

# The Gospel Witness

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IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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

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## A Pair of Shoes

We are living in a day when many new gospels are being preached in the name of Christ. There are gospels which promise better wages, better labour conditions, better houses, better schools, better governments. The Christian religion is being interpreted very largely in terms of the material. This gross materialism is, however, usually cleverly disguised. Many preachers are busy in the prosecution of pacifist campaigns, and are serving on committees of anti-war movements; and while, with high sounding phrases, they aim at preventing war between nations, they have no gospel powerful enough to prevent a bad tempered man throwing a rolling-pin at his wife. In the final analysis these modern gospels are to be applied to circumstances and conditions, and to men only in their collective relationships. Meanwhile the individual conscience is left unsmitten, and the individual heart unregenerated.

Does not this new emphasis virtually amount to a misinterpretation of the genius of the gospel of Christ? Is not the gospel primarily a message to the individual, which promises to make him a new creature, and thus to affect his every relationship in life? There is a text in Deuteronomy which, in principle, summarizes the gospel programme in its relation to the Christian's equipment for life: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

### I.

We are not promised a smooth road, nor an easy passage through life. Iron shoes and daily strength suggest rough roads and steep hills. But nowadays men are everywhere demanding paved roads, and easy and swift methods of transport. There is no promise in the gospel that in this dispensation such provision will be made for the Christian pilgrim.

This applies to the individual believer. We must expect rough roads to be the rule. Our Lord Himself promised, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Hence we must not be surprised if we are forced to give a negative answer to the question, "Is this vile world a friend to grace to help us on to God?" Often

in the domestic sphere, in one's place of business, in his recreational life, in his chosen sphere of service, the Christian will find rough places for his feet.

The same is true of every Christian church. It is still the church in the wilderness. Millennial conditions have not yet arrived. It must still wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world. It must still expect to hear the growling of the wolves, and sometimes to feel their sharp fangs. In apostolic times the preacher dared to preach the gospel, even though his faithfulness thrust him into jail. But nowadays a great body of Christians will appoint a representative to wait on the Government to secure freedom to exercise a gospel ministry. Where this is practicable, there can be no objection to the method, but we must not refuse to travel the road because it is rough.

Let us count it not strange, therefore, if we fall into divers temptations. We must not think we are off the track because we fail to find streets of gold on earth, and in this dispensation. Abraham was admonished to walk before God, and be perfect. Most people nowadays want to be carried, and that in the smoothest possible conveyance. But to the end of time it will remain true that they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.

### II.

It is a far greater miracle when God provides a man with an equipment sufficient to conquer circumstances, than when He removes all difficulties and makes one's circumstances easy. God's invariable promise is, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass". Not paved roads, but shod feet, is the gospel promise; not the removal of difficulties, but strength to overcome; not a life of tranquillity, but a life of triumph.

What, then, is meant by the figure, "shoes of iron and brass"? Surely it means shoes that will protect the feet on the roughest roads. What can it mean but that God will give grace equal to every emergency? In Joshua's day He wrought a miracle upon the flood, and the children of Israel went over dry-shod; but we read of some in David's day, "These

are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks." In the one instance the Lord miraculously made a path through the flood; in the other, He made men mighty by His grace to overcome the flood. And it is better to be made, by divine grace, superior to circumstances, than to have circumstances rendered inferior to us.

The gospel does not promise to keep us out of the lions' den, nor yet to kill the lions: it promises rather to give grace to make us brave to face the lions, while God's angels shut their mouths. It does not promise that Nebuchadnezzar will not light his furnace, nor so deprive him of the fuel necessary to heat it seven times more than it is wont to be heated: rather it wraps God's believing people in asbestos coats, and makes them superior to the flames. Shoes of iron and brass are not bedroom slippers, nor dancing slippers, nor high-heeled footwear. It may be that shoes of iron and brass will not be made after the latest of New York, or London, or Paris fashions. They are not designed for the bedroom, or the drawingroom, or the ballroom; but for the hard, rough, roads.

But shoes of iron and brass are not uncomfortable. Thin-soled shoes may do for soft carpets, but heavy soles are more comfortable for long walks. And it is true that God maintains His people in the midst of many trials in great comfort, so that at last they come to "glory in tribulations also." The shoes of iron and brass are more comfortable than bedroom slippers. Yes; there are compensations to be found in the lions' den, and in the furnace, and in the midst of the battle. There is a joy of achievement and conquest which he who lives a self-indulgent life can never know.

The shoes of iron and brass imply rough roads instead of carpeted floors; but they imply the open spaces also. The scent of the honey-suckle in the hedgerow, the smell of the hay, the hum of the bee, the shade of the majestic forest, the music of God's out-of-doors, and the glorious freedom of those who live beneath the spreading sky, with its brilliant sun or its myriad stars, more than make up for a few rough spots in the road; and the experiences through which the Christian pilgrim passes, and which require shoes of iron and brass, abundantly compensate the believing soul by the multitudinous ministries of grace in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

### III.

But strength is also promised according to our days. A multitude of days imply a variety of experiences. The roads are not always rough, nor does the pilgrim's path everywhere lie uphill. There are green pastures in which to lie down, and quiet waters beside which one may rest. And strength is given for such days as these, not a surplus, but enough to minister to the quiet and satisfaction of the soul. But there are other days which bring with them heavy burdens. Responsibilities and cares increase as the journey stretches out toward the distant city, but there is always strength enough for the burden. When the child is sick, or another loved one lingers long upon a bed of pain, and by reason of the long-extended agony, the nurse sometimes seems to be in greater danger than the patient, yet strength is given. There are lions

and bears in the wilderness to be met by those who are mere shepherds and keep a few sheep; and strength is given for the daily task, to save the lamb from the lion and the bear. It is not until some Goliath hurls his challenge at the people of God that strength for such a conflict as his conquest involves is given; but it is just as easy for God to fell Goliath as to kill a bear. Because it is by divine strength our victories are won, it is nothing with God to save by many or by few. He can always give strength according to our day.

What more can anyone want than this? Be the burdens never so heavy, the foes never so fierce, the day and the road never so long, the super-abounding grace of our God is equal always to every demand.

### IV.

And both these figures imply a grace that is inexhaustible. Iron and brass will not wear out, and the strength of the Almighty will never fail: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

### MUST BAPTISTS TAKE REFUGE IN INTERDENOMINATIONALISM?

It is always easier to detect error in another church or another denomination than in our own. We recall an instance where a Baptist pastor called attention to false teaching in a Methodist college, when his exposure resulted in the resignation of certain professors from the college faculty. He was forthwith hailed by his fellow-Baptists as a great champion of the faith. But when he turned his searchlight upon his own Baptist household, and showed that there was the same false teaching among Baptists, instead of being regarded as a champion of the faith, he was called a "disturber of the peace".

It is very easy for David to pronounce judgment on the unnam'd sinner of Nathan's parable, but a new situation is created the moment the prophet applies the parable by saying, "Thou art the man." Nathan could be a very popular preacher in our day were he content to preach his parabolic sermons without making any application. The great congregation, after the benediction, would break up into little groups and say, "What the preacher told us to-day is almost unbelievable. The man who would do that sort of thing ought to be excommunicated at once. The sermon this morning made me furiously indignant at the wrong-doer; and I must say that I greatly admire the splendid courage of our pastor in making so bold an exposure of error." No, Nathan would have no trouble whatever if he were to confine himself to the parable; but if he were to gather up its teaching in a few sentences of application, and point to

the members of his congregation and say to each of them, "Thou art the man", in many instances they would go out feeling very angry, and declaring that such pointed and personal discussions were entirely out of place in a modern pulpit; that we ought to have greater "tolerance", and try to exercise a little greater charity toward those who differ from us!

Notwithstanding this human tendency, however, by this time there must be a multitude of people who are prepared to admit that if there is not "something rotten in the state of Denmark", there is at least something radically wrong in the Baptist denomination.

The Fundamentalist movement among Baptists is growing apace, and, rallying to the standard of Fundamentalism as in David's time, they are coming day by day, and promise soon to become like the hosts of God. Among them are many who have become as deeply dissatisfied with "Baptist" heretical ecclesiology as with "Baptist" theological defection. Such Baptists as believe the Bible, and believe we have the pattern for the New Testament churches in their individual and collective ministries, in the New Testament itself, are becoming increasingly opposed to the great ecclesiastical machines, which, themselves unbaptistic in their very genius, are being used for the defense and propagation of anti-Baptist, not to say, anti-Christian principles.

What are such Baptists to do? In some quarters we find a reaction whose wisdom we cannot possibly commend. Because some Baptists have gone wrong, there are some who foolishly suppose that we should cease to be Baptists altogether; because Baptist organizations have become corrupted by Modernism, therefore we should find affiliation with believers from all paedo-Baptist bodies in some new non-Baptist organization. It is no new thing for a genuine Baptist to have happy fellowship with believers who are not Baptists. When the great Wilberforce was holding an anti-slavery meeting in Exeter Hall, he found that Spurgeon was holding a meeting, if we remember correctly, advocating the disestablishment of the English Church. Wilberforce, of course, was a Churchman, and Spurgeon a Baptist, but they were first of all believers in a common Saviour. And when Wilberforce wrote Spurgeon urging his presence at his meeting, even if but for a few minutes, he said (we are quoting from memory) something to this effect: "You must come!—think of my saying 'must' to an archbishop like you!"

There has always been just such true fellowship between true believers of every denomination, but such fellowship did not involve a necessity for the suppression of distinctively Baptist testimony. If Baptists have been right, historically, in insisting that their position was true to the teaching of the Word of God, why should we depart from it now? And when the exigencies of the hour especially require us to stand for the absolute infallibility and supreme authority of the Bible as the Word of God, is it consistent for Baptists to find affiliation with individuals and organizations which, however loyal to some of the fundamentals of evangelical faith, are yet guilty of setting aside at some points the explicit teaching of Scripture? If Baptists are to stand for the authority of Scripture at all, let us stand for its full authority, as Baptists have always stood.

What, then, is the practical course to be pursued? So far as it is possible, Fundamentalist Baptists ought to

contend for the faith, and endeavour to purge out the leaven of Modernism from their individual churches, or their individual Baptist organizations, whatever they may be. But when Modernism is in such an advanced stage in any of these organizations that purging is impossible, then let Baptists withdraw. From what? From organizations which have ceased in any true sense to be Baptist. But to what shall they withdraw? To some non-Baptist organization? That would be the very essence of inconsistency. **Join another Baptist organization, if there is one to join, that is true to the faith, and if not, form a new one; but remain Baptist to the core. Let us do our distinctively Baptist educational work, and our distinctively Baptist missionary work. Let us give to the world a distinctively Baptist testimony.**

We rejoice in the general soundness of the Baptists of the South. We believe that the chief defection of Southern Baptists, where there is defection, is to be found in some of their leaders. We deplore, for example, the compromising attitude of the great Dr. George W. Truett. He could even now become as great in the Baptist world as Abraham Lincoln was politically. If he would have the courage to face the evils that are in his own denomination, even in the South, and among his associates in the leadership of Southern Baptists, and would say, "Brethren, I have gone as far as my conscience will permit. I have exercised every charity toward my brethren; but my first allegiance is to Jesus Christ, and beyond this I will not go." If he, with his tremendous prestige, would take that heroic step, he could go far to cleaning the whole Southern Baptist house, and as the leader of Southern Baptists, could probably do more than any other single man in the world to bring Baptists back to the faith of Christ. But a course of continued compromise gives place to the cancer of Modernism, and if action is postponed much longer, it will be too late to perform an operation.

Once we spoke from the same platform with Dr. L. R. Scarborough, when we delivered a fighting speech, as guest of the Fundamentalist Committee of the Northern Baptist Convention at their pre-convention conference in Des Moines. On that occasion Dr. Scarborough made some very complimentary remarks about the address and about the speaker. Nobody has ever doubted Dr. Scarborough's intellectual orthodoxy; but if he would join hands with Dr. Truett, and they would consent to bury their personal animosities, and put Christ first, and stand for the faith of Christ, what a glorious result might be achieved!

But we have written this article chiefly to protest against the tendency toward interdenominationalism on the part of some of our Baptist Fundamentalists. So far as the Editor of this paper is concerned, he makes no apology for proclaiming himself a convinced and inveterate Baptist. Never much at home in interdenominational movements, we had our last association with a union evangelistic meeting eighteen years ago, and that against our judgment, because the Jarvis Street Church had been a party to the arrangement before we became Pastor. But on that occasion we promised the Lord that if we might be forgiven for that venture, we would never have anything to do with such a movement again; our reason being that we soon discovered, that while we were expected to carry more than our share of the bur-

den, we were expected also to withhold our distinctive testimony as the condition of our being welcome at all.

We believe the world never needed the Baptist testimony more than it does to-day, and for ourselves we propose to abide simply by the old-fashioned Baptist position with respect to the Bible, the great essentials of the gospel, and the two ordinances of the New Testament church in their primitive order and spiritual significance.

### THE PLANTS ARE FLOURISHING IN TRENTON.

Exuberant health is always attractive whether it manifests itself in a little child, a grown man or woman, a field of growing grain, an orchard, or a beautiful garden. Contrarily, there is nothing more depressing than evidences of slothfulness and neglect. So the Wise Man observed in the long ago: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."

On July 6th we went to Trenton to attend the recognition service of the newly-organized Belleville and Trenton Baptist churches and the ordination of Mr. H. Buchner, who is the pastor of both. We found both churches, as represented by the company of people gathered, like a well-tilled, beautiful, and fruitful, garden; and the pastor impressed one as a skilful, industrious, and faithful, gardener. While still on a small scale, it was suggestive of that beautiful picture of the church in the Song of Solomon: "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon, Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

Moreover these young churches seem to be experiencing the fulfilment of the promise, "Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God."

We do not know the exact number of representatives who were present from Belleville, but the new church at Belleville has a membership of eighteen, and that of Trenton, thirty-two, giving Brother Buchner a company of fifty earnest souls to care for. Both churches are founded on the Word of God, and have adopted as an accurate statement of their own faith, the Articles of Faith embodied in the Constitution of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. The churches themselves are happy, united, and full of enthusiasm and hope for the future.

Elsewhere we publish the official report of this meeting. This is intended only to give our own impression of the service.

Brother Buchner's statement respecting his conversion, call to the ministry, and doctrinal views, was full of interest and enjoyment. We were particularly impressed with his absolute frankness in taking the statement which has been adopted by the churches he serves, as expressive of his own convictions of truth. We have attended ordinations now for a good many years at which the candidate has read his statement, and we cannot recall attending one in which we did not recognize some of the "sources" from which the statement was obtained; yet it was supposed to be the candidate's statement. We were deeply impressed with the value of having a statement of faith such as that which has been adopted by the Union of Regular Baptist Churches. Here is a young man who has taken a somewhat extended course of training: he has attended the Bible Training College of Toronto, and has completed his Arts course, obtaining his degree, at McMaster University. He has had a good deal of experience in preaching and in general Christian work, and now he comes before an ordination council, and he says in effect: "Brethren, I am pastor of two churches. These two churches have adopted a certain statement of faith. I have critically examined it, and I subscribe absolutely without reserve to these Articles of Faith. That is my doctrinal position. That Statement of Faith represents the things which I most profoundly believe." How very simple and satisfactory the whole matter is! We know where the churches stand; we know where the pastor stands; and, having in a manly, straightforward way, read the Statement of Faith, solemnly asserting that he stands by this Statement, he waits to be questioned. Every opportunity is given all the delegates to ask as many questions as they like, but the whole matter is so fully stated that it is entirely satisfactory to all concerned, and no one is disposed to ask any questions; and when the evening is over we know we have at least two Regular Baptist Churches who believe something, and we know that the man who is their pastor stands uncompromisingly for the great principles for which Regular Baptists stand.

One of the chief lessons we learned from our attendance at the Recognition and Ordinance Services at Trenton was the great value of having a clear statement of faith.

The ladies of the two churches supplied refreshments between the afternoon and evening services, and at the evening service the programme elsewhere reported was carried out.

### ANOTHER CIRCLE OF HAPPY FELLOWSHIP.

Tuesday evening, July 10th, it was our privilege to address the evening session of the Pastors' and People's Conference of Hamilton and district. The building was completely filled, and representatives were present from Boston, Scotland, Burtch, Brantford, Woodstock, Grimsby, Toronto and other places. We have no official record of attendance before us, but are writing merely from our recollection of the persons we met.

There was a very happy fellowship at the morning session; in the afternoon, notwithstanding it was a hot July day, about one hundred gathered, with the

(Continued on page 16.)

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## How to Retain Spiritual Sight and Memory

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 1st, 1928.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."—II Peter 1:9.

### Prayer Before the Sermon.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy Holy Word which tells us that God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. We bless Thee this evening for this inspired record which Thou hast given to us of Thy Son: for the promise of His coming, in the Old Testament, and for the record of His having come, in the New. We thank Thee that Thou has promised us the Holy Spirit. He Who inspired men to write Thy Word, comes also to enlighten our understandings, to make it possible for us to understand that which is written. We thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight. We confess our inability to understand the thought of God. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy thoughts higher than our thoughts, and Thy ways than our ways. Thou art the high and lofty One Who inhabitest eternity. We are but men whose breath is in our nostrils, who know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth. How is it possible for us, subject to all the limitations of the finite mind, to understand the word of the Infinite? Only as Thou dost condescend, O Lord, to our finiteness, only as Thou dost stoop to open our understandings, can we understand the Scriptures.

We pray this evening that we may have a special sense of Thy presence, that the Holy Spirit Himself may preside over this service, and that in the quiet of this evening hour a work of grace may be wrought in the understandings of some which will enable them to receive the truth in the love of it. It may be there are some here this evening whose minds have been long fast locked against the word of revelation, and we have no power whatever to cast down imaginations, nor any high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, nor to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. But as the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, we pray Thee to use Thine own word this evening to unlock darkened hearts. The entrance of Thy word always giveth light. Thou, O Christ, art the light of the world, Thou art the bright and morning Star, Thou art the Sun of Righteousness. Be pleased to shine upon us this evening. It was at Thy word the darkness fled when Thou saidst, Let there be light. May God who caused the light to shine out of darkness, shine into every heart this evening to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We pray that the Holy Spirit may be present in such power as to neutralize, nay, as utterly to nullify, the attempts of the enemy to close men's minds against the truth of God. Make this an hour of spiritual illumination, an hour of re-creation, when the word of God shall break in upon the chaotic condition of many a human mind, and bring out of it a condition of ordered beauty where the light of the glorious gospel shall shine. Graciously hear us in this.

If any in Thy presence are so conditioned as to find it difficult to receive Thy truth, a stranger perhaps whose

mind is filled with anxiety about some matter which he cannot touch until the morrow, let Thy blessing rest upon such an one. Many a mind is distracted by the thought of other things. We beseech Thee, O Lord, to give special help to any such this evening, and may no one in the building escape Thy benediction. Grant that the dew of God may rest upon us all, that we may be refreshed by a divine visitation, and that we may leave this place with praise upon our lips, and gratitude and thankfulness in our hearts, because we belong to Jesus Christ, because we know we are saved. Hear us in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Every figure used in the Scripture to represent the Christian life indicates that it is one of development and progress. There must, of course, be a beginning. "Ye must be born again." We become babes in Christ, we receive a new life from God; and then as new-born babes we are to desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow thereby. We are to grow up into Christ in all things. The Christian life is likened to a race; we are to forget the things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are before, we are to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". Every believer is a plant which the heavenly Father hath planted; small in the beginning, but of infinite potentialities; we are to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We are called, as believers, to a life of continuous progress. There are some young people who talk about "completing their education". Sometimes we hear someone say, "I was educated at such a school." But education, properly understood, is a process. There is no end to it. I met a young man once on the train whom I had known some years before. He saw me at one end of the train as he got on at the other, and came running down the car; and loud enough for everybody to hear he said, "Did you know, have you heard, that I got my B.A.?" He has never obtained anything since! But he got it, although nobody would ever suspect it unless he were told. There was nothing to indicate any intellectual strength at all. Education is a life process. I am speaking now on the natural plane, intellectually. A man goes to school, to college, merely for the disciplining of his powers, and when he has been graduated, he begins then really to learn something. He goes on, and on, and on, to the end. So in the Christian life. Life is implanted by the Spirit of God; we are begotten again by the Holy Ghost; "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"; the believer is in Christ, he

is a new creation. But from the beginning of His Christian life he must set his face toward a life of unending progress. We are to follow on to know the Lord, and only thus can we be what God wants us to be.

As we believe in the Lord Jesus, we are justified by faith. Justification is the act of God when He imputes to the rebellious sinner the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are immediately, instantaneously, justified by faith. But sanctification is a life-long process. I have heard people say, "When I got my sanctification"! Well, whoever talks thus has not the remotest idea of the teaching of the Word of God. What education is in the realm of the intellectual, sanctification is in the realm of the spiritual. It means the life-long disciplining of the soul. We become children of God, and then we go to school; and as we continue in school, learning of Him, the process of sanctification goes on.

This chapter from which our text is taken sets forth very clearly this great principle. Peter speaks of those who have "obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". That is the beginning. We believe in Him, and through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ we are justified, we are given a place in the divine family. Then he prays that grace and peace may be multiplied unto us through the knowledge of God, and of Christ Jesus the Lord. As we believe in Christ, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; but peace is to be "multiplied", we are to have a deeper peace, a richer peace. We never could believe but for divine grace, but, being the children of grace, we are to have more grace; and we shall have more grace and more peace as we have more knowledge, as we get to know God better.

They are to be multiplied to us "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." God has made every provision for our growth in grace. I have known parents who were deeply concerned because they had not the means to give their children a liberal education. I remember a pastor and his wife talking to me about their two boys whom they loved very dearly. They said, "We have made all kinds of sacrifices for the Lord's work ourselves, and we have delighted to do so; but we question whether we are justified in sacrificing the future of our children, and we have no means whereby we may give them a liberal education." Blessed be God, our Father has means whereby He is able to educate all His children. He has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. He has blessed us with all "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

All things that pertain to life and godliness are provided for us, and they come to us through the more perfect knowledge of Him Who has called us, as Dr. Stockley read a moment ago, to glory and virtue. He has called us up to the heights. In the beginning He said, "Let us make man in our image",

and He never will be satisfied until we bear His image. Did you ever see a father's eye kindle, and his enthusiasm for his child manifest itself, when some son of his has come to distinction, and somebody says, "He is just like his father"? Is there anything in the world that will please him more than to be told that his son is growing up into the likeness of his father? Our God wants us to be like Himself, and in order that we may be, He has provided us with everything that pertains to life and godliness, and it will be ours through the knowledge of Him Who has called us by His own glory and virtue.

How does it come? Listen: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Every time you and I receive and believe a promise from God, and have that promise fulfilled in our experience, there is communicated to us something more of the divine nature. We begin by seeking forgiveness, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; then we are made new creatures, we become partakers of the very nature of God. And the life He gives is eternal life, it is the life of God Himself. I cannot explain it, no one can explain it, but you remember when Jesus said to Lazarus, "Come forth", there was power, there was life in that command, and the dead heard the voice of the Son of God, and lived. Thus the word of God communicates the very power of God, and we are made partakers of His nature.

Then we are to give all diligence for this very reason, because this is true. Because there is laid up in the bank for me a sum of money, an ample fortune upon which I may draw for my education, for my development, in order that I may be trained and fitted for the high standing to which I am called, and because it is possible for me to appropriate it, therefore I am to do the best I can, and to make the best possible use of the resources of grace that are in Christ.

We are to add to our faith, virtue; or, to supply in our faith, virtue. Faith is a manifold grace. Did you ever see one of these little Chinese puzzles? Perhaps it was in the shape of a small box, or sometimes it is in the shape of an egg. Somebody says, "Open it". On opening it, you discover inside there is another just like it but a little smaller. You open it again, and inside that there is another one. You open it once more, and there is still another. One may keep on opening it, and again and again a smaller one is found; there is always something new inside. That is what faith is: there is in faith all that we need for the Christian life. If I can give God His place in my life, as my soul responds to the divine call, and I recognize Christ Jesus as my God, in my faith I have potentially everything that is necessary to the Christian life, so that in my faith I have virtue, strength. The believer ought to be a strong man; for the word virtue here, has a wider and fuller meaning than that to which it is now usually restricted in current speech. Virtue means strength, vigour, virility. To believe in Almightyness implicitly is to become mighty.

"And to virtue knowledge." We should go on in our acquisition of spiritual knowledge. Faith puts no premium upon ignorance. The more we know of God the more fully we trust Him. Faith is not reason in

its infancy, but reason grown to be a man. Faith is the soul's apprehension of God as God. Hence the growing Christian must be characterized by a growing knowledge, an enlarging intelligence, as well as by an ever-increasing strength.

"And to knowledge temperance", or self-control. God does not superimpose His will upon us. He gives us faith, and through faith He makes us strong. He intends that our intelligence shall be enlarged, our knowledge shall be increased; and that with such understanding we shall exercise self-control.

"And to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance (or self-control); and to temperance patience." How closely related are these virtues! The man who is under control is able to be patient. You cannot become patient until you become self-controlled. "Add to your temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness"—a characteristic grace. How infinitely patient is our God! "And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."—There is the ascending scale. That is the curriculum. These are the subjects you are to study if you are to be graduated as fully developed Christians: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love. What a man he becomes who is thus symmetrically developed! "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark that: it is possible for us to have an intellectual apprehension of the truth, and yet to be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if there be a growing Christian character, then we shall not be barren, we shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ.

That is a long introduction, and I shall have to make the sermon short.

"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." When you have some particular illness and go to a doctor and tell him that you are off shade, that you are below par, that there is something wrong with you, and you name the particular symptoms, he may say, "Ah well, it manifests itself in that form, but the difficulty with you is that your general health is down; and if we can build up your general health you will find that these particular weaknesses will disappear. It may be that you think you are permanently short-sighted. The doctor may tell you that is not the case at all, but that your health is below par, and if you can build yourself up, even your sight will come back again.

That is the principle here. This physician of the soul, Peter, tells us how to maintain ourselves, by God's grace, in vigorous, exuberant, spiritual health, how to abound in the life of God; and he says if we follow the divine prescription it will make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is what our Lord Himself meant when He said, "Herein is my Father glorified"—not that "ye bear fruit", but—"that ye bear much fruit."—"I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." But if you lack this private, intensive, cultivation of spiritual graces, unless you attend to your spiritual health; lay hold

of the promises, receive supplies from heaven, and then add to your faith virtue, knowledge, and so on—if you fail in that, if you are lacking in these things, you will become blind, and will not be able to see afar off; and will forget that you were purged from your old sins.

Very simply that verse gives us some symptoms of spiritual declension, and I think it supplies an explanation of many things difficult to understand to-day.

### I.

Here is one who is becoming blind, whose spiritual vision is becoming dim, ONE WHO IS SHORT-SIGHTED, AND LACKING SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT. How is it that to-day, when you discuss some of the profoundest things of the gospel, so many people who are Christians do not know what you are talking about? They have no spiritual discernment at all. They cannot see. Supposing you were to send for a doctor when one of the children is ill, and he were to come to diagnose the case. When he comes you find that his sight is very dim. He is not altogether blind, but his sight is very dim, and he has forgotten his glasses, he cannot see. You point to certain marks upon the child's face and say, "Do you see that rash, doctor?" "No, I do not see it." "But it is there, what is the meaning of that? It fills me with alarm!" He says, "I do not see anything." "Is it scarlet fever?" "Well, I cannot see anything wrong. I do not know." What would you do? Would you not send for another doctor? If one were thus blind, what use would he be to you?

So, my dear friends, that is our present situation spiritually. That, it seems to me, is the position of multitudes of preachers to-day. You say to them, "Can you not see, man, the symptoms of disease? Can you not see that the body is sick? Can you not see that a fatal malady is gripping the church of Christ? No, I do not see it. Everything is all right. I am not alarmed." Then he turns upon you and says, "You are an alarmist. You are a disturber of the peace." The poor man is blind, that is what is the matter. He is in such a low state of spiritual health that he is utterly disqualified for the exercise of his office. He cannot see the dangers that are about.

Consider for a moment a young man or woman who is perplexed about a certain course of conduct. It may be his or her attitude toward worldly amusements, we will say, for the sake of illustration. You turn to your Bible and open up these great principles which teach us that the believer ought to live on a high plane, that it is his privilege to go beyond the first mile and revel in the abounding grace of the second, that it is his privilege to deny himself of meat or anything else that will make his brother to offend, and you say, "There it is in the Book. Can you not see it?" "No, I cannot see it." "But you are a Christian, are you not?" "Yes, I am a Christian. I joined the church, I was baptized." "There is the principle, there is the standard; measure yourself by it." But he says, "It is no use. I cannot see it."

Some man says, "I do not see any harm in this or that. I do not see any harm in being a member of a society or an organization that is made up, for the most part, of ungodly men, where Jesus Christ is never invited, and where He is never welcome. I am a

Christian, a member of a church, but I spend most of my time in a lodge room. I do not see any harm in it." You are blind, my brother. That is why you do not see any harm in it. It is because your spiritual health is at a low ebb, and the thing that ought to smite your conscience, and bring you down in humility before God, does not affect you at all, because your sight is dim.

So I might go on, but the principle is this: grace for grace, grace instead of grace; as we obey one command we understand the next one. The Word of God was not given us to make us intellectually superior to someone else; and if I receive a distinct command from Jesus Christ, and it is applied to my heart and conscience, a principle of God's Word, and I resolutely set myself against it, and disobey it, I thereby disqualify myself for the understanding of the next lesson. "Holding faith and a good conscience." So if we fail to add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control, and so on, we shall lose our spiritual discernment, and stumble on into all kinds of difficulties, because we are wanting in spiritual perception. You can tell the difference between a spiritual man and one who is not spiritual, can you not? You can soon discern the growing Christian. He may not have been very much at school, he may not pass among men as highly educated, but he has been seated at the feet of Christ, he has been growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And what discernment he has!

Some years ago I went to visit a friend in a little country place, where there was not even a village, simply a blacksmith shop, a post office, and a store. He said, "I want to show you a curiosity. We have no great sights to show you here, but I have one thing to show you that I think will be of interest." He took me down to the blacksmith shop, and I met a man who was about forty years of age. He had been converted three or four years before, and at the time of his conversion he was wholly illiterate. He had never been one day at school in his life, and did not know even the alphabet. But he had a little girl who was going to school, and when the Lord saved him, and the Word of God got into his heart—the entrance of God's word always bringeth light—when it got into his heart, he wanted to know more of it; so every day he got his little girl to teach him, first the alphabet, then short words and sentences. From his own little girl, ten or twelve years of age, he received instruction that he might learn to read. When I knew him three or four years after his conversion he had gone through the entire Bible many times. I do not recall how many times, but I distinctly recollect that he told me he had studied, meditated through, the New Testament forty times. He had never read any other book than the Bible, but I discovered that I could talk to him about almost anything, and the Word of God had given him a keen spiritual perception, a penetration that was extraordinary; and no matter what subject one suggested, his mind seemed to go to the heart of it like the lightning's flash, and his mind was so full of the Word of God that no matter what you said, there always came up before him some scriptural standard, and he could give you an intelligent answer. How

was it that that man, with such a limited education, had such a keen perception of spiritual values, such a profound understanding? He had received life from heaven, and he had gone on with Christ, growing up into Him in all things. He had learned to think God's thoughts after Him.

That is the need of the hour, that we should have full-grown, stalwart, Christians who know what they believe. But to lack these things is to lose that spiritual discernment. The electric lights went down a minute or two ago due to the storm, and if you had had to read your Bible by that light you could not have done it very readily, could you? There may be somebody here this evening saying, "I had a delight in the Bible once; I did not need anyone to expound it. Although I always delighted to hear the Word of the Lord, yet as I took the Book alone, the bush burned, it spoke to me, and I revelled in it. But somehow I do not seem to be able to see anything in the Bible now." No, "He that lacketh these things is blind"; and you will not see anything in the Bible until you go back to the place where you left God. Go back and take your lesson over again, and attend the school of Christ; then your general spiritual health will improve, and your spiritual sight will return. That is one point.

Are you losing your sight. If you are, your spiritual health is declining, and you need to exercise your soul toward God to discover the cause, and to get yourself right, so that the Great Physician may build you up again, that your spiritual vision may return.

## II.

"Blind, and cannot see afar off." NOT ABSOLUTELY BLIND, BUT YOU CAN ONLY SEE THE THINGS THAT ARE CLOSE TO YOU. Perhaps I can make my meaning plain by a few illustrations. Here is a preacher who walks with God. He talks with God, he rejoices in the Word of God; the promises of the Word of God are being fulfilled to him every day; and consciously he is being made partaker of the Divine Nature, and is becoming strong. His faith issues in virtue and spiritual vigour and strength. But after a while something happens, and he loses his touch with God. While he is in touch with God, what is his message? He lays emphasis upon the value of the individual, he preaches the gospel for the salvation of souls, and spends his time in trying to get people ready for heaven, because he can see afar off. He sees the gates of pearl and the jasper walls, he anticipates the glory of residence in the heavenly capital, and in the palace of the king. The brief period of ten, twenty, thirty, or fifty, years of waiting seems nothing to him. He says, "It will be but to-morrow, and I shall be with the king. I had better spend my time getting people ready; I had better get ready to go where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." But something happens, and his vision becomes dim, he cannot see the city that is afar off at all. To him, in his present state, the promise of godliness for the life to come, makes but little appeal. By and by he says, "After all, brethren, I used to go after the individual, but now I see we need to study the social implications of the gospel. We need to improve the social order, we must discuss the problems of labour and capital. We must see if we can get better houses and better wages, and if we can



improve the world politically." So the poor man is looking at things roundabout him, with never a word about heaven, never a word about meeting God, never a word about the necessity of being robed in the righteousness of Christ.

What has happened the man? Is he heterodox in his teaching? No, not at all. It is perfectly true that godliness has the promise of the life that now is; it is true that a Christian employer ought to pay his employees fair wages; it is true that a Christian workman ought to put conscience into his work; it is true that a Christian citizen ought to exercise his franchise for the betterment of his fellow-men so far as he is able. It is not that anything the man says is untrue: it is simply that his short-sightedness has led him to a new emphasis; and his new emphasis, because of his neglect of the other thing, amounts to a misrepresentation.

That is what we have to-day. The disability is not wholly in the intellectual realm. The great need of the hour is that we should have a sweeping revival that will quicken every heart and bring us back into the school of Christ, that we may take up our lessons and go on with Christ. As our spiritual health returns, we shall get a vision of the King in His beauty, and behold the land that is very far off. Wherever you hear the preacher laying emphasis upon time and sense, with no recognition of the life to come, you will find a man whose health is down spiritually. It means a loss of perspective. You can never see anything accurately unless you see it perspectively. You can never rightly appraise the values of time until you learn to relate time to eternity; and you can never do that if you lose the ability to see afar off. The present becomes the all-important thing.

My friends, how is it with you? Are you living for time or for eternity? Our Lord Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." The man who can see afar off is likely to relate the labour of time to the rewards of eternity. The Lord does not make up His books at the end of every day, He does not pay us by the day, but by the lifetime; and if, like the hireling, we faithfully fulfil our day, in the evening we shall receive our penny. What are you working for? For the applause of men? For temporal judgments? For the "well done" of your contemporaries? Is that the guiding principle of your life? If you are, you are not doing anything that is worthwhile. Our Lord will come to reward His servants, and Paul, who could always see afar off, said, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment"—or, of man's day. "I do not care what you think of me now", said he, "judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." If you can see afar off, you will be willing to bear shame and contumely, and every kind of reproach for Christ's sake, in the confidence that some day Jesus will come to reward His servants.

What a foolish man Moses was in the estimation of his contemporaries!—turning his back upon the palace, refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's

daughter, notwithstanding he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in word and in deed. How was he able to do it? How was he able to leave Egypt with all its preferments and advantages, and go out into the wilderness with a nation that had been a race of slaves? "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"—why?—"esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." He endured—how? "As seeing him who is invisible."

But you cannot see Him if you are blind. Without perspective there is nothing to look forward to, no prospect, everything is dull, drab, and monotonous. If I were an evolutionist I should want to be something else than a minister. If I had to wait a hundred million years, multiplied for aught I know by another hundred million, by the time the gentlemen get through, for any approximation to a day of righteousness, I should say, There is no prospect. I can see no end to this thing. I cannot see anything. I look here and they tell me the thing is moving, and that in several hundred millions of years something will happen! That is not very encouraging to me. What did Paul say? Dr. Morris quoted it the other night, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Blessed is the man who loves the very thought of the coming of Christ! What a blessed time it will be when He comes! ("Hallelujah!" "Praise the Lord!") Sometimes one dreams of good fortune of one sort or another, trying to lift himself out of the sordid present by dreaming of the future. But this is no dream ("Hallelujah!") Our Lord is really coming; and as we grow up into Christ and have keen spiritual perspective, and are able to see afar off, we shall be able to say, "Behold he cometh with clouds." He is even now on the way, and it will not be very long before He arrives.

### III.

If you put off the old man and put on the new, the characteristics of the old man will diminish and the characteristics of the new will become predominant. When the old man is in the ascendancy you will not be able to see without your glasses—and you will need two or three pairs. You will not be able to see afar off. And will say, "Dear me, dear me, I cannot remember as I used to." THAT IS A SIGN OF OLD AGE, WHEN YOU CANNOT REMEMBER; that is a sign the old man is on top. But as you put on the new man, then you remember things. If the old man is in the ascendancy, and health declines, the man forgets that he is purged from his old sins.

That text was suggested to me last week as I was thinking of some that must really be the Lord's people. Here is a preacher who had a very definite Christian experience, he was really washed in the blood. And yet somehow or another he can sit still while people deny the blood. He sees no inconsistency in holding fellowship with men who deny that Christ died for

our sins according to the Scripture. And I said to myself, How can it be possible for any man who was ever washed in the blood of Christ to forget the infinite debt he owes? How is it possible? Then this text came into my mind, "He has forgotten that he was purged from his old sin." There are people who seem to have forgotten all about that happy day when Jesus washed their sins away.

Have you noticed that people who are happily married love to talk about their wedding day? I saw the other day a picture of some woman celebrating her silver anniversary, and wearing the same gown that she wore the day she was married. People who are happily married love to talk about it; and, when old, look back to that day as the beginning of happiness. But if the joy of it is past, they are not particularly fond of talking about that day. My dear friends, as we live and walk with the Lord Jesus, and get to know Him better, and love Him more every day, the wonder of our introduction to Him grows, and the joy of knowing our sins are washed away never fades. The really healthy Christian revels in the story of the Cross, and will brook no denial of that central truth. Do you love to hear about the Cross, the precious blood—do you? If you do not, there is something the matter with you, there is something radically wrong with you; you are out of fellowship with God, even though you are a member of the church. But if we are really His, and walking with Him, we shall be able to sing,

"Oh, happy day! that fixed my choice  
On Thee, my Saviour and my God;  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad."

I heard of a woman who went to an oculist. She said, "I cannot see properly; my sight is failing." The oculist examined her and said, "There is nothing organically wrong with your eyes. There is no reason why you can not see except that you are not using your eyes properly. Where do you live?" She told him. "What can you see out of your front window?" "The wall of the house across the street." "And it is a narrow street?" "Yes." "You have nothing to look at but a brick wall across the street?"

"Have you an attic?" "Yes, at the top of the house." "What can you see from there?" "Oh, I do not go up there very often, but I can see over the roofs of the houses across the street." "What lies beyond?" "In the distance there is a range of hills." "You can see them from the attic?" "Yes." "Then I prescribe for you half an hour at the attic window every day. Look at the mountains." "But I cannot do that. I have not time." "Then you must make time, that is all; you must make time." "Just that?" "Just that, nothing else. Put your chair at the window and lift your eyes over the roofs and look at the most distant things you can see. Gaze upon them. When you have done that for a couple of weeks, come to see me again." She protested that she had a family of children, and could not find time simply to look out of the window. But the doctor said, "You must find time, or you will not look at anything before long." When she came back again she was a new woman. The oculist said, "How have you been getting on?" "Oh, splendidly, I went up first of all and spent half an hour, and it seemed a long time because I could not see very clearly. I could just see the outline of the mountains. But I looked and presently as the days passed I found I could see them more clearly. Then I found the half-hour too short, and I made it an hour. Sometimes now I go up in the afternoon as well as in the morning. I spend as much time as I can looking at the everlasting hills. My general health has improved with my sight, or my sight has improved with my general health. I am more cheerful, I am better in every way." "Well", said the doctor, "keep on looking at the hills."

My friends, you were not made to look at a ledger. You women were not made to look at dishes and pans. You must look at them sometimes—I hope you do at least. But you were not made to concentrate on the things about you. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." Let us lift up our eyes to the hills, and see the land that is very far off. As we see that land clearly, we shall see the things that are near at hand still more clearly; and we shall abound in health and in fruitfulness to the glory of God.

## Eternal Kindness

(Recently, when looking over some old papers, we came upon a copy of *The Montreal Witness* dated March 4, 1903, which contained the following sermon which had been sent to that paper at its Editor's request. We recall it was blest of God to many a shut-in when published twenty-five years ago, and we reprint it in the hope that it may carry comfort to others in this later day. We have no other gospel now than we preached then.—Ed. G. W.)

By the Rev. T. T. Shields,  
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"My kindness shall not depart from thee."—Isaiah 54:10.

It is written of Jesus, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." And the world has not made his acquaintance yet. No one was ever so misunderstood, so misrepresented, so grievously misjudged as He has ever been. We ourselves, though we have been introduced to Him, do not know Him very well. He might well say

to one of us, as to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?"

And because we misunderstand Him in whom "all things consist," we fail to recognize that all the details of our life are so related to each other and to our life as a whole that they "work together for good"; and thus we fail to see "things which are temporal" in their correct proportions and true perspective; and life becomes a tangled skein, a medley, a veritable

Babeldom. While we misunderstand Christ we cannot understand ourselves, our circumstances, our lot in life.

"What think ye of Christ?" is the test  
To try both your plan and your scheme;  
You cannot be right in the rest  
Unless you think rightly of Him.

You see, then, how this ignorance of ours robs Him of praise and deprives us of peace? There is, therefore, no holier or happier ministry than to help some one to know Jesus better. It glorifies him; it gladdens his friends. This is to have "the tongue of the learned," and to "know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." I have therefore this purpose this morning, to teach you to call the "gardener" to whom you have offered your complaint, by His proper name, "Rabboni," which is to say, "Master," or, finding some Hagar fainting in the wilderness, to point out to her a well of comfort, that she may fill her bottle, that she and the lad may go on their way refreshed.

This is the Lord's word to His people, "My kindness shall not depart from thee." It mentions a divine attribute that we may know Him better; it suggests a common need, that we may seek His help, and supplies in the promise a ground of perpetual comfort.

I. Let us contemplate this DIVINE ATTRIBUTE, that we may refresh ourselves in the knowledge of God's kindness.

The works of God declare that God is kind. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Before it was stamped with Caesar's image and superscription, the gold of the world was made, in nature's mint, to bear the impress of God's tender care. The silver and the copper, the tin, the iron, and the lead, these are but bells which call us to worship in His temple who is pleased to inhabit the praises of Israel. Hundreds of fathoms deep, where sunbeams never fall, where coal is mined to warm the feet of little children, to cook dinners for a million mouths, to supply power to a million hands, to annihilate distance, to bridge the oceans, and span the continents, and make men five thousand miles apart the neighbours of each other—a hundred fathoms deep a collier's lamp will show you the kindness of God. We are indeed only beginning to learn that the Niagaras, the lightnings, all the great forces of nature, are our Father's horses, which, though running wild in His world, were meant to be our servants, to drag our carriages, to carry our messages, and to do for us what our fathers called impossibilities.

All nature is vocal with the truth of the text:

So soberly and softly  
The seasons tread their round,  
So surely seeds of autumn  
In springtime clothe the ground,  
Amid their measured music  
What watchful ear can hear  
God's voice amidst the garden?  
Yet hush! for He is here!

No mere machine is Nature  
Wound up and left to play;  
No wind-harp swept at random  
By airs that idly stray;  
A spirit sways the music,  
A hand is on the chords,  
Oh, bow thy head and listen,  
That hand, it is the Lord's.

And if your ears are trained to catch the music of love's message, you may hear it thundered by the waters as they break upon the bound which God hath set that they turn not again to cover the earth; you may hear it carolled by the springs of the valleys as they run among the hills, and give drink to every beast of the field; you may hear it above you in the trees of God's planting, where the birds make their nests, where they sing among the branches; you may hear it echoed from the high hills where the wild goats find refuge, and from the rocks where the conies dwell; it is borne upon the breeze which plays upon the grass which groweth for the cattle; it is wafted by the wind which is perfumed by the flowers, and by the herb, designed for the service of man. God's loving kindness shimmers in the dewdrop of the morning, it shines in the shadowless noontide, it is painted on the rainbow, in the storm, and when wrapped by evening shadows you may read it in the crimson of the sunset, while at night the stars bear witness to the everlasting truth. The kindness of God! The seasons sing it in their march, the years echo it in their flight; the generations write it as they pass, the centuries engrave it on their monuments, to speak when they are gone. On the great and wide sea where go the ships, on harvest plain, in flowered dale, and on the highest sun-kissed mountain peak; there is left the impress of a loving hand. Once deluged in vengeance, this earth is now flooded with the kindness of God, so that, as then with wrath, so now with mercy, the tops of the highest hills are covered.

And he whose eyes the Lord anoints  
His tender love may see  
In radiant hill, and woodland dim,  
And tinted sunset sea;  
For not in mockery does He fill  
Our earth with light and grace.  
He hides no dark and cruel will  
Behind His smiling face.

But there are many who accept this teaching and at certain seasons of the year absent themselves from the house of God, to "commune with nature." "The plain or Jordan was well watered everywhere . . . even as the garden of the Lord. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." If, where there were no thorns or thistles, in Eden, nature's witness failed to preserve the link of communion unbroken, is it likely that, beyond the gates and the flaming sword, where sin's discordant and deceitful voice disturbs, by contradicting the harmony of nature's testimony to God's goodness, is it likely that under these less favourable circumstances nature can restore what she failed to preserve? Environment cannot save. Poor Byron sang:

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
 There is society where none intrudes,  
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar.

But he did not find in "the pathless woods," the path that leads to God, nor in "the rapture on the lonely shore" was his soul caught up in heavenly communion, while in solitude's society he seems never to have found the society of angels nor to have made the acquaintance of God.

But this divine attribute is more plainly expressed in God's word. I cannot tell you half the written word has said of God's kindness. I must be content with this, it is a loving Father's letter to his children. It is a tale of matchless kindness; it tells of God's desire to deliver our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. Nature's witness is made clearer by the Word:

What sacred emphasis:

The word on nature's loveliness has shown,  
 And how the world by Christ's face lighted is!  
 As if new sunshine burst into the air,  
 As if fresh odors burst from everything!  
 This Book is a wide window opening fast  
 Into the splendors of immortal spring.

But, notwithstanding, the god of this world hath so blinded men's minds that they are few who really believe that God is kind.

You have seen, perhaps, a "blind man's Bible"? Because his sightless eyes leave him in perpetual night, uncheered by nature's smiling face, distraught by the page that speaks of God, he must have a Bible specially made to meet his peculiar need. And you have seen him reading the raised letters, not with his eyes, but with his fingers, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." And God has given to a blind world a blind man's Bible. John speaks of "that which our hands have handled of the word of life." On the eighth day after His resurrection when the disciples were gathered together, Jesus appeared in their midst. And he said, in effect, to one of them: "I have been a long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me. And now poor blind, unbelieving Thomas, I have brought to thee a blind man's Bible, the truth is written in my hands, and feet, and side,—come near, and read it with thy fingers, 'God loves the world'."

And ever since that day this music has been sounding from the Cross and echoing from the empty grave, and ringing round the world, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

II. And now, further, the text suggests A COMMON NEED. Heads and hands are more plentiful than hearts. There is nothing the world needs so much as "kindness." And that is what God promises.

His kindness is promised to the undeserving—"My kindness shall not depart from thee, saith the Lord, that hath mercy upon thee"; and mercy is for the guilty only. You may have kept a part of the law in the letter of it; you may, I say you may possibly, have acted as though you loved your neighbour; but

"the first and great commandment" we have all broken both in spirit and in letter. You, personally, have not loved God, you have not been kind to Him. On the contrary, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Hell would be justice, and everything short of that is mercy.

But I speak to those who have accepted that mercy in Christ Jesus to remind you of your perpetual need of the kindness of God.

God speaks in our text to the "afflicted." The sick child in your home receives more attention than all the others, and our Heavenly Father is especially kind to his afflicted children. I know that their very affliction may seem to contradict that saying, but our text declares that from his afflicted people his kindness shall not depart. Because you are not afflicted to-day, perhaps my message will fall upon indifferent ears. But you will be wise to store your memory with it, for you will need it by and by. We in the city do not appreciate the moonlight. Our streets are always lighted, however dark the night. But it is different in the country. There they learn to be thankful for moon and stars. And before your pilgrimage is over your weary feet will walk the lonely unlighted country road of sorrow, and in the darkness of the hour of affliction you will be glad of a light which shines from the skies. Travellers know, when they see the lamps burning in a railway car in the daytime that there is a dark tunnel somewhere on the way. And this promise, if you will hang it up, will serve as a lamp in the tunnel by and by.

And until you need it yourself you may lend it to others. Some of the Lord's dear children are sick to-day. Go and tell them of his kindness. Perhaps they have forgotten it, or find it hard to believe it. Go, and take them this text: Perhaps the sermon is not worth carrying, but I am sure the text is. Make thy feet beautiful to-day by carrying good tidings and publishing peace. Take this bunch of heavenly forget-me-nots gathered from the garden of God, and make the chamber of the afflicted sweet with their hope-bringing fragrance. You know how people who are ill, lying idle all the day, count the figures on the wallpaper, take mental measurements of the pictures, and of the furniture, and of all that is in the room? As a traveller wearily waiting at a cold and cheerless station for a train to take him home reads the advertisements, and the time table, and everything in sight a score of times, so do the Lord's afflicted children waiting for the coming of the home-train often suffer for the want of some worthy subject of meditation. Will you, therefore, take some such this promise? Hang it up before then. Tell them it is written in the gold of God's faithfulness upon a background of crimson—dyed with blood. Show them that it is hung in a frame, as the context says, that is set with sapphires, and agates, and carbuncles, and all pleasant stones; and let them measure, if they can, the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love which it reveals.

Some sufferers to-day are trying to rest their throbbing heads upon pillows filled with doubts and fears which are harder than Jacob's stone. Go, take to them this comforting word, and bid them rest their aching head upon this downy promise-pillow, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

This kindness is pledged to those who are "tossed with tempest, and not comforted." Life is often compared

to a sea-voyage; and we shall all be "tossed with tempest before we get to the farther side. And experience with the winds and waves of life produces a kind of sea-sickness which makes the kindness of God very necessary to our comfort. Who does not know the utter hopelessness of that—I had almost said—"eternal", hour of real sea-sickness? And so it comes to pass on life's long voyage. A tempest suddenly breaks, and the sea is angry, and all ills are forgotten in that one bitter, hapless, almost hopeless, experience. Some bring themselves into the storm, like Jonah, and some, like the disciples on Galilee, encounter the "contrary" winds just because they are obedient to the Master's will. But they are not forgotten in either case, God's kindness ever remains. His way is in the sea, his path is in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. And if he takes us ashore in a whale or in a boat, if some great sorrow should swallow us up and teach us to pray, and come back to God, or if, by gentler methods, he should make the waves be still it will be in the end alike good, and we shall have to sing—

With mercy and with judgment  
My web of time He wove,  
And aye the dews of sorrow  
Were lusted by His love;  
And e'en my murkiest storm-cloud  
Was by a rainbow spanned,  
Caught from the glory dwelling  
In Immanuel's land.

III. And last of all, here is A SURE GROUND OF COMFORT. "My kindness shall not depart from thee, saith the Lord". There is the ground of comfort, "saith the Lord". It must be true.

Nothing can change the mutual relationship of Christ and his people. His kindness means his kinship, and that forever remains. He is still the Son of Man. He will never cease to be our Brother. We are bone of his bone, members of his body. He is our Head, we shall never be cut off from him; he is our Husband, we can never be divorced from him. Our divinity is conditioned upon his humanity; our God-likeness upon his being found in fashion as a man.

This promise derives its value from the Cross. "For this", says the ninth verse, "is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth so have I sworn that I would no more be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. And you will find in the history that when Noah went forth out of the ark, "he built an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings upon the altar. And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake". It was when the smoke of sacrifice ascended God smelled a sweet savor, and swore He would curse the ground no more. It is the sweet savor of Calvary that secures the kindness of God to you and to me. The stroke that fell on Jesus has removed all but God's kindness from us.

And, brethren, this text puts beneath the feet of faith the oath of God that cannot lie. And that is more enduring than the everlasting hills. David, you remember, sang his new song when he felt his feet upon a rock. The "horrible pit" is a poor place for singing; you can keep neither time nor tune in "the miry clay". If you want to sing in the choir you must come up on the plat-

form of God's oath-bound promise. You will find no better standing place in heaven itself than that. Stand by faith upon it, and sing this song, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee". Sometimes your Master will set its music in a minor key, and then you must keep very near to the Leader if you would not make a false note. Can you sing it?

I dimly guess from blessings known  
Of blessings out of sight,  
And with the chastened Psalmist own  
His judgments too are right.

I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air,  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.

Hush! heaven and earth are vocal with His praise, —angel choirs are singing it, and all the earth is echoing it—"My kindness shall not depart from Thee."

Let me entreat you to take my text with you. As Obed-edom received the ark of the covenant into his house, so do you take this covenant-promise home to your hearts. You will find that, like the ark, it contains manna for food, a law for instruction, and a rod upon which the weary may lean. Let this promise be as a rock beneath your feet, as a song in your mouth, as an angel singing a song of the shadowless land. "The mountains shall depart." The Moriahs with their trials, the Nebos with their unknown graves, the Carmels with their conflicts, the Horebs with their sharp rebukes, the Tabors with their transient joys,—the mountains of trial and of triumph, with their cloud-capped summits of mystery, and their deep valleys of shadow, shall depart; "and the hills be removed,"—the Mizars of littleness and loneliness, the Olivets of weeping, and the Calvarys of bitter pain,—the hills of difficulty and discipline—saith the Lord, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee."

I want to hang this promise as a silver bell in the tower of the temple of thy heart, where the hand of faith may pull the rope and ring its merry chime; or as an aeolian harp upon which the Heavenly Wind which bloweth where it listeth, may play and wake the perfect harmonies of heaven. And while amid earth's Babel sounds, the clash of arms, perhaps, the crash of crumbling fortunes, the sigh of disappointment, the wail of pain, the whispered farewells of the dying—when mountains of friendship melted away, and hills whereon you worshipped are dissolved, then listen! listen! to the music of this song of everlasting friendship, falling from the sapphire throne and breaking through the clouds, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

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# Coals for the Altar Fire

By Rev. T. I. Stockley, D.D., Dean of the Toronto Baptist Seminary.

Sunday, July 15th,

*The Seven Ships of Saul of Tarsus— Philippians iii:1-12*

Saul of Tarsus was once a thriving merchant and an extensive ship-owner; he had seven vessels of his own, the names of which were—1. Circumcised the Eighth Day; 2. Of the Stock of Israel; 3. Of the Tribe of Benjamin; 4. A Hebrew of the Hebrews; 5. As Touching the Law, a Pharisee; 6. Concerning Zeal, persecuting the Church. The seventh was a man-of-war, with which he one day set out from the port of Jerusalem, well supplied with ammunition from the arsenal of the Chief Priest, with a view to destroy a small port at Damascus. He was wonderfully confident, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter. But he had not got far from port before the Gospel Ship, With Jesus Christ Himself as Commander on board, hove in sight, and threw such a shell among the merchant's fleet that all his ships were instantly on fire. The commotion was tremendous, and there was such a volume of smoke that Paul could not see the sun at noon. While the ships were fast sinking, the Gospel Commander mercifully gave orders that the perishing merchant should be taken on board. "Saul, Saul, what has become of all thy ships?" "They are all on fire." "What wilt thou do now?" "Oh that I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith."

Monday, July 16th.

*The Rock that is higher than I— Psalm lxi:1-8*

"The Psalmist prayed, 'When my heart is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.' Imagine a man seated on a lofty rock in the midst of the sea, where he has everything necessary for his support, shelter, safety, and comfort. The billows heave and break beneath him, and the hungry monsters of the deep wait to devour him; but he is on high, above the rage of the former, and the reach of the latter. Such is the security of faith.

"But why need I mention the rock, and the steel house? for the peace that is in Christ is a tower ten thousand times stronger, and a refuge ten thousand times safer. Behold the disciples of Jesus exposed to famine, nakedness, peril, and sword—incarcerated in dungeons; thrown to wild beasts; consumed in the fire; sawn asunder; cruelly mocked; and scourged; driven from friends, and home, to wander among the mountains, and lodge in dens, and caves of the earth; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; sorrowful but always rejoicing; cast down, but not destroyed; an ocean of peace within, which swallows up all their sufferings.

"Neither death, with all its terrors; 'nor life,' with all its allurements; 'nor things present,' with all their pleasure; 'nor things to come,' with all their promise; 'nor height of prosperity; 'nor depth' of adversity; 'nor angels' of evil; 'nor principalities' of darkness; 'shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.'"

Tuesday, July 17th.

*The Peace the Saviour Gives— Matthew viii:23-34*

"Oh, what a blessing is peace! 'How precious in the case of the awakened sinner! See him standing, terror-stricken, before Sinai. Thunders roll above him—lightnings flash around him—the earth trembles beneath him, as if ready to open her mouth, and swallow him up. The sound of the trumpet rings through his soul, 'Guilty! guilty! guilty!' Pale and trembling, he looks eagerly around him, and sees nothing but revelations of wrath. Overwhelmed with fear, and dismay, he cries out—'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me! What shall I do?' A voice reaches his ear, penetrates his heart—'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!' He turns his eyes to Calvary. Wondrous vision! Emmanuel expiring upon the cross! the sinner's Substitute satisfying the demand of the law against the sinner! Now all his fears are hushed, and rivers of peace flow into his soul. This is the peace of Christ.

"How precious is this peace, amid all the dark vicissitudes of life! How invaluable this jewel, through all the dangers

of the wilderness! How cheering to know that Jesus, who hath loved us even unto death, is the pilot of our perilous voyage; that He rules the winds, and the waves, and can hush them to silence at His will, and bring the frailest bark of faith to the desired haven!"

Wednesday, July 18th.

*The Timepiece of the Christian Life— Philippians iii:13-21*

"A gentleman's timepieces were once out of order, and they were examined, when it was found that in one of them the mainspring was injured; the glass which protected the dial-plate of the other was broken; while the machinery of the third had got damp, and rusty, although the parts were all there. So the lack of holiness, in some cases, arises from the want of heart to love God; another man has not the glass of watchfulness in his conduct; another has got rusty with backsliding from God, and the sense of guilt so clogs the wheels of his machinery, that they must be well brushed with rebuke, and correction, and oiled afresh with the Divine influence, before they will ever go well again.

"The whole of a Christian's life is a reaching forward; but he has to begin afresh, like the people of Israel in the wilderness; or, like a clock, he has constantly to recommence at the figure one, and go on to that of twelve, through all the years of his experience on earth. But after the resurrection, he will advance, body and soul, to the figure of millions of millions, never to begin again through eternity. The sun in that world will never rise, nor set; it will have neither east, nor west! How often has an invisible hand wound up thy religious spirit below, but there the weights will never come down again!"

Thursday, July 19th.

*Water for Thirsty Souls— Exodus xvii:1-7*

"The water flowing from the rock was like a river of life to the children of Israel. Who can describe the distress through the camp, and the appearance of the people, when they were invited to approach a flinty rock, instead of a fountain, or a stream, to quench their thirst? What angry countenances were there, what bitter censures, and ungrateful murmurings, as Moses went up to the rock, with nothing in his hand but a rod! 'What is he going to do on that rock? Does he mean to make fools of us all? Is it not enough that he has brought us into this wilderness to die of thirst? Will he mock us now by pretending to seek water in these sands, or open fountains in the solid granite?' But see! he lifts the rod, he smites the rock; and lo, it bursts into a fountain; and twelve crystal streams roll down before the people! Who can conceive the sudden transport? Hear the shout of joy ringing through the camp, and rolling back in tumultuous echoes from the crags, and cliffs of Horeb,—'Water! water! A miracle! a miracle! Glory to the God of Israel! glory to His servant Moses!' It was a resurrection day to Israel, the morning light bursting upon the shadow of death. New life, and joy are seen throughout the camp. The maidens are running with cups, and pitchers, to the rock. They fill, and drink; then fill again, and haste away to their respective tents, with water for the sick, the aged, and the little ones, joyfully exclaiming—'Drink, father! Drink, mother! Drink, children! Drink, all of you! Plenty of water now! Rivers flowing from the rock!'

"Brethren, this is, but a faint emblem of the joy of the Church, in drinking the waters that descend from Calvary, the streams that gladden the city of our God."

Friday, July 20th.

*Floods from the Smitten Rock— 1 Corinthians x:1-15*

"In the death of our Redeemer, we see three infinite depths moved for the relief of human misery: the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the energy of the Holy Spirit. These are the depths of wonder whence arise the rivers of salvation.

"The waters of the Smitten Rock flowed in the presence of the whole assembly. The agent was invisible, but His work was manifest.

"The water flowed in great abundance, filling the whole

camp, and supplying all the people. Notwithstanding the immense number, and the greatness of their thirst, there was enough for each, and for all. The streams ran in every direction to meet the sufferers, and their rippling murmur seemed to say—"Open thy mouth, and I will fill it." Look to the cross! See there the gracious fountain opened, and streams of pardoning, and purifying mercy flowing down the rock of Calvary, sweeping over the mount of Olives, and cleaving it asunder, to make a channel for the living waters to go out over the whole world, that God may be glorified among the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth may see his salvation.

"The water flowed from the rock, not pumped by human labour, but drawn by the hand of God. It was the same power that opened the springs of mercy upon the cross. It was the wisdom of God that devised the plan, and the mercy of God that furnished the Victim. Our salvation is wholly of God; and we have no other agency in the matter than the acceptance of His proffered grace.

Saturday, July 21st.

Victory through our Risen Lord— 1 Corinthians xv:20-23  
51-58.

"Ever since the fall in Eden, man is born to die. He lives to die. He eats, and drinks, sleeps, and wakes, to die. Death, like a dark steel-clad warrior, stands ever before us; and his gigantic shadow comes continually between us, and happiness. But Christ hath 'abolished death, and brought life, and immortality to light through the gospel.' He was born in Bethlehem, that He might die on Calvary. He was made under the law, that He might bear the direct penalty of the law. He lived thirty-three years, sinless, among sinners, that He might offer Himself a sin-offering for sinners upon the cross. Thus 'He became obedient unto death,' that He might destroy the power of death; and on the third morning, a mighty angel, rolling away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, makes the very door of death's castle the throne whence He proclaims 'the resurrection, and the life.'

"The Hero of our salvation travelled into Death's dominion, took possession of the whole territory on our behalf, and returning, laden with spoils, ascended to the Heaven of heavens. He has gone over into our promised inheritance, and His glory illuminates the mountains of immortality; and through the telescope which He has bequeathed us we 'see the land which is very far off.'"

—Selections from Christmas Evans.

### BAPTIST BIBLE UNION LESSON LEAF

Vol. III. REV. ALEX THOMSON, Editor. No. 3.  
Lesson 32. Third Quarter. August 5th, 1928.

#### PAUL'S GOSPEL FROM CHRIST.

Lesson Text: Galatians, chapter 1.

Golden Text: "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:12.)

#### I. THE SALUTATION (vs. 1-5.)

1. The apostle was confronted in Galatia, as in several other places, with Judaizing teachers who taught falsely concerning the observance of the law, and disparagingly of his apostleship. He therefore begins this epistle by emphasizing his divine calling. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ; "not of man, or by man". Unlike the false teachers, he is commissioned and sent forth by God. Therefore he possesses the necessary authority for his mission. 2. He conveys the greetings of his companions (v. 2), and salutes them with a benediction, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs. 3-5). This is not a mere pious sentence, but the expression of a sincere desire. "Grace is the sum of all blessing bestowed by God, and peace in its wide Hebraic range of meaning, the sum of all blessing experienced by men. Grace is the Father's good will, and bounty in Christ, to His undeserving children. "Peace, rest, . . . and gladness of the child brought home to the Father's house to dwell in the light of the Father's face." A wonderful twofold blessing indeed which any child of God might wish for another, or any pastor for the people of his charge. 3. The apostle adds something concerning

Christ, however, which is very important. He would draw the attention of the Galatians to the work of Calvary, the central feature of his gospel, and the means of salvation. Christ gave Himself for our sins (v. 4). How often we need to be reminded of His glorious atoning work! It was necessary to bring it to the attention of the Galatians who were in danger of being entangled in the false teaching of salvation by works. It is equally necessary for us in these days when the same error is being taught, though under a different guise. Our Lord finished the work on Calvary, and we are saved through faith in Him. 4. One great result of such blessed work is the deliverance from this present evil world (v. 4). This is not a pessimistic way of referring to the world: it is simply a plain statement of truth. The world is evil in the sight of God, for it is opposed to Him (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 8:7,8). It crucified our Lord; it has slain apostles and countless thousands of the Lord's servants; and to-day it still rejects its Saviour. There is a twofold deliverance from it: one in the present, in that we are kept by the power of God from its contamination; and while we are in it, we are not of it (John 17:15, 16). The other when we shall be taken from it to be for ever with the Lord. 5. This wonderful plan of salvation is according to the will of God (v. 4), and the apostle adds, "To whom be glory for ever and ever." And we heartily unite in saying, Amen, for man is incapable either of thinking or of carrying out such a wonderful plan.

#### II. PAUL'S ASTONISHMENT AT THE DEFECTION OF THE GALATIANS (vs. 6-10).

1. After the benediction there comes the complaint. There is no thanksgiving so customary in the apostle's epistles: simply a direct reference to the purpose of his writing, emphasizing the seriousness of the situation. The Galatians had been led astray by Judaizing teachers. 2. They had removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel which was not another. But there were some troubling them who would pervert the gospel of Christ (vs. 6, 7); and the apostle marvelled that their defection had occurred so suddenly. Evidently little persuasion was required to make them change their belief. They were not steadfast, and they lacked spiritual discernment. That other gospel which they had accepted was not really a gospel, but simply a device of certain men who were seeking to pervert the gospel of Christ (v. 7). 3. There is only one gospel, and it is a sin to put anything in its place. The heinousness of the sin may be judged from the words used by the apostle concerning the false teachers. "Let him be accursed". These are solemn words, and the Galatians certainly would be startled by them, and particularly at their application to angels as well as to men (vs. 8, 9). The words are startling even now, and in these days of easy tolerance they ought to be taken to heart. There is a danger of looking too lightly upon false teaching. There is a time to be tolerant, and a time to be intolerant. When the vital principles of the gospel are at stake, there can be no compromising. We must contend for the faith. To remain passive merely for the sake of peace where error is to be propagated, is to be disloyal to the Lord who has given us the gospel. 4. There is something satanic in false teaching, for satan is the father of all lies; and it is his desire to displace God in the heart of man. Therefore no plea of tolerance or liberty, of love or peace, can justify a child of God giving his approval in the slightest degree to that which is contrary to the gospel of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. 5. The apostle, in adopting such a strong attitude, is not seeking to gain popularity with men, but rather that he should have God's approval; for if he sought to please men he would not be the servant of Christ (v. 10). Paul put his Saviour first. Too many put man first, and while they may be good politicians, they are miserable prophets. Be true to God, and leave the consequences with Him.

#### III. PAUL'S GOSPEL RECEIVED FROM CHRIST JESUS (vs. 11-24).

1. Having in mind his detractors who were seeking to undermine his influence by casting aspersions upon his apostleship, Paul proceeds to prove his claim. He first certifies that the gospel which he preached was not of man's devising. He did not receive it from man, nor was it taught him by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (vs. 11, 12). 2. He received his message direct from his Lord. It was therefore the true gospel, and being independent of men in

its reception he was a true apostle. In corroboration of his claim, we find his gospel agreed with that of other apostles, proving the divine source of both. 3. He then explains his relationship to the other apostles, beginning with the time prior to his conversion. Recalling the nature of his behaviour, how he persecuted the church and sought to root it out, and excelled many of his own aides in his zeal for the tradition of the fathers (vs. 13, 14), he paints a graphic picture of a converted religious zealot. Like many persons of to-day he had religion, but he did not have Christ. There is a vital difference between Christianity and religion. 4. The Lord had a purpose for Paul higher than the one he sought to carry out. He had separated him from his mother's womb, a testimony to the sovereignty of God; and had called him by His grace, and had revealed His Son in him, a testimony to his conversion when the Lord called him on the way to Damascus, and revealed Himself, not only to him, but in him; and later had given him a further revelation of Himself. 5. When this happened he did not hold a consultation with men, nor did he go up to Jerusalem to confer with those who had been apostles before him; but immediately departed into Arabia, and then returned to Damascus. He did not require the commission of men when he had the authority of God. 6. The sojourn in Arabia would be of great benefit, affording time for his new duties. Moses also had his period in the desert prior to entering upon meditation and prayer before entering upon the arduous labour of leadership; and our Lord also had His time in the wilderness. We should not be surprised if, after God calls us into definite service, He sends us into the desert. It is for our spiritual advancement, and is a preparation for the work which is to follow. 7. Paul then refers to his visit to Jerusalem, the purpose of which was to become personally acquainted with Peter, and he states the time of his sojourn with him as fifteen days—too short a time surely in which to receive instruction, as stated by his enemies. The only other person of prominence he saw was James, the Lord's brother. After stating this, he calls God to witness that he is telling the truth (vs. 18-20). His journey into Syria and Cilicia is noted, and the fact that he was unknown by face to the churches in Judaea is stated, emphasizing the truth of his claim that he received his gospel from the Lord, and not from the other apostles in Jerusalem. 8. These churches had heard of the great change in him, however, and glorified God in him (vs. 21-24). Conversion means a change, and the church and the world will hear about it when it is real.

### ANOTHER CIRCLE OF HAPPY FELLOWSHIP.

(Continued from page 4.)

building full in the evening. We were a little late in arriving, and Rev. T. White, of Scotland, had just concluded a gospel sermon. One could feel by the very atmosphere of the place that the hour had been one of spiritual uplift. There had been also a fine open-air meeting between the afternoon and evening sessions. It was our privilege to give an address, and to have delightful fellowship with the friends assembled.

Every such meeting we attend affords additional justification for the stand which has been taken by those who represent the new Union of Baptist Churches. There is a unity of the spirit which can never be experienced without a corresponding unity of the faith. That, of course, does not mean that everybody thinks alike, but it does mean that on the great essentials of the gospel, a company of believers are all of one mind as they were on the day of Pentecost.

Rev. J. G. Connor, the Pastor of Immanuel Church, is an overflowing fountain of joy himself. What a happy fellow he is! What an exhilaration to hear him laugh! To hear him say, "Praise the Lord"! And genuine believers ought to laugh; they ought to laugh heartily: "Then was our mouth filled with

laughter, and our tongue with singing." And what follows? This inevitably: "Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

### RECOGNITION AND ORDINATION AT TRENTON.

A council of delegates from certain churches of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec was called by the Belleville and Trenton Churches to consider the advisability of setting apart to the Gospel Ministry, their pastor, Mr. Buchner, also to recognize the said Churches.

The churches responding to the call were as follows: Annette Street, Jarvis Street, Mount Pleasant Road, Oakwood, Grace and Willowdale from Toronto; Boston, Bobcaygeon, Stanley Avenue, Hamilton; Trenton and Belleville.

The council met in the beautiful and promising town of Trenton. The Reverend C. J. Loney, pastor of Stanley Avenue Church, Hamilton, was elected moderator; Reverend J. H. Peer of Willowdale, as clerk.

The moderator called for a statement from the Trenton and Belleville churches and the churches, through their respective clerks, read of God's marvellous dealings, of transformed lives, of spiritual growth and victories won in the midst of discouragement and opposition.

The council very heartily and unanimously recognizes these churches, praising God for the honour of having them linked with the Union of the Regular Baptist Churches, two more fundamentalist testimonies in such strategical and promising fields.

Mr. Hannah, of Trenton, was then called upon to introduce the Pastor to the council. Mr. Hannah paid fine tribute to Mr. Buchner as a man, as a man of God whose ministry was, to a marked degree, expository, powerful, true to the word yet never losing an opportunity of throwing out the life line to lost men and women. Mr. Buchner was then called upon to give the statement of his conversion, his call to the ministry, and his doctrinal convictions. After listening to his statement, the council unanimously felt that here was a man whom God had called and thrust forth into His Harvest field. After retiring for a few minutes, the council decided to fellowship Mr. Buchner and proceeded to his ordination.

The afternoon session closed with prayer, after which refreshments were served by the ladies of the Belleville and Trenton churches.

The evening session opened with the reading of Scripture and prayer. The moderator called upon Reverend W. E. Atkinson, secretary of the Union, formally to give the right hand of fellowship to the Belleville and Trenton churches. In solemn and searching words he reminded them that the Christian life was a fight, that they were to guard the faith by using it, and by aggressive evangelism to give forth the word of life; he further exhorted the church to pray for, love and honour their pastor.

The right hand of fellowship was then given Mr. Beatty, representing the Belleville Church, and Mr. Lumb the Trenton Church. Dr. T. I. Stockley, out of the richness of his experience, gave the charge to the candidate. He reminded the pastor that he must give attention to his personal soul culture if he would be a successful minister in the years to come. Keen discernment of the need of his people, whether in sorrow or in spiritual decline, always ready to be a weapon in the hands of God to do His work, were requisite to success in the ministry. Reverend Mr. Loveday, of Boston, then offered the ordination prayer.

Dr. T. T. Shields delivered the ordination sermon, speaking from Acts 2: 47.

So ended a day which all felt to be one never to be forgotten, in glorious fellowship with two churches standing for the inerrant work of God. Watch them grow!

J. PEER.