

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

CAN ONE BE SURE HE HAS ETERNAL SALVATION?

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 6th, 1927
 (Stenographically reported.)

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
 "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."—John 10: 27-29.

Let us bow in prayer:



Rejoice, O Lord, in the assurance that we are in Thy presence, and that even now the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, bearing witness with our spirits, in the case of many of us, that we are born of God. For this we humbly and gratefully bless Thy holy name. And now for the few moments in which we turn to Thy Word, we pray that all other voices may be silenced, and that we may hear the Word of the good Shepherd Himself. We have already read from Thy Book that Thy sheep hear Thy voice. O, Shepherd of the sheep, we pray Thee to call Thy lost sheep back to Thyself to-night! May souls that are dead in trespasses and in sins hear the voice of God and live; and may Thine own people, in the assurance of Thy favour, and in the security of Thine electing love, be led to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory". And as we come to Thy table, and break the bread, and drink the wine, may it speak to us afresh of Him Whose body was broken for us, and enable us this evening hour veritably to feed upon Christ. Give us a little touch of heaven in Thy presence this evening:

"We stand upon His merit,
 We know no other stand,
 Not e'en where glory dwelleth
 In Immanuel's land."

Hear us and let Thy mercy quicken and sustain us all, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

I have been wondering to-day if there would not be many present this evening who would be able in some measure to enter into a pastor's experience.

You who are housewives, and who have the cares of a family, sometimes rather weary of what seems to be the drudgery of getting meals, of feeding the family. Sometimes you wish you could put away your apron, that you could get away from the dreary round of the daily task, and do some great thing; and yet your better judgment prevails, and you say, "No, my first duty is to my family, I must see that they are cared for, and that they are properly fed." I suppose preachers are sometimes tempted to attempt some great thing; it is very interesting to entertain a great company of people, and to have them say, "We had a most pleasant evening to-night". Though perhaps, after such entertainment if you met them Monday morning and inquired, "Did you get anything to eat last night? Was your soul fed? Did you receive any word of instruction from the Lord? Are you a stronger and better Christian to-day, Monday, for what you heard on Sunday?" If the answer to such questions be in the negative, the preacher has sadly failed in his duty.

Therefore I think it is very necessary for the pastor to go into the kitchen. to prepare a homely meal, especially where there are many children,—I mean those who are but young in Christ, for they need confirming after the apostolic manner; they need to be still further established in the truth of the gospel. This evening I shall essay that somewhat prosy, commonplace, task of putting a little bread and butter on the table so that everyone may get something to eat at least. And I shall not be at all offended if you do what I very often do when I leave a restaurant or hotel dining-room, scarcely give the chef a thought. If only your soul is fed I shall be content.

Can we be sure we have eternal life? Must we go on "hoping" that we may be saved? Must there be that doubtful note in our testimony? May we only hope we may see "the end of a praying life"? Or is it possible for us, by God's infinite grace, to be as sure of salvation as though we were safely enclosed within the jasper walls? I believe it is. I give it as my testimony, it is the marvel of marvels, it is the thing for which I have no explanation! If I lived for millenniums I could never tell you why I should have been saved; but I give it as my testimony that this poor sinner is eternally safe. ("Amen.") He is more sure of it than he is of anything else in life. There is nothing we profess to know, there is no element in the sum total of our knowledge, that is so firmly and unshakably based as that which assures a reborn man that he belongs to God.

I shall take two verses,—although the first of the three verses tempted me very much, for there the good Shepherd speaks of "my sheep". I should like to identify the sheep, and I should like to try to tell you what the word of the Lord says about those who are His sheep, and why He knows they are His sheep, and that they are His sheep even before they know that He is their Shepherd. But His "sheep" hear His voice; and the proof of their being His sheep is that they hear His voice; and follow Him, and He knows them all. But especially for a few moments we shall meditate upon the two verses I have announced as the text.

How may we know we are saved? First of all, BECAUSE SALVATION IS A GIFT WHICH IS RECEIVED WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE. "I give," said the Lord, "I give unto them eternal life", and that which He gives He will not withdraw; "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Our gracious God does not change His mind and withdraw from our possession that which He once bestowed upon us. He gives us salvation, and forasmuch as it is received as a gift, and absolutely without merit on our part, we can never be less worthy than we were when we received the gift. If salvation is bestowed upon us as an act of sovereign grace because God wills to do so of His infinite mercy, because for reasons known only to Himself, and residing within Himself, He has been pleased to set His heart's love upon us, when He gives us salvation, He gives it to us forever.

But I must this evening pass that by, only because I have not time to dwell upon it, to assure you that *the gift which He bestows is eternal life*, which does not mean merely that life is of endless duration, not that only, it is more than an endless life. There is a passage in the Scripture in which that word "endless" occurs in our Authorized Version, and it is applied to the life of the Lord Jesus. It says that He, our High Priest, was "made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life". The word really is, the power of an indissoluble life, a life that cannot be dis-

solved, a life that has eternity in it. He said of His life, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father". The life that was in Jesus Christ was not the life of mortal man, for though He was born of a woman, He was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and the very life of God was in Him. Therefore there was no power on earth, or in heaven that could terminate that life; He was proof against all the powers of darkness, being Himself the very fountain of life. And it is of His own life He gives us when He gives us eternal life. The adjective defines not the quantity so much as the quality, the life which we receive when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is in its very nature and essence eternal, it is not subject to death, it is a part of God; we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Our exalted Head is in heaven, though we the members of His body are upon earth. There is exactly the same kind of life in my little finger as there is in my head. And there is the same kind of life in the humblest member of the body of Jesus Christ as there is in Jesus Christ Himself; it is eternal life. And that is what He gives us. He does not give us life to experiment with, He does not put us on probation. If salvation depended upon our holding on to God, upon our worthiness, or our ability to continue, then we might well be put on probation, not for six months, as was customary among the Methodists, but for six years, and then that should be multiplied by ten, and that multiplied by a hundred! Indeed we should be on probation for ever, if it depended upon us. But salvation is not of works, it is of grace, freely bestowed as a sovereign act of God; and He puts within us His Spirit, His own life which is itself eternal.

II.

OBSERVE HOW HE PILES UP ASSURANCES HERE, HOW HE LAYS FOUNDATION UPON FOUNDATION FOR OUR FAITH. *Such life can never be lost:* "They shall never perish". The first clause ought to be enough, "I give unto them eternal life". But because He knows how natural it is for us to doubt, He knows so well the weakness of the flesh, He leaves us without excuse for questioning our standing in Him. And, therefore, He adds this great word, "And they shall never perish." Now what do you suppose was in His mind? He has been speaking about the Shepherd and the sheep, and He says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and feeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." The hireling does not own the sheep, and therefore will not risk his own life with the wolves for the sheep's salvation. But the good Shepherd saith, "They are mine, they are My sheep, I am no hireling, and I will see to it that My sheep shall never perish." I like to go back to that story in the Old Testament of David's shepherd days, when, you will remember, he said to Saul, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep"—Oh, what a volume there was in that simple sentence! He did not say, "I tried to keep them, I attempted it, I once tried to be a shepherd."—"What competency, what ability have you", said Saul, "to meet the giant?" And David replied in effect, "I will tell you, my lord, O king, thy servant kept his father's sheep. I did not lose any of them, I kept every one of them." The king might have enquired, "Was that a difficult task? How did the mere keeping of sheep qualify you to do battle with a giant?" To which David could have answered: "There came a lion, but I was not a hireling; he took a lamb out of the flock, but I went after him, and I delivered the lamb out of his mouth, I slew the lion, but I saved the lamb; and then there came a bear, and he took a lamb out of the flock, and I went after him, and I delivered the lamb out of the paw of the bear, that is my qualification. Of all that my father gave me I lost nothing, I kept my sheep. Now by God's grace I will deliver Israel from this Philistine too."

Oh, yes, there are lions and bears. "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour". And let me assure you, as the sheep of the good Shepherd, if it were not that the good Shepherd is always on the alert you would be eaten up before tomorrow morning. You would have no chance at all against the adversary. But, blessed be God, this good Shepherd saith, "They shall never perish". He stands between us and the enemy of our souls. The lion and the bear are not our only enemies, there is a perilous path round about by the precipice!—Oh, I am deeply concerned for

young people in a day like this. How can they walk through the entanglements of life and serve God? They cannot do it without the Shepherd's help. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." And this good Shepherd will be with you, young people; He really will. He will go with you to the office, to the shop, to the place where you live, and in all the relationships of life He gives you His promise that if you are among His sheep you shall never perish. Well now we might stop now. Don't you think that is enough? But there is still another word.

"Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Someone may say, "I thought being a Christian meant joining the church". But we could not be sure of salvation if salvation were in the church, for then you might be in for a while, and then be out again. I will tell you in what salvation consists: it is being in the hand of Jesus Christ! "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "Oh," says one, "that may be true enough, that no man shall pluck one of His sheep out of His hand: but there are other powers that are superhuman: may not a sheep perish at their hands?" But the text does not say "no man". The word "man" is supplied, it is in italics. The text has a much wider scope than that, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand". Do you know that He has ascended "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under—oh, hear it!—UNDER HIS FEET." Hell itself is under the feet of Christ the Conqueror! And you are on His shoulders if you are a lamb of the flock. That is a safe place to be! Salvation consists in a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. I beg of you, trust to nothing else, especially you members of Jarvis Street. Do not say, "I am a member of Jarvis Street, and therefore I am safe". It is possible to go to hell from Jarvis Street. There is a path to the pit from every place of privilege. But there is no way to the pit from the hand of Jesus Christ ("Amen"). Make sure that you are held in the saving grip of the sovereign Son of God. What about His Hand? Oh, I could talk to you for a week on that. What if I were to begin on a passage like this: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighted the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing". Why, you poor sin-sick soul, when you go across the sea you are still in His hand, and the whole ship too. "Neither shall any man", nor devil, "pluck them out of my hand."

Now we may stop? No, I am going to give you something more than that. "My father gave Me these sheep, and all My sheep are my Father's gift to Me." You remember what He said in His high priestly prayer, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." He never was in the hand of Christ, but all who were His Father's sheep He safely kept. How highly we prize gifts that are bestowed upon us by our loved ones. A gift has an added value because of the giver, and that is what our Lord Jesus means when He says, "My Father gave them to me."

"His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep;
All that His heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep."

And is that all? No, no, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. Greater than all our sins, greater than all our weaknesses, greater than all our temptations, than all our tempters, greater than all our difficulties, greater than anything that could afflict the soul in time or eternity, greater than all our enemies, greater than all the forces of earth, and of hell combined! That is the challenge to them, "All my Father gave me are my sheep, and He is greater than all." This must have been in the mind of the apostle Paul when he said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or pain, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,

nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Surely we have got to the end now, have we not? No; not quite: "And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." The Son in covenant relationship with the Father! We have the communion service following, and I must hasten to a conclusion. I wanted to say a word that would lead you to rejoice in Christ, to make you sure of salvation, and I do not know how I could sum it all up better than in a story I once heard of a coloured man down in the south land, who was continually shouting, "hallelujah", praising the Lord, and telling people everywhere of the joy of his salvation. Someone once asked him what made him so happy, and he said it was his assurance that he was saved, and so they pressed him for a reason for his confidence. "How do you know you are saved?" they asked. And he quoted many passages of Scripture. "But," said they, "what if the Lord should let you slip? What if you should fail in some particular?" "Oh," he said, "that is not possible." And pressed at last he said, "See here, sir, it is just like this—" and he quoted this text: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." "So," he said, "You see, sir, I am held in the hand of Jesus, the good Shepherd, and He is held in the hand of the Father, and I am kept by the power of God, and," he said "the Devil"—this is the way he put it,—"the Devil would have to bust the Godhead before he could get at me!" And that is true. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have eternally covenanted to save such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I bring you this evening the word of God who cannot lie. Do you wonder that we contend for the Word of God? Suppose this Scripture could fail? Oh, supposing this Book were not the Word of God, what then? Well none of us could be sure of anything. But because it is the Word of God we have the promise of God Who cannot lie that we are as safe to-night as we shall be when we pass within the gates of pearl. That is a salvation worth having. How many of you have received it? If there are some here to-night who have not received it, will you receive it as we sing our closing hymn. No, do not wait even for that! Will you receive Christ now? Will you yield to Him, and say, "I accept the gift of eternal life, and I will rest upon God's sure promise that I am saved forever". Then you can go out from this service with a great hallelujah in your heart. Let us pray.

Help us, Lord, those of us who are Thine, to rejoice more than ever in our security in Christ. And we pray that any who are not Thine may this evening, even as we are bowed in Thy presence, receive the gift of eternal life. O, Spirit of God, seal the testimony of Thy word to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

MEMORY HYMN NO. 3.

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou light of
men;
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-Head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to
fill.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;
Thou savest those that on Thee call;
To them that seek Thee Thou art good,
To them that find Thee, All in all!

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee
fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay,
Make all our moments calm and
bright,
Chase the dark night of sin away,
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light.

Bernard of Clairvaux, trans., Ray Palmer.

Editorial

ANTI-EVOLUTION LAWS.

In many states in the United States, efforts are being made looking to the enactment of laws which will prohibit the teaching of evolution in tax-supported schools. *The Literary Digest* for February 19th, in an article entitled, "Campaigning For Genesis", says, "A flood of anti-evolution legislation is predicted for this year; and it quotes a writer in the Baltimore *Evening Sun* as saying the Fundamentalists, "their appetites whetted by victories in Tennessee and Mississippi, are thirsting for more blood. They seem determined to save the Republic from the devil."

The men whom this article holds chiefly responsible are: Dr. W. B. Riley, Dr. John Roach Straton, and Dr. J. Frank Norris. The article says, "Led by such men as the Rev. John Roach Straton, and the Rev. J. Frank Norris, the Fundamentalists are bellowing for Genesis in all parts of the Republic."

What a crime! What an offence against good taste! What an affront to "education" in general, and to "science" in particular, to be "bellowing for Genesis"!

But Dr. W. B. Riley seems to be the chief offender. Anti-evolutionism is described as "Rileyism". Dr. Riley is referred to as quoting this from one text-book:

"How I hate the man who talks about the 'Brute' creation with an ugly emphasis on the word 'brute'! As for me, I am proud of my close kinship with other animals. I take a jealous pride in my Simian (monkey) ancestry. I like to think that I was once a magnificent hairy fellow living in the trees, and that my frame came down through Geological ages of time via Sea Jelly, and Worms, and Amphioxus, and Fish, Dinosaurs, and Apes—who would exchange these for the pallid couple in the garden of Eden?"

And this is "science"! This is "education"! And this is to be preferred to "bellowing for Genesis"! What do parents think of these things? Imagine young lads with clear eyes, and high foreheads, the stamp of potential, noble, manhood on their countenances; and young girls, like flowers from a beautiful garden, made to drink in and make visible all the beautifying powers of heavenly grace—imagine their being taught to say this: "How I hate the man who talks about the 'Brute' creation with an ugly emphasis on the word 'brute'! As for me I am proud of my close kinship with other animals. I take a jealous pride in my Simian (monkey) ancestry."

What Christian can read such stuff without remembering that it is written, "To be carnally minded is death"?

Picture again our boys and girls being fed with such pabulum as this: "I like to think that I was once a magnificent hairy fellow living in the trees, and that my frame came down through Geological ages of time via Sea Jelly, and Worms, and Amphioxus, and Fish, Dinosaurs, and Apes—who would exchange these for the pallid couple in the garden of Eden?"

If the youth of our day are taught to dwell lovingly and longingly upon the glories of their alleged animal ancestry, need we be surprised if we meet the stench of a moral sewer when we read the record of the outworking of this philosophy in the daily papers, and in the parcels of printed putrefaction called "magazines"?

Set beside this the noble record of the origin of man in Genesis: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

What of Fighting Evolution by Law?

Some will object to the use of "carnal" weapons in the defense of the faith, and will say that we ought not to attempt to compel people to become religious by law. To this we agree. But as we are opposed to any law designed to make men religious, so we are opposed to any system having the

sanction of law, and compulsorily supported by public money, which makes people irreligious. We do not believe that any religion should be "by law established". We do not believe the children of Jews, atheists, Mohammedans, or modernists, should be compelled to study the Bible as a text-book in the public schools. We do not believe in tolerating the slightest infringement of the conscience of the individual in religious matters. The doctrine of the separation of church and state is based upon the individual's inalienable right to absolute liberty of soul.

We would not oppose the teaching of evolution by legal process on the ground that it is anti-Christian *per se*; for that would implicitly involve the legal sanction of Christianity—to which Jews and others might have conscientious objection. It seems to us that anti-evolution laws ought to be framed without reference to the Bible or to Christianity.

Evolution is not a science, only the shallowest thinker, or the blindest and most prejudiced partisan would so denominate it. Evolution is a religious philosophy, and it goes so far as to offer us a philosophy of religion. Evolution is a doctrine of origins, and therefore it is equally and inevitably a doctrine of destinies. This being so, Dr. Mullins to the contrary notwithstanding, it cannot avoid trespassing upon the province of religion—it is, in fact, itself a religion. It not only presumes to account for the whole visible created order, but it undertakes to account for the human soul, its religious instincts, the Christian Scriptures, and for God Himself.

To permit the teaching of evolution in tax-supported schools is to use the powers of the state to teach religion—that it is a religion that is utterly anti-Christian is not our argument in this connection;—as a Baptist, believing in soul liberty, we would oppose with equal heartiness the teaching in the public schools of doctrines which Baptists distinctively hold. It is because evolution is not in any true sense a science, but merely a theory of existence that is religious at its base, we believe the state should have no part in its propagation. And this for the reason that such procedure necessarily compels people to pay taxes for the teaching of a religious philosophy against which the consciences of many revolt.

The proof of this contention may be found in a further quotation by Dr. Riley from a book on "Criminology";

"Nothing in human culture is more archaic than religion, because it professes to teach absolute truth, and to inculcate immutable rules of conduct; consequently religion has always been a powerful foe for repressive legislation, and therefore a prolific cause of evolutive criminality." Again from the same source: 'Disrespectful mention of God, Jesus, and other alleged supernatural beings is prohibited in various parts of this country, in spite of the fact that these beings are reputed to be strong enough to defend and avenge themselves. In this fashion is violated the fundamental and inalienable human right of free speech, and the courts are furnished the power to interfere, if they so desire, with the spread of liberal ideas and the refutation of archaic beliefs.'

"Replying that laws against the teaching of the theory of evolution do not interfere with freedom of conscience and belief, Dr. Riley argues: 'Since it is not permissible to teach the Bible in our public schools, it is only consistent that we should not teach theories directly opposed to the Bible.'"

THE EMPTY CRIB.

HAVE YOU DISCOVERED WHAT IT IS THAT DEFILES AND CONTAMINATES YOUR SOUL?

By F. W. Boreham, Pastor, Armadale Baptist Church, Australia.

It was on the lawn in front of the Silverstream Manse that I lost my faith in the unimpeachable excellence of cleanliness. Cleanliness is a good thing; but, like most good things, it can be overdone.

We were lounging under the shade of a giant elm—Sidwell, Laird, John Broadbanks and I. We had survived without much trouble, the tedium of the

committee meeting, for, on this occasion, the dreariness of resolutions and amendments had been tempered to us by the idyllic conditions under which we met. To keep in line with tradition, the meeting should have been held in a dingy classroom in the city; but John Broadbanks, who had a genius for making drudgery delightful, upset the usual procedure.

"There are only four of us on the committee", he wrote to the secretary. "Why should we all go to town to bore each other to death in a stuffy old-classroom? Come out to Silverstream; we can have the meeting on the lawn; you can bring your pipes; and we'll have some afternoon tea to keep us from falling asleep over the business." It was so arranged. We quickly reached the end of the agenda, and John slipped off to arrange for the afternoon tea. On his return to the group, he was attended by little Don. Don had an exercise book in his hand and wanted his father to set him a copy. Taking his fountain pen from his vest-pocket, John wrote across the top of the page, in his best copper-plate, the words: *Cleanliness is next to godliness*. And Don, advised by his mother to get such irksome tasks out of the way as quickly as possible, scampered off to copy it at once.

"That's wholesome doctrine for a growing boy!" remarked Laird, smiling, as he watched Don's retreating form. "Oh, yes," laughed John, "it's a proverb; and, somehow, proverbs seem made to be inscribed on the pages of copy-books. But, like most proverbs, it's more epigrammatic than true. It's good as far as it goes; but the trouble is, it doesn't go far. The Bible itself warns us, you know, against making a fetish of cleanliness. But, I say!" he exclaimed, with sudden enthusiasm, "if you fellows have not yet chosen your texts for Sunday, I can recommend that one: *Where no oven are the crib is clean*. That's the other side of the proverb that I wrote in Don's copy-book. And it's a very important side, too!"

But at that moment he was interrupted by the arrival of his wife with the afternoon tea. "Sermonising again!" exclaimed Lilian, turning playfully upon him. "Do you think these ministers want you to talk texts to them all the afternoon?" "Indeed, it was a very good text that I was giving them", replied John, in self-defense. "It was the text that I often quote to you, my lady, when you scold me about the untidiness of my study. As I often impress upon you", he said, taking the cups from her tray in order to hand them to us, "it would be very easy to keep the study tidy if I never went into it. *Where no oven are the crib is clean*. They're all going to preach on that next Sunday: I can see the light of an inspiration coming into Sidwell's face. They'll have a great sermon on *The Empty Crib* at Balchutha on Sunday; you mark my words!"

The subject passed with the tinkle of the tea-cups; and I thought no more about it for many a long day.

II.

That committee-meeting on the Silverstream lawn took place more than twenty years ago; but a couple of experiences that fell to my lot on Tuesday brought it back with singular vividness to my memory. In the afternoon I was visiting at the home of Tom and Elsie Reed. Tom and Elsie are young people to whom I am very much attached. I married them some years ago; they are devoted members of the church; and they have three bonnie little children. Elsie's mother lives with them. Mrs. Brown is very old and infirm; and it was to her, primarily, that my visit was directed. She is too feeble to come to church, and I like to look in when it is at all possible. Whilst I was chatting with her, Jack, the eldest of her grandchildren, came in from school and, seeing me, came and stood beside the old lady's chair. He listened for a moment to our conversation and then started a new theme on his own account. "Oh, Granny", he cried, "you'd get into dreadful trouble if you came to school. Teacher says she's going to examine all our hands every morning; and, unless they're as white as white can be, we shall be kept in. Just look at yours!" This brought Elsie to the rescue.

"Ah, but Jack", reasoned his mother, "teacher was only speaking of little boys and girls who have never done any hard work. It's quite right for you and Lena and Daisy to have white hands. But when you get older you'll understand that white hands are not the only nice ones." She perched herself on the arm of her mother's chair and took one of the wrinkled hands in hers. "Granny's hand", she said, stroking it, "is stained and soiled through working

hard all her life for me and for all your aunts and uncles. These hands can never be white now, but *we* think they're lovely."

Jack sauntered off to think about it; and I, too, shortly afterwards took my departure. It was raining in torrents, but, all the way home, my mind was back at Silverstream. I thought of John's playful remarks about his study. "It would be easy to keep the study tidy if I never went into it!" I thought of Elsie's remarks about her mother's hands. "It would be easy to keep your hands white if you never did any work!" And then there came flashing into my mind the text on which John had urged us to preach: *Where no oxen are the crib is clean*. It is strange that I have been so long in taking his advice.

The weather got worse rather than better. It was a dreadful night, with a wind that shook the house, and a rain that lashed wildly at the windows. I was glad that I had no engagements. After tea I sought the society of cosy slippers, a roaring fire, a luxurious armchair, and a delightful book. The book was the *Reminiscences of Sir Henry Hawkins*. Two pictures soon impressed themselves on my imagination. I saw Sir Henry Hawkins at the climax of his career, the most popular and most powerful advocate of his time. He is waited upon by an army of clerks: he moves amidst a whirl of papers: he is amassing an enormous fortune. His success is phenomenal. But it was not always like this. He himself describes the inauguration of his career. He was entered at the Middle Temple on April 16, 1839. He took, as his office, a little room at 3 Elm Court; it was approached by five flights of stairs. From the window he could see nothing but a forest of chimney pots, and, having nothing else to do, he spent a good deal of his time surveying them.

"The room", he says, "was cheap and lonely, dull and miserable—a melancholy abode, beyond the world and its companionship. Had I been of a despairing disposition, I might have gone mad, for hope surely never came to a fifth floor. But there I sat, day by day, week by week, and month by month, waiting for the knock that never came, hoping for the business that might never come." Hundreds of times a day he listened feverishly to the steps on the stairs below. Most of them only came up one flight, a fair number came up two: some even climbed the third: on rare occasions some bold adventurer ascended with asthmatical energy the fourth; but the *fifth!* "The fifth landing was too remote for the postman, for I never got a letter; and no squirrel watching from the topmost bough of the tallest pine could be more lonely than I!"

Look around the rooms in 1859! There are piles of papers everywhere: messengers rush in and out: the waiting-room is thronged with clients and witnesses: attorneys pass to and fro: clerks fly hither and thither: everything seems in a whirl and a flurry!

Go back twenty years and glance once more at that little upstairs chamber at Elm Court! There is a virgin sheet of blotting-paper on the desk: the pigeon-holes are empty: the pen-nibs glitter in their immaculate cleanliness: the stationery is arranged in faultless regularity: the law-books are in perfect sequence and condition on the shelves.

Under the genial influence of my fire, I allowed the book to sink to my lap: I closed my eyes: I surveyed these two pictures side by side. The cleanliness of 1839! The confusion of 1859! And then—my comfortable conditions asserting themselves more unmistakably—my mind wandered. It wandered back to the events of my afternoon call: it journeyed on across the years to the committee meeting on the lawn at Silverstream: it took hold once more of the text that John quoted that day with such effect. *Where no oxen are the crib is clean*. The unused study is easily kept tidy. The hands that are never soiled by domestic ministries can easily be preserved in milky whiteness. The upstairs office to which no client ever comes can easily be kept free from furry and confusion. The stall into which no cattle are ever led is easily kept from litter and defilement.

III.

Cleanliness is next to godliness, says the proverb that John Broadbanks inscribed so boldly in his boy's copy-book. It sometimes is. And sometimes, on the contrary, it is as far from godliness as pole is from pole. Cleanliness is often a blessing; but it is often a curse. In the fourth chapter of his terrible prophecy, Amos tells of the horrors that the Most High has sent upon His reprobate people in hope of leading them to repentance. "I have sent unto you war and pestilence and famine, yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the

Lord. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities and want of bread in all your houses, yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord."

Cleanness of teeth! The cleanness that is not a blessing, but a curse, and a curse most terrible! I know a man whose ledger is spotlessly clean: his business is a failure! I know a woman whose nursery is hushed and neat: her child is dead! I know a carpenter on whose workshop floor there is no litter of shavings: he has taken to drink, and never goes near his bench! In each case it is because there are no oxen that the crib is clean. The cleanness is the cleanness of stagnation; the cleanness of inactivity; the cleanness of death.

Like everything else, cleanness may be purchased at too high a price. The grocer can not afford the clean ledger: the barrister can not afford a tidy office: the farmer can not afford the clean but empty stall. Herein lies the weakness of monasticism. I may prevent the dust and defilement of the world from settling on my soul by imprisoning myself in a cloister. But, separated from the world, I can no longer serve the world. I have stultified and disqualified myself. I have rendered it impossible for me to do the work that I was sent into the world to do. It is better for me to enter into the hurly-burly and to do my work, even though my soul gets somewhat dusty in the doing of it. By entering a convent a woman may render indelible the virgin sweetness of her chastity. But it is the hand that rocks the cradle that rules the world. There hangs before me as I write a picture entitled, *More Heavens Than One*. I fell in love with it as it stood in a picture-dealer's window many years ago, and bore it home with singular exultation. It represents a nun passing the open door of a workman's cottage. The wife—a young woman of simple beauty and homely charm—has prepared the evening meal in readiness for her husband's arrival. As she awaits his coming she plays with a curly-headed little toddler perched on the edge of the table, whilst a baby slumbers serenely in the cradle at her feet. Her knitting is lying close at hand, and the evidences of her womanly touch are everywhere. The nun, glancing in at the door, feels that her cloistral life has saved her from an infinity of toil and toil; but has she paid too high a price for that immunity? That is the question skilfully expressed in her countenance. Has she bought the cleanness of the stall by sacrificing the oxen? There are, she feels, more heavens than one, and she is by no means sure that *her* heaven is the heavenliest.

IV.

The empty crib saves the farmer a lot of trouble; but, on the whole, it would be better for him if it were occupied by oxen and needed constant cleansing and attention. He has a clean crib, it is true; but, on the other hand, he has no oxen with which to plough, and his farm must go to rack and ruin. The same principle holds true of the easy conscience and the complacent soul. *Where no oxen are the crib is clean*, and, where no illumination is, the conscience is clean also. An uninstructed conscience may be coaxed into approving of any enormity. Every crime in the calendar has at some time or other been committed by a man whose conscience applauded the deed.

The atmosphere of the dining-room looks perfectly free of dust until a shaft of light suddenly shines across it, and then, in that luminous line, a million specks are seen to be dancing. It is a parable. When there was no divine work going forward in the heart of Job, he talked all day long of his integrity and charity; but, when a spiritual illumination broke upon him, he abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. Before Paul caught the vision on the road to Damascus, his soul was like an empty crib. Nothing was going on there. And, as a consequence, he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, proud and perfectly content. But when there began in his soul that wondrous work that transfigured him and, through him, shook the world, he cried out of the bitterness of his spirit, that of sinners he was chief.

Let every minister be thankful that his study needs tidying; let every barrister be thankful for the bustle and confusion of his office; let every carpenter be thankful for the heap of shavings on the floor; let every mother be thankful for the tumult in the nursery; let every farmer be thankful for the crib that needs cleaning out! It shows that there is something doing. In exactly the same way, let every man be thankful when his conscience cries out against him: the evil day on which conscience resolves to speak no more.

And, above all, let every man be thankful at having discovered the defilement and contamination of his own soul. As with the defilement in the farmer's stall, it is a sign of life. We have all heard of the visitor who, inspecting a little country cemetery, pitied the ill-health of the grave-digger. "You've a terrible cough!" he said. "Umph", retorted the old man; "but there's plenty here"—pointing to the tombs—"would be very glad o' my cough!" That is so. The cough is a sign of life; but, for all that, the cough must be cured or it will drag the old man down to his grave. The sight of the dirty crib is a healthy sight, but it is at the same time a call for cleansing. The torments of an aroused conscience, and the recognition of inward pollution, are symptoms of spiritual vitality for which a wise man will give thanks on bended knees; but they are useless, and worse than useless, unless they drive him, in his desperation, to the Fountain opened for all sin and all uncleanness.

From *The Christian Index*, of December 30th, 1926.

THAT BLESSED HOPE

A message delivered at Old Harbour, Jamaica, B.W.I., on January 8th, 1927
By the Rev. T. I. Stockley

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."—Titus 2:13.

We are to speak of the Christian hope. How the word hope shines out in the pages of the New Testament! What is it? Let us remember at once that the Christian hope is no vague and uncertain wish. It is rather a well-grounded expectation of certain good. There is no doubt about its realization.

We will consider first of all:

The Object of our Hope. The object is presented to us with many different aspects. Notice some of them. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. (See I Tim. 1:1), the "Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." The hope of the Christian is not a vague something but a blessed *Some-One*. Paul, the aged, the brilliant, the wonderful servant of his Lord, was drawing towards the close of his earthly career. The great change was not very far away, and in looking forward he sees the Lord Jesus. This ever-glorious Person was everything to Paul. He was everything for salvation, everything for life, everything for power. Now He is all his hope. He is the Author of the blessed hope, its Revealer, its foundation, and its very substance. It was not events merely, for which Paul looked, but the Person who was his All. Since that wonderful experience on the Damascus road, when he was smitten to the ground by the glory of the face of Jesus our Lord, Paul could see no glory compared with that Blessed One. He was Paul's "I am" for the present, and his one hope for the future. Are we ever looking for Him?

It is the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus. (See Titus 2:13.) Paul was looking for the epiphaneia of Jesus, the becoming visible. This is John's favourite word. How he loves to speak of the manifestation of our Lord! So Paul has this ever in view. The Sun is there behind the horizon; but the Christian looks for Him to burst forth, to flood the earth with His glory. And this is not a vain hope. Our Lord told His disciples, "If I go . . . I will come again." He has gone, we certainly know; as certainly therefore we know that He will come again. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." How beautiful those words are, and how positive and clear! The early church lived in the light of this bright hope. Dr. Denney says that, "that attitude of expectation is the bloom, as it were, of the Christian character. Without it there is something lacking: the Christian who does not look upward and onward wants one mark of perfection". But he makes the shocking statement that "the disciples of Christ have practically ceased to think of the second advent". Paul could not cease to think of our Lord's return. The Great High Priest has passed within the veil to present His own blood for sinful men, and now it is our privilege to wait to see Him come forth again. May He not tarry long!

It is the resurrection of the holy dead (See Rom. 8:23, 24). The redemp-

tion of our body is another aspect of the Christian hope. This means the resurrection of the holy dead as well as the transformation of the holy living. We are saved with a view to this hope, says Paul. And the resurrection of the holy dead is the first great happening when Jesus comes. So our holy dead are not gone for ever. We shall meet them again, if we too are the Lord's; and we shall meet them in such glorious conditions, in a body like our Lord's, for He will transform this body of our humiliation, and fashion it like unto the body of His glory. Beautiful! Think of what He is today. Did Stephen get a glimpse of Him as He is? Did Paul behold something of His glory? And did John in Patmos see Him as He is? When He returns, all of us who love Him will see Him; and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. So the redemption of the body is one aspect of the Christian hope, and certainly a very lovely aspect too.

It is the hope of salvation (See I Thess. 5:8). The word salvation has a threefold meaning as it applies to the believer. There is a glorious sense in which we are already saved. Every believer is saved from the past by the precious blood of Christ. Paul says to the Ephesians, "By grace ye are saved." It is an accomplished fact. Hell's door is shut to such: they are saved. Then the believer is also *being saved*, or as Paul puts it in Romans 5:10, we are being kept safe in His, our Lord's, life. Now, and every day, we are being saved. The risen Lord is carrying on the work without a break. He waters the life, "every moment, lest any hurt it. He keeps it night and day." But we also hope for salvation—that is the full and final deliverance of the whole person, spirit, soul, and body—from all the pollution and power and presence of sin. Writing to the Romans, Paul says, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". What a salvation that will be! Do we not look forward eagerly for it, when we shall be completely and forever saved from all the effects of sin, into the unutterable fullness of redemption?

It is the hope of eternal life (See Titus 3:7). Here again is something we have now, "Verily, verily, I say unto you he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life." He has it now. Yes, trusting souls have eternal life now; we have it in germ, but we are hoping for the fullness. We have the bulb, and we are looking for the beautiful flower; we have the dawn, the first gleams of the coming glorious day; we have the sub-arctic experience, and are looking for the full tropical splendour. The hope for eternal life is wonderful, the life of eternity in its richest, and most perfect form.

It is the hope of a reward. (See 1 Thess. 2:19, 20.) The apostle looked forward to a reward, and in one aspect of it he says that the sanctified and glorified souls for whom he laboured would be his reward. Was not Paul following in the footsteps of his Lord, "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross despising the shame"? (Salvation is a pure gift; but faithful service will be rewarded. Our Lord has promised the reward, and Paul strove for it, and looked for it: "I so run that I may obtain". How eager Paul was not to lose the reward, nor to be disqualified! 1 Cor. 9:24-27. He taught the believers, too, so to build that their work should not be consumed in the great day of testing. (1 Cor. 3.) But for faithful toilers the reward is sure. We read of a crown of life for the faithful witness. (Rev. 2:10; the crown of righteousness for the faithful servant, 2 Tim. 4:8; and the crown of glory for the faithful shepherd of the flock, 1 Pet. 5:4. What an inspiration for service is this hope of reward!

It is the hope of glory, (See Col. 1:27), "Christ in you the hope of glory." Oh, what is "glory"? Surely glory belongs to God alone. And yet the Lord is not content to give us less than glory. And glory is honour, praise; glory is lustre, brightness, dazzling light; glory is divine effulgence and radiant beauty, dignity, splendour; glory is regal majesty, pomp, magnificence; glory is excellence, and perfection. And we are looking forward to assured glory; we are called to it; it is linked without justification, for "whom He justified them he also glorified". We are being prepared for it as vessels unto honour: our great Leader is bringing many sons unto glory. How wonderful glory will be! Grace is very sweet, but the Lord will give not grace only, but glory too. We shall have the glory of a perfected character; the glory of complete victory over every evil; the glory of divine approval; the glory of dwelling with God, of reflecting the beauty of God, and of the enjoyment of God Himself for ever.

But how can we poor saved sinners tell what glory is? However, it will soon be ours: our Lord has designed that it should. Glory to His Name!

Once more, the blessed hope. It is the hope of being like our Lord. (See 1 John 3:2, 3). "We shall be like him for we shall him as he is." This is the crowning glory of the Christian hope, like Him Who is the altogether lovely One! Vision becomes assimilation. The indescribable beauty of our Lord will be transferred to us, and fixed upon us as we gaze upon Him. This is the great principle of the Christian's sanctification now. Beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. But when we see Him as He is we shall be fully like Him. With one stride we shall pass from sub-arctic regions to the tropics. "Under the direct rays of the Sun of Righteousness the buds of earth will become the flowers of Heaven." In spirit, soul, and body we shall be like our Lord. Oh, the wonder of it! And out of such poor material too! Oh, the heaven of it! "Vision begetting likeness, and likeness again giving clearness of vision, their endless inter-action securing endless progress toward the inexhaustible fulness of Christ." This is a dim glimpse of the Christian's hope.

Some features of our hope. It is a good hope. (See 2 Thess. 2:16). It may well be described as a "good hope". Could anything be better? Can we conceive of anything better than the hope upon which we have just been gazing? The past is good, for the precious blood of the Lamb has washed away our sins; the present is good, for we have as much of the divine life, and light, and love as we have capacity to receive and to enjoy; and the future is good indeed, for it is nothing less than the glory and blessedness which we have striven to behold. How encouraging it would be for us sometimes to sit down and dwell upon one hope, until involuntarily we exclaim, "How good, how good"!

It is a sure and well-grounded hope: "Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." As an anchor our hope is not cast into the shifting sands of time. Our moorings are sure, the anchor is fixed in eternal realities. His word of promise is the "impregnable rock", and, cast there, the anchor will hold. His word about the Lord's first coming was fulfilled in wonderful detail; and His word relating to His second coming will be fulfilled as surely. The hope, therefore, being well-grounded "maketh not ashamed". What a contrast this to the vain hopes of men about temporal things. How disappointing many of such hopes are! This will never disappoint: the Christian hope is a well-grounded hope.

It is a living hope: "Begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead". And so the Christian's hope stands out in contrast to the dead hope of the worldling. This hope has vitality. It is a real thing, a quickening, life-creating hope. The Word of God exults in living things, and the Christian's hope is marked with great vitality. It also produces overflowing life, and makes the spirit abound with energy. No man can live a dull, deathly life who keeps the Christian hope in view. The hope may well be "living" when it is connected with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The hope is living, it is pervaded with life, carrying with it in undying power the certainty of fulfilment. It has life, it gives life, and has life for its object. And it lives on in ever fuller joy till it reaches its consummation when Jesus comes.

It is an enduring hope. "Hope to the end", or hope perfectly, without a doubt, or dejection, with a full unwavering hope. This hope will live on through storms and conflicts till the revelation of Jesus Christ. The poor worldling may hope when all is well in temporal things, but when these break down he often sinks to utter despair. He cannot hope "to the end". But when the skies are blackest, and when the way is blocked before him, the Christian's hope abides; he can hope on and on till the day breaks, and all the shadows flee away—it is an enduring hope.

It is a blessed hope: "Looking for that blessed hope". This instance of the use of the word "blessed" is very exceptional. Persons are called "blessed", but of the fifty passages when the word occurs this is the only instance where the word is applied to an object that is itself the source of the blessing. The one blessed thing for the believer is the hope of our Lord's return. There is nothing sad or dreary about this: rather it is unspeakably blessed. And well it may be blessed, because it keeps the Person of the Lord Jesus ever before us.

How happy is he whose eye is ever upon his Lord, and who knows that any moment He may appear!

How beautiful are the features of the Christian's hope!

The influence of this hope. Here again we will let the Word of God speak to us.

The hope is purifying (See 1 John 3:3). "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure". If we *hope* to be like our Lord when He comes, we shall surely *seek* to be like Him now. And so John says he that hath this hope purifieth himself. He cannot live an unclean life. He must be pure. He purifieth himself; he does not criticise others; but sees that he himself is pure. The elements for his purification are provided. As the laver and the water made provision for the washing of the priests, so the Spirit in the Word is God's provision for our cleansing. And the Christian who lives with the hope of the Lord's return in view uses the provision and purifieth himself. Yes, he *purifieth* himself. He does it. Not he *may* do it, but it is certain he *does* it. And this is universally true, for John says "*everyone*" that hath this hope does it. There is no exception. You can not live in the prospect of the Lord's return at any hour, and live a life of iniquity. And the hope touches the whole range of the life with its purifying touch. "Even as he is pure". What a hope is this! How it pours its purifying light upon our path!

The hope is steady. (See Heb. 6:19). The anchor which has sure anchorage steadies the ship. So this glorious hope steadies the soul. When others are filled with fear, when some are thrown into panic, when many are overtaken with dismay, this hope keeps from alarm, and stills the soul with a beautiful peace. The world is a tossing, rolling sea, its waters are always troubled; but the Christian has the secret of a great and lovely calm, and the secret is "that blessed hope". This is how our Lord Himself puts it: "Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear". Then the Christian's hope enables him to look up and be elated for his "redemption draweth nigh."

The hope is protecting (See 1 Thess. 5:3). "And for a helmet the hope of salvation". The helmet gives protection to the head. And this blessed hope protects the head from being filled with the idle dreams of worldly happiness, whether of power or fame; it will defend us from being seduced by the world's pleasures; or allured by the world's honours. It is a great defence too from error and false doctrine. It is beautiful to see how those who live in the hope of our Lord's return are kept from the errors which are fashionable today. It is indeed a strong defence.

The hope gives patience (See 1 Thess. 1:3). The apostle speaks of the "patience of hope". This hope makes one content to wait. Bunyan tells us that in the house of the interpreter, the pilgrim saw two children called Passion and Patience. "Passion will have all now," says Bunyan, "that is to say in this world". "But Patience is willing to wait." The Pilgrim said, "Now I see that Patience has the best wisdom, and that on many accounts: first, because he stays for the best things; secondly, because he will have the glory of his when the other hath nothing but rags." Happy, indeed, is the soul who has the patience of hope. We can wait. This is our true attitude. We have "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven."

The hope gives joy (Rom. 5:2). "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It is a joy-giving hope. Preaching on one occasion at Basingstoke in England on the coming of our Lord, a friend remarked at the close of the service, "One cannot be a pessimist if he believes what you have been teaching us this afternoon." True! It fills one with the spirit of triumph. In view of His approaching return our Lord Himself tells us to "*be elated*"; and we may well be so. Oh, let the joy of the hope be real, and deep; and let it be manifest in our lives. Mrs. Henry Denning was once in conversation with an extremely grave clergyman who was known as one who waited for the Coming, when she turned abruptly and incredulously to him and said, "Are you *really* looking for the speedy coming of Christ?" "Certainly! Why do you doubt it?" was the grave reply. "Because you *look* much more as if you were expecting antichrist!" said Mrs. Denning. Oh, let the joy of the hope flood our lives, that all may see how real it is to us.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." This is the privilege of the true child of God; but others are without God, and therefore without hope in the world. What a contrast!

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Vol. II.

T. T. SHIELDS, Editor.

No. 1.

Lesson 13.

First Quarter.

March 27th, 1927.

PETER'S MINISTRY.

LESSON TEXT: Acts, chapter 9: 32 to 10: 22.

GOLDEN TEXT—"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common".
(Acts 10: 15).

I. THE HEALING OF ÆNEAS.

1. Peter passed throughout all quarters, and came to the saints at Lydda. The center of attraction in early times was not the lodge or the club, but the saints. We may wisely press the question, When going to a strange city, for what, or for whom, do you look?

2. But he found also a man who had been sick of the palsy for eight years. No matter where we go, if our eyes are open and our hearts filled with the love of God, we shall find abundant opportunity to minister to needy people in the Name of the Lord.

3. Peter declared, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," and the man was made whole. That was the mission of the Lord Jesus: He does not come to destroy, but to save; He comes to make men whole. A life without Christ is but a fragment of a life. We are complete in Him.

4. "All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord". A genuine miracle of grace will be more fruitful in meeting the masses than any other attraction which human ingenuity may devise. Let men be made whole, and the multitudes will consider it.

II. THE RAISING OF DORCAS.

1. Discipleship does not necessarily mean that a person must preach from a platform, or write a book, or give evidence of special learning: Dorcas worked with her hands, she "was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did". And many a great sermon has been preached by lives full of good works and almsdeeds.

2. Death is no respecter of persons, and comes to all, good and bad alike. The best preacher to have in such an hour is one who can tell you something about the resurrection—and on this subject Peter was an expert, and so they sent to Joppa for him.

3. No matter how great our trouble, or deep our sorrow, God's ears are always open to our cry. The first thing Peter did was to kneel down and pray; and, like his Master, he called the dead by name; and she came to life.

4. Mere handshaking is a poor substitute for the communication of positive spiritual power; but when one is busy extending his hand in the Name of the Lord, to perishing souls, in the power of the Holy Ghost, marvels of grace may be expected; and the good accomplished will be known to all the neighborhood roundabout (vss. 41, 42).

III. HOW CORNELIUS WAS PREPARED FOR PETER'S MINISTRY—10: 1-8.

1. Cornelius feared God, gave alms, and prayed; yet he did not know God in Christ. He belonged, perhaps, though a Gentile, to a class of Old Testament believers who feared God; but as yet did not know that Christ had come.

2. He was given a Divine revelation. In every case of true conversion, God sovereignly interposes. Cornelius had probably never heard of Peter, and, of himself, would never have been able to find the way to God.

3. Yet God willed to use a human instrument. Why did He do so? Why did He not speak directly to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road and deliver His message personally, rather than through the lips of Ananias? Here an angel is sent to Cornelius to tell him how to be saved. God could have com-

missioned angels to preach the Gospel, but instead He has chosen to make men His messengers.

4. We have the same intimate knowledge of Peter as was shown in the commission of Ananias respecting Saul. We can never hide from God: He knows our address, and can always find us when He wants us. Cornelius sent for Peter as he had been directed.

IV. HOW PETER WAS PREPARED TO RESPOND TO CORNELIUS' REQUEST.

1. He was prepared to receive his commission by prayer. Only as we abide in fellowship with God can we hope to receive orders from Headquarters. The person who prays much will never be unemployed.

2. It is suggestive that Peter employed the time while dinner was preparing in prayer. Even the busiest man has odd moments between duties, waiting somewhere for dinner, waiting for a car or for a train, which might be turned to good account. In many instances the fragments of time that remain over and above those portions employed in regular duty would possibly make up the greater part of the day. We cannot thus always read, but we can, no matter where we are, always pray.

3. Notwithstanding the wide and varied experiences Peter had already had, he still needed much preparation for this particular task. The preparation of the preacher is always a greater task than the preparation of the sermon, and the preparation of the teacher or personal worker is equally difficult. It is not because the road is rough, or the hill steep, that we fail so often to go to the house of Cornelius: it is rather because of the pride and prejudice of our own hearts.

4. We may not have direct visions such as Peter had, but by the operations of His providence, God often designs to remove from us those qualities that would impair our usefulness. We do well to study all extraordinary experiences, that we may find in them the Divine intent.

5. We shall not lack for an interpretation of the vision, or the particular experience, if our hearts are responsive to God. When the messengers from Cornelius came to the house where Peter was, the Spirit explained his coming. So will it be with us.

THE REVIVAL CONTINUES IN STANLEY AVENUE CHURCH, HAMILTON.

While a snowstorm raged without, the Lord gave further showers of blessing within Stanley Ave. Church last Sunday. Pastor Loney preached in the morning, and in the evening the students from the Toronto Baptist Seminary again had charge of the service. Following the sermon, by Mr. L. Roblin, five other students gave the story of their conversion. One young man attributed his conversion to the hearing of one of these testimonies. The service continued until the midnight hour. Throughout the day there were several conversions and applications for baptism, while a great host publicly re-consecrated themselves to the Lord's service.

Churches desiring the services of the Seminary Band will please address Dean W. J. Millar, at the Seminary Building, or at 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto. Sunday evening next the Band will have charge of the service at Mount Pleasant Road Church, City; and invitations are coming in from many points.

LAST SUNDAY.

Dr. Shields left Saturday evening to conduct a two weeks' mission in Elyria, Ohio. During his absence the church is enjoying the ministry of Rev. R. T. Ketcham, of Elyria. In spite of the storm last Sunday, large congregations greeted Mr. Ketcham, whose sermons were deep and inspiring expositions of the Word.

REGULAR BAPTIST MISSIONARY AND EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY OF CANADA.

We would remind our readers that while a permanent Secretary-Treasurer has not yet been appointed, the acting Secretary-Treasurer of the new Society is Rev. G. W. Allen, 75 Delaware Ave., Toronto 4, Canada, to whom all contributions may be sent, and all enquiries addressed.