evening amounted to Eleven hundred and five dollars.

One crowded bus and some cars went from Annette Street church: two crowded buses and several cars went from Jarvis Street: practically the entire membership, we should suppose, of the Orangeville church were present, as well as a fine contingent from Hamilton, who came with the Rev. C. J. Loney, pastor of the Stanley Avenue church, who offered the dedicatory prayer.

At the close of the splendid meeting, the Alton friends served those who had come from Toronto and Hamilton with refreshments, and the Toronto contingent arrived back in the city somewhere about two o'clock in the morning.

On Sunday morning, Mr. W. Gordon Brown preached the first sermon in the new church, and when Pastor McGinlay gave the invitation, eleven responded. Great services were held afternoon and evening when Brother McGinlay preached. The new building, with its splendid equipment, was crowded at both morning and evening services.

The total cost of the building will be approximately ten thousand dollars, but it should be borne in mind that all the stone for the building was donated, and was hauled to the place by the members of the church. The excavation, we believe, was done in the same way. Beautiful as the building is, splendid as this material accomplishment must be recognized to be, to us the miracle of all is the spiritual transformation which has been made in the lives of those who have been saved by divine grace. To look into the faces of those men and women many of whom, sixteen months ago, did not know the Lord and were utterly without religious interest, to observe their devotion to Christ, their apostolic zeal, their loyalty to the gospel, made one feel that it would be well worth while to go through Nebuchadnezzar's furnace a thousand times

in defence of that gospel which could accomplish such a miracle. We throw the gauntlet down to Modernism and challenge these men with their boasted "new thought", to produce a miracle like Alton.

MATERIAL HELD OVER.

Five pages of editorial matter and news which we already have in type are held over until next week, in order to give place to the report of the Missionary Convention appearing in this issue.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Vol. 1.

T. T. SHIELDS, Editor.

No. 4.

Lesson 12.

Fourth Quarter.

December 19th, 1926.

THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS.

Lesson Text: John, chapters 20, 21. To be studied in harmony with lesson text: Mark 16: 14-18; Luke 24: 36-49.

Golden Text—"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John 20: 30, 31).

I. AT THE SEPULCHER WITH MARY AND PETER AND JOHN.

1. Mary's strange discovery at the tomb: She found the stone taken away from the sepulcher, and the door of the sepulcher open. Until then every grave was sealed without hope of its evacuation; but from then until now every such visit by a believer to a grave has been changed by the fact that the grave of Jesus is empty. 2. There are spiritual affinities which inevitably gravitate toward each other: it was natural for Mary to run to tell Peter and John of her discovery, for she knew that they would be interested in her story of the open grave. We may well enquire, What do people tell us? There are people who have a special faculty for gathering ill news and unsavoury reports. Do our ears hear good news or bad? Others will soon discover what we want to know. 3. The record of two different investigators: Peter and John ran both together, but physically John outran Peter. Arriving at the sepulcher John observed from without, but Peter, with his usual impetuosity, went into the sepulcher, and examined it particularly and in detail, only to be followed by John. They saw and believed, in the sense that they knew the sepulcher to be empty; but "as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead". Only as the circumstances of life are interpreted in the light of Scripture can they be properly understood. 4. Apparently thinking there was no more to be learned, the disciples, that is, Peter and John, went away again unto their own homes. It is not recorded that they spread the news of the empty sepulcher. Their message would have been of a negative character: there is little inspiration in telling people what we have not found. Men would soon cease to talk about Jesus had they nothing but an empty grave to discuss; but these disciples were not unlike some who go quickly from church. It takes them but a little while to see and hear all that may be seen and heard.

II. WHAT A LOVING FAITH LEARNS BY PATIENT WAITING.

1. Mary was unwilling to leave the sepulcher in uncertainty. She cared nothing for the empty tomb: it was her Lord Himself she wanted. Therefore she let her tears flow freely, and waited at the sepulcher. What she expected to see or hear, we do not know; it was, perhaps, a kind of Divine instinct, the goings of God upon her own spirit that bade her stand still and wait. Often there is more to be learned by standing still than by running; patience is sometimes a better teacher than the spirit which is identified with what is sometimes colloquially called "pep". If we have no message of a risen Christ we shall accomplish nothing by running hither and thither trying to do something. We had better wait at the sepulcher weeping, for if Christ be not risen our faith is vain, and our preaching is vain, and we are of all men most miserable. 2. The angels appeared to this waiting soul. Peter and John had carefully inspected the interior of the sepulcher, but they saw nothing but the napkin and the linen clothes; but when this waiting, weeping woman looked, she saw two angels, "one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain". God's angels are ever ready to minister to us, and they are always concerned about those who seek Jesus. 3. After the angels there appeared Another whom Mary knew not. We do well to listen to the angels, for the sound of their Master's feet is always behind them. Yet Mary knew Him not. What change had been wrought? Was it in Him, or in her? Yet there was something about Him which was unchanged: when He said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" she supposed Him to be the gardener; but when He called her by name saying, "Mary", she said, "Rabboni", which is to say, Master. This is an illustration of what He meant when He said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and a stranger will they not follow; for they know not the voice of strangers". Not yet had He ascended to His Father, but He commissioned Mary to go to His brethren and tell them that He would ascend to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. Hearing this, Mary did not go to her home as Peter and John had done, but she told the disciples that she had seen the Lord. A living Saviour is a greater inspiration than an open grave.

III. JESUS APPEARS TO A COMPANY OF DISCIPLES.

1. Brought together by a common sorrow illumined by a faint hope resulting from the report of the empty tomb, the disciples gathered behind shut doors, and Jesus appeared to them, and

breathed peace upon them, and showed them His hands and His side. Throughout the record of the events, which Luke describes in the Acts as "infallible proofs", it should be observed that no one did ever find Jesus, but He of Himself appeared to His disciples. No one was ever convinced of the fact of the resurrection by an empty tomb, nor by the linen clothes, nor by the testimony of angels or of men; but by the actual appearance of the Lord. So is it ever: only by direct contact with God are men convinced that Jesus lives. 2. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord". Imagination is staggered in any attempt to picture to the mind the inexpressible joy of that occasion; nor has it passed into history, for still there is nothing that will bring greater gladness to a believing heart than a view of the risen Christ, showing the marks of His crucifixion. 3. The disciples were commissioned by the living Christ and sent as He was sent. Nothing else can fit any one to preach: "How shall they preach except they be sent"? We must receive orders from Headquarters, and not by proxy.

IV. HOW THOMAS MISSED THE LORD'S APPEARANCE, BUT LATER SAW HIM—Vss. 24-28.

1. He was absent from the first meeting when Jesus appeared to His disciples, and he must have been absent because he did not expect Jesus to be present. That is why people stay away from prayer-meeting and church, for did they really expect Christ, they would be sure to be on hand. 2. When Thomas was told by the disciples who had themselves seen the Lord, of His appearance and presence in their midst, he refused to believe; and declared that nothing short of putting his fingers into the wounds would convince him that Christ was alive. Thus sometimes in sorrow, and half in despair, men foolishly talk still. 3. But Jesus gave this longing heart a second chance, and challenged him to do as he had said, and by the challenge showed that He knew what he had said. But Thomas was not guilty of the vulgar touch. He loved his Lord sincerely and profoundly, and answered with this glorious confession, "My Lord and my God". Doubting Thomas was not always a doubter; and it should be remembered that some who do not find faith easy and who do not quickly find the path out of the wilderness of doubt, do, notwithstanding, rise to great heights of holy confidence. Jesus pronounced a special blessing upon those who believe without seeing. 4. The theme and purpose of the Book, John reveals in the last two verses of chapter 20: a wealth of material was at hand, but by Divine direction a record only of such signs as are written in the Book is preserved—all that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and believing, have life through His Name.

V. JOHN'S POSTSCRIPT TO HIS GOSPEL.

1. Christ's appearance at the Sea of Tiberias. It is to be observed He showed Himself again to the disciples. On this occasion it would appear seven were together. They had returned to their regular vocations, and had become fishermen again. They were engaged in the daily task. They were not dreaming on the mountain top, nor were they even in a place of seclusion engaged in prayer; they were not fishing for pleasure; it was their vocation, not their avocation. And they spent the night in vain endeavour. But with the morning Jesus came. So does He still appear to us while we are engaged in the daily task. He comes to us with sympathy, touched by our failures; He comes to ask us how we are getting along; and all this from the risen Christ. In His resurrection power and glory He was just as near to His disciples as on the other side of the Cross. 2. Aside from all technicalities, He told them where they were to cast their net, and they found success in the daily task by obeying Him. Our Lord is an expert at all trades; infinitely wise, He can lead us to success. 3. It was grace enabled them in their success to recognize the Lord. Too often it is when sorrow and adversity come upon us we are disposed to attribute them to God. Blessed is he who can cry, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits". 4. Jesus helped the disciples to get breakfast. He kindled the fire, and laid the fish and bread thereon. Let it not be forgotten that He is now engaged in the important work of convincing His disciples that He is alive. In this instance He does not go to the scholar in his study, nor to the king upon his throne, but to a couple of men faced with the necessity of getting the morning meal, and there He demonstrates the truth of the resurrection. And often still the resurrection of Christ is more real in the kitchen than it is in scholastic halls. One of the proofs that Christ is alive is to be found in the fact that He still helps the busy housewife to get the breakfast! A religion that does not help us in our daily toil is not the religion of Christ. It was not necessary for any one to ask Him who He was: they all knew now that it was the Lord. Thus He showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead, the third time, in the business of catching fish, and getting breakfast.

VI. PETER'S THRICE-REPEATED CONFESSION—Vss. 15-17.

Into the details of this we have no space to go. Peter had somewhere had a private interview with his Lord, as we learn from other Scriptures. What passed between them, however, inspiration does not record. But as he had three times denied his Lord, he is here given opportunity three times to confess Him. And further, the man who had so boldly declared his readiness to die for Christ, was told that that privilege should be his. 1. One of the lessons here is how fully the Lord Jesus received Peter back into His confidence. He had sinned terribly; he had so disgraced himself that he could not have complained had he never been trusted again. But here the Lord promised that he shall yet become a valiant soldier, and that when his work was done he should glorify God by a martyr's death. As his career is followed in the Acts of the Apostles, and his holy boldness is observed, it should be remembered that the same Master who predicted that he would deny Him, had also prophesied that he would die for Him. Knowing that that awaited him somewhere in the future, Peter never turned back again. Surely this was a marvelous triumph of grace! 2. Peter and John. Peter was obviously interested in John's future as well as his own, but the Master gently told him to mind his own business, and intimated that some high privilege was also in store for him. His words were misunderstood, and it was reported that that disciple should not die. Obviously the disciples believed that some would still be alive when the Lord should come, but they misunderstood His reference to His Coming. That He will come again there is no doubt; but this was a special and peculiar coming, a coming in revelation to make known things which should shortly come to pass. Doubtless it was fulfilled on the Isle that is called Patmos, where John was banished for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus. 3. The authorship of this Gospel is established by the concluding verses. It was that same John who wrote these things, and he tells us that, a record of all that Jesus did would fill the world itself with books.