

The Gospel Witness

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

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"ALL THESE THINGS ARE AGAINST ME"

Looking down from the window of a high building on the surging crowds that throng a city's streets one sees nothing but apparent confusion: men and women jostling each other as they go in opposite directions; vehicles seem to become a tangled mass; and order and peace appear to be nowhere.

But is not the highway of life like that? Does it not appear to be thronged with jostling and contrary elements? Does it not sometimes appear that life is composed of warring principles, which threaten to destroy each other, and to annihilate the human beholder? A little child, with rosy cheeks, and laughing eyes, and merry dimples playing hide-and-seek, toddling among the flowers in his father's garden, may feel, if he does not think, that life is full of pleasure and bubbling over with delight. Or the happy bride amid the orchids and orange blossoms on a beautiful June morning, in her ecstasy of gladness, may momentarily forget every painful and distressing experience, and imagine there are twelve Junes in every year, without even so much as an evening twilight, or a single cloud to darken so much as one of its three hundred and sixty-five rapturously delightful days.

But the little child long before nightfall will have scratched his knees, and will have stained his lovely cheeks with many a tear. And the bride must learn that even on a wedding day the sun goes down, that shadows are inseparable from the day's declining hours. And many another, toiling in the fields, discovers thistles there; or faring up the winding road, finds there are sharp stones for pilgrim feet. Others find their further passage barred by mountain steep, or else that the way leads now through swollen torrents; and when the stony roads are left behind, and the turbulency of life seems to be subsiding, companions of sombre dress and uninviting countenance come to keep step with them; and as they approach the quiet of the evening tide, beautiful as seems the place within the gates they now approach, ere long they find they are drawing near to God's acre and the city of the dead.

The words chosen for the title of this article need no context. They may be arbitrarily separated from

the story to which they belong and almost indiscriminately written into the history of any one of us; for where can there be found a man or a woman who, on one or another day of their experience, has not exclaimed, "All these things are against me"?

Poor aging Jacob! Perhaps his story will help us to understand our own. God's Book is full of object lessons. The Bible does not often concern itself with theories in the abstract; rather, it writes a story of human life, showing us how men live; how they suffer; how they sorrow; how sometimes they serve; how, in some instances, they are defeated; and in others, how the suffering life is crowned with glorious victory.

Jacob had suffered no physical injury. He was not, at the time, subject to any physical pain. What were the things, the impersonal, intangible, unescapable, inexorable "things" which were "against" him?

He had had what seemed to be trouble in his family. He had been blessed with twelve sons, every one of whom he had loved most deeply. But one, for some strange reason, had been to him a peculiar treasure. He had loved him inordinately, extravagantly, pre-eminently. He had set him above all the others, and had made for him a coat of many colours. And it fell on a day that this best beloved of his soul did not come home. He waited long and anxiously, but the welcome sound of his footfall never fell upon his ear. Instead, the other children came, these other sons of his; and they brought the coat of many colours dripping with blood. Then Jacob knew that Joseph's place was empty, and that the boy so greatly beloved would come home no more.

Thus his greatest joy became his greatest sorrow. It is often so. The mother would not part with one of her children. No money could compensate for the absence of one of them. Yet that which she loves most, afflicts her most. Pleasure and pain are closely akin to each other; and when her arms are empty, and her heart is as empty as her arms, she says that that experience is "against" her.

But Joseph was not the only son. Jacob knew that his children were not always agreeable with each

other. Alas! Alas! What aching hearts' parents sometimes carry in their breasts! The thorns which pierce and tear them, the menacing ghosts which threaten them, the tantalizing imps which agitate and unnerve them, are often their own children.

And this is true of life in general. Life never did, and never can, consist in the abundance of the things which one possesses; nor, indeed, can it ever consist in mere things at all. We live in the lives of others. It is not possible to find joy in "things"; neither have mere things the power to give us sorrow. Thus, too often, the tenderest ties of life become to father and mother, children, brother and sister, husband and wife, like heated iron chains which bind and afflict the bleeding soul.

Yet there were things in Jacob's experience which seemed to be the instruments of suffering. He was not poor, but conditions arose when money would not buy the necessities of life. A man may starve as easily in a golden palace as in a log hut. Wealth has no power to minister real and abiding satisfaction. Jacob lived in a land where gaunt famine stalked. Bread is not everything. We have the highest Authority for the statement, "Man shall not live by bread alone." But in this dispensation and condition of life, at least, he cannot live without bread. So Jacob found.

It is easy to mock at the bread-and-butter question. But it is a question which cannot be ignored, especially when it is reduced to a question of "bread alone", without even butter. Men do strange things when they become desperate. Man's worst enemy declared, "All that a man hath will he give for his life."

It must have been still lonelier in Jacob's dwelling when all his sons went down into Egypt to buy bread. It is not always in precisely the same way the children are driven from home; but sooner or later the nest is broken up and the family is scattered. When that is so, the home-coming of the children at Christmas or Eastertide, or on any other occasion, is eagerly awaited. And Jacob must have been impatient for his sons' return. When they came, it must have ministered some satisfaction to know that, with their coming, for Jacob and his family, the famine was, temporarily, at least, removed.

But the absence of Simeon, and his sons' gloomy tale of the menacing attitude of the governor of the far-off country, must have filled the spirit of Jacob with disquiet. It is not superstition, although it may not be susceptible of any psychological explanation, but it is a fact, that there are days in life which, from their earliest hours, fill us with foreboding and a sense of impending disaster. Perhaps our imaginations are more depraved than we know. Perhaps they have a natural affinity for gloom and darkness. Perhaps we unnecessarily invite the shadows, and listen in expectation of the raven's croak, instead of anticipating the song of the nightingale.

It was ill news that Joseph was gone, and that Simeon had not returned: it was still worse news that the price of bread in Egypt had gone up, and that Jacob's sons would never return again from Egypt with sacks of corn well filled except on condition that the place of Benjamin in Jacob's home must first be made empty. We must not lecture Jacob, nor complain that he was unduly apprehensive and unreasonably gloomy when he said, "Me have ye bereaved of my

children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." We have said it ourselves—and we have felt it perhaps oftener than we have said it—that that closed chapter of the long ago when Joseph disappeared, and this more recent absence of Simeon, with the threatened separation from Benjamin on the not-too-remote to-morrow, constitute a trinity of catastrophes sufficient to extinguish hope in the soul.

We must each identify the contrary elements of life: the adverse, uncontrollable, and apparently malignant principles which thwart our purposes, destroy our peace, break our fellowships, sap our joy, supplant our dreams, negative our achievements, nullify our possessions, blight and blast our prospects, impoverish our minds, and bankrupt our affections. They may not come to us all in precisely the same form, but come they do. And when they come, we are likely to exclaim, "All these things are against me".

Then there comes the blackest day of all, the day when the house is empty. That which was prophecy has become history, and Joseph and Simeon and Benjamin have all gone away! What a picture of loneliness, of dejection, of desolation, of almost despair, Jacob must have presented during the absence of his sons in Egypt! Like Rachel, the mother of the two of them, he must have lamented for his children, and would not be comforted because they were not.

Have you come to the dark days? or to the darkest day of all? Taking a leap into the New Testament, here it is in the language of Holy Writ: "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." That is the time to say, "All these things are against me." Yes, that is from the New Testament, a little more modern than the saying from Genesis; but both are true to present-day experience. We all have had the sunless, starless, days, when no small tempest lay upon us, and we all have come to the hour when all hope that we should be saved was taken away.

Is it really true that the darkest hour is just before the dawn? Or is it a proverb born, not of meteorological facts, but of common, every-day, human experience? The sons of Jacob were long in coming home. They started for home, and they had to go back again. Ah me! How often we all turn back! What progress we should make along the highway of life if it were not for the detours! Life's journey is very much like many of Toronto's streets just now: one can scarcely move without meeting an obstruction bearing the sign, "No Thoroughfare". There is a red flag by day and a red light at night; and one must needs jog from street to street to get through at all. It would be easy to say, when in a hurry, "All these things are against me", but why have we not, sense enough to know that we cannot have paved streets without red flags and red lights and some obstructions? Who knows but that these barriers across the way, which irritate us so much, are put there by the Chief Engineer and the great Road-Master just to give time to pave the golden streets?

But the boys came home at last. Yes, they really did. Down the long road the old man looked for many a weary hour with no answer to his longing gaze. It was only a dust cloud, or perhaps a caravan

of Ishmaelites or others; but they came nearer, and passed, and left the road unoccupied, and the spirit of Jacob still depressed. But the boys came home at last! And they were one more than when they left. Simeon was with them. And, wonder of wonders, Benjamin was with them, too! Poor Jacob had been wearing his life out at the thought of losing Benjamin—and he did not lose him after all, bitterly complaining that Simeon was not—but he has come again! Most of our troubles are but shadows.

Some of the things you thought to be against you were really not so untoward as you supposed. Poor, depressed, and despairing spirit, open thine eyes! Simeon and Benjamin have come home! All is not quite lost yet.

But there is more than that to be said. Let the sons of Jacob tell their tale. The sacks are full of corn, everyone of them—Simeon's and Benjamin's beside. The camels are all there, and the money they took with them to Egypt they have brought back again. Simeon and Benjamin have returned; and there is plenty of bread in the house, and plenty of money, too. Who knows but there may be something in the story of the rainbow on the cloud? Ah, there is more than "something": there is everything, for God put it there; and God said that it should mean something to us. Can we not sing it, though we have not reached the end of the road as yet,—

"With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dew of sorrow
Were lustered with His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that plann'd,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.
And aye my murkiest storm-cloud
Was by a rainbow spann'd
Caught from the glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land."

There is a long train of wagons there. They do not belong to Canaan. They have another trademark upon them: they come from Egypt's land. Each of Jacob's sons has returned with changes of raiment, and Benjamin not only returns, but brings with him three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment. And there were "ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father", and luxurious wagons waiting to carry an old man on a long and wearying journey.

What is the story they have to tell? It is the story of a resurrection, of the re-opening of that dark chapter that was supposed to be closed, of the return to Jacob's empty aching heart of the one he supposed had been lost to him for ever.

The story, like every good story, as it approaches its climax, hastens to a close. It is not true, it never was true, that Joseph is not; and Simeon is not, and Benjamin is to be taken away. They were all always in God's safe keeping.

Later Jacob heard the story. Some day we, too, will learn the sequel to all the disappointments and distresses, to all the privations and petty cares and

painful experiences of life. Jacob rode in the wagons after that immeasurable, unending, "little while" that has a place in every life—ah yes, how does it read?—"Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said, therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith."

But the "little while" ended at length, and Jacob went down into Egypt. He saw Joseph at last. Once again he wrapped his arms about him, and the loved form that had been clothed with his coat of many colours was his again.

Yet he was another Joseph, for now all the glory of the land of Egypt was his. All the wealth was at his command. All its power was subject to his authority. And he shared it all with mourning, sorrowing, and despairing Jacob. In the end he had more than Joseph: he had Joseph's sons as well. When Joseph brought them to his father to receive his blessing, he crossed his hands in benediction. Oh, there is a lesson in the crossed hands!—

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head."

When Jacob crossed his hands and laid them, the right hand upon the head of Ephraim, and the left upon the head of Manasseh, he said, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Who is this that is speaking? Who speaks of an Angel having redeemed him from "all evil"? Have we not met with that word "all" before? Did we not hear it from these same lips, "All these things are against me"? And now he declares he has been redeemed from "all" evil! The Wise Man was right when he said, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." "All these things are against me"? No! No! There is a better word than that,—
"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The truth is, the Angel is always with us; the Angel of His presence saves us; in His love and in His pity He redeems us; He bears us and carries us through all the days of life. Thus, in the life of God's chosen always, in spite of all that seems to be contrary and disintegrating, there is a plan and purpose in it all; and the "all things" that seem to be against us are really the "all things" that work together for good. Though we complain, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter", faith protests against the assumption, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Thus it shall come to pass that at eventide it shall be light, and we shall enter into the King's palace singing,—

"Light after darkness, gain after loss,
Strength after weakness, crown after cross;

(Continued on page 12.)

HELPING NEEDY STUDENTS

In our efforts to obtain money for Christian Education we have met with many who hesitate to make an investment in any educational institution because they say that most of the colleges and universities which are now chiefly engaged in disseminating doubt and infidelity, were established by Christian men for the express purpose of propagating the faith of the gospel. In view of all the facts we are not surprised that many fear to give to educational institutions. And yet no one doubts that we need an educated ministry; and if men are to be trained for the ministry there must be schools in which they can be trained.

We have a proposal which we believe should appeal to many of the Lord's stewards. There cannot be a shadow of a doubt as to the absolute theological and spiritual soundness of every member of the Faculty of The Toronto Baptist Seminary; and those who support the work of the Seminary as it is now constituted need not have the slightest misgivings. The principles that are taught in The Toronto Baptist Seminary are the principles which are expounded in this paper. The coming year our expenses will be a little heavier because we shall have a larger student body, a third class, and additional instructors. We shall be grateful therefore if our friends will not only continue their generous support of the past, but increase their giving. Thus far the Seminary has been practically supported by Jarvis Street Church, but we are confidently expecting a larger measure of outside help this year than we have yet received.

Needy Students.

But the special purpose of this article is to appeal for help for needy students. For two years we have conducted a students' dormitory which is almost directly opposite the Seminary building on Jarvis Street. But in this dormitory we have accommodation for only twenty-three students. Students have been charged, for board and room, \$7.50 per week. There is running water in nearly every room, and most of the rooms accommodate three students. But to our amazement we found it was difficult to get the students to live in the dormitory. On enquiry, we discovered that it was because they could not very well afford to pay \$7.50 a week for room and board. Three or four of them would get together and secure a cheap room somewhere, \$4.00 or \$6.00 per week, and cut their room expenses to \$1.50 or \$2.00 per week; and then get their own meals. Of course, in such case, they lived, for the most part, on cold meals; and we fear were not properly nourished.

What the Trustees and Faculty of the Seminary would like would be to have a fund which would enable us to augment the income of certain needy students by, say, \$1.00, \$2.00, or \$3.00, a week, as the case might be. The Seminary term, from September 30th, 1929, to May 16th, 1930, would roughly be thirty-three weeks. In the case of some students, an extra \$1.00, \$2.00, or \$3.00, per week, would make all the difference between the possible and the impossible.

Are there not some of our readers who could send us \$1,000.00 for this purpose? That would enable us

to put a certain number of students, for example, in the dormitory, supplementing their income, let us say, for illustration's sake, by \$3.00 per week. \$1,000.00 would make it possible for us to help ten students to the extent of \$3.00 a week each. To add that to what they could provide, say \$4.50 per week, would give them a fine Christian home, and good wholesome food, for one year. \$2,000.00, of course, would double the number.

If we had the money we should like to take several large houses for dormitory purposes, and keep all our students together in one happy Christian family. The idea occurs to us as we write, that there might be some of the Lord's stewards in Toronto or hereabout who would be interested in this proposal. Here is a suggestion: some of large means might buy several large houses within easy reach of the Seminary—if not several, perhaps one—which they could hold each in his own name, as his own property, and say to the Seminary: "For the next five years (or ten years as the case may be, more or less) provided you continue to magnify the Bible as God's word, and Jesus Christ as His only Son; and train young men and women to preach uncompromisingly the unsearchable riches of Christ, you may have the use of this building to house your students, rent free." Such a benefactor, in this way, would always have the property under his own control; and would be running no risks of making a bad investment.

But there are many others who could not do that, who could send us varying sums of money to be used by the Seminary management to assist needy students. Many a student could testify that one or two dollars a week would be to them a Godsend. By this means, if we had no large houses at our disposal, the Seminary could secure rooms in different houses, which would be under the Seminary's supervision, and pay the rent of them, thus giving the student his room rent-free, or at reduced rates, according to his ability to pay.

How many of our readers, then, will write and say that they want to help one student to the extent of \$1.00 per week, for thirty-three weeks, or five students to the extent of \$1.00 per week, as the case may be? Write the President of the Seminary, the Editor of this paper, on this matter immediately. Applications are being received from prospective students daily, and it will help us greatly in arranging for the Seminary opening in the Fall if our friends will send along their contributions immediately.

"Go Thou and Do Likewise"

This week we received a letter from a Christian layman in Australia containing a cheque for one hundred dollars, with the names of nineteen persons to each of whom he requested "The Gospel Witness" be sent for one year, and that the balance of sixty-two dollars be used to help defray the expense of the big Des Moines University issue of "The Witness".

How we should like to receive a hundred such letters every day! Why not invest some of the Lord's money in this way?

THE PRESENT STATUS OF EVOLUTIONARY FAITH

By Rev. Professor Floyd E. Hamilton, Korea.

Strange as it may seem, most scientists to-day regard evolution as a closed question. The majority of them see no reason whatever even for discussing a subject which they deem settled long ago; and they are inclined to be impatient and resentful at those who persist in making evolution a subject of controversy. They became convinced of the truth of evolution thirty years ago, and using evolution as an assumption, proceeded to construct a number of sciences such as biology, geology, anthropology, etc., which to-day can hardly be taught on any other basis than that of the assumption of the truth of evolution.

In fact, it may almost be said that the correlation and systematization of facts bearing on the theory of evolution stopped with Herbert Spencer, for when the scientific world accepted evolution, there seemed no longer any reason to waste time proving it. With the development of scientific specialization, the evolutionary systematist became an anachronism, and since it was no longer possible for a man to be an authority on *all* the sciences bearing on evolution, scientists ceased to attempt to correlate or to criticize the discoveries of colleagues in branches concerning which they had no first-hand knowledge.

With the advance in the technique of the microscope, even biology became too vast a field for one man to master in detail, and the various specialists found their time so largely taken up with detailed investigations that they actually had no time for investigation of discoveries outside their own special fields. Though facts bearing on the question of evolution were continually being discovered, for the most part they remained *unrelated* facts, for there was no great systematist, like Darwin, to show their relation to the evolutionary theory. Of course, parts of the theory of evolution had to be remodelled, but no one dreamed of abandoning the principle of evolution itself, for it had become an integral part of all these sciences so that abandoning it would be almost like abandoning the sciences themselves.

The natural result of this general scientific attitude was that any re-examination of the evidence for evolution itself became practically impossible. It seemed almost like questioning the multiplication table, or like examining the evidence for the roundness of a circle! Each student of science, hearing evolution taught as unquestioned truth on all sides, naturally grew up an evolutionist, and if he became sufficiently interested in any branch of science to make a specialty of it, soon became so engrossed in his detailed investigations that he had no time or inclination to question the principle itself.

During the last two decades, however, a remarkable phenomenon has occurred. Gradually, item by item, the original Darwinian theory of the Origin of the Species has been abandoned as a *cause* of evolution,¹ and as new discoveries in cytology and genetics became generally known there occurred a subtle change in the teaching of the theory of evolution itself. While many scientists like Sir Arthur Keith still call themselves Darwinians, and still try to cling to the Darwinian theory,² scientists as a group have abandoned Darwinism. Darwin's name, it is true, is still lauded, and his great service to science

still praised by the majority of scientists. They believe in evolution as firmly as ever, but in place of the old confidence and assertiveness that natural selection was the sovereign explanation of all the problems connected with the origin of species, there is now only ambiguity of statement and vagueness of thought, with increasing agnosticism as to the *causes* of the evolution which they all believe in. Even the old definitions of evolution are giving way to new ones like the following: "Embryology further shows that evolution is not invariably an advance from lower and simpler to higher and more complex types, but may be by way of degeneration, and degradation."³ In contrast to Le Conte's famous definition that "Evolution is continuous progressive change, according to certain laws and by means of resident forces,"⁴ the evolution of scientific opinion is striking, to say the least! If evolution has come to mean going backward or downward as well as going forward or upward, then almost anyone to-day can be an evolutionist! The Bible doctrine of the fall of man would be right in line with such "evolution"!

If embryologists have, as Professor Scott says, proved that evolution may be by way of *degeneration*, then however much evolution may still remain as the fundamental principle of geology and biology, nothing could be plainer than that there needs to be a complete re-examination of the evidence for evolution itself, for how can it any longer be claimed that all life has evolved from a single cell or group of cells by means of resident forces? Why may not the alternative, and certainly more plausible, explanation that the forms of life in the world to-day represent a *degeneration from the originally created* forms of life, be accepted even by evolutionists themselves? Evolutionists can still call that evolution if they desire, but if they define evolution as sometimes occurring "by way of degeneration" they have in reality accepted the logical possibility of special creation of the species originally!

Statements like the one quoted above from Professor Scott might lead the uninformed observer to think that perhaps the belief in evolution itself was disintegrating, but as a matter of fact the idea of evolution is still as firmly entrenched in the scientific mind as ever. It is only the *logic* of the belief that has been abandoned. Since the famous address at Toronto delivered by the late Professor Bateson a few years ago, which Professor Osborn deplored as likely to lead laymen in science astray, the majority of scientists have adopted the position which Professor Bateson then stated so frankly as that of *faith* in the *fact* of evolution having occurred, but ignorance or agnosticism as to the *causes* which have brought it about.⁵ Vernon Kellogg voices what is probably the consensus of scientific opinion when he says: "But—let me repeat—because the biologists do not know, or only partially know, the causes of evolution, to assume from this that they have any doubts at all of the reality of evolution, would be to assume what is not true. I do not know of a single living biologist of high repute—

¹ L. T. Moore: "Dogma of Evolution".

² W. B. Scott: "Theory of Evolution".

³ W. B. Scott: "Theory of Evolution".

⁴ Le Conte: "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought".

⁵ "Science", N. S., Vol. LV, No. 1412.

and I do not determine repute on a required basis of belief in evolution!—who does not believe in evolution as a proved part of scientific knowledge.”¹ From this it appears that we find science in the strange position of falling back on *faith in the dogma* of evolution, after all attempts to unravel the mystery of the causes which brought it about have ended in failure! A careful examination of the various possible causes will make it clear, just what a sheer venture of blind faith this is; but the point we are calling attention to now is that there is almost no division of opinion among scientists on two points: (1) that evolution is a fact, and (2) that no explanation of the causes which are alleged to have produced it has been, or can be, accepted by scientists of the present date. Darwinism is dead, Sir Arthur Keith and the Bishop of Birmingham to the contrary notwithstanding. It served the valuable (according to the evolutionists) purpose of convincing the scientific world of the fact of evolution, but now has to be abandoned as a theory of explanation of the causes of evolution. And though Darwinism is dead, alas, no other explanation has taken its place! Mendelism, mutations and what not, have all been examined, accepted in part or in total, and yet rejected as adequate explanations of the causes of evolution. Even the dead corpse of the theory of “acquired characters” was galvanized into an appearance of life by the late Professor Kammerer, (who committed suicide when he discovered that someone had falsified the photographic plates of the salamander upon which he depended to prove that acquired characters were inherited) and Pavlov,² only to be discarded as hopeless by most modern biologists. In short, all *possible* causes have been carefully investigated, and one by one abandoned as real explanations of evolution. Evolutionists conceal this fact even from themselves, and still cling to the delusion that some day, somehow, a cause adequate to have brought about evolution will be discovered. They seek to convey the impression that there are numerous possible causes of evolution which have not been thoroughly investigated, so that it is only a question of time and patient research before the definite causes of evolution will be discovered. What they are concealing, oftentimes even from themselves, is the fact that *all* possible causes of evolution have *already* been examined and one by one discarded. If evolution was not produced by any one of the possible causes now known to science, or by any combination of those causes, then *no* cause could have produced it, for there are simply *no other causes* to be investigated. Evolutionists still speak in the vaguest terms of the way in which water animals “acquired” the habit of spending part of their time on land between the tides, on some mud flat, until at last they “developed” lungs, as though all that was necessary to bring forth the lungs was the *need* for lungs! Every biologist, except possibly the few who still cling to the delusion that acquired characteristics can be inherited, will admit that such statements have no basis in biological facts, and can only be asserted in blind, unreasoning faith. The mechanism of mutations and of Mendelian changes amply accounts for all inheritance factors, but there is no way in which a *new* characteristic, such as lungs, could ever enter the evolutionary chain except by special creation which they deny. Any factor which is present as a gene on one of the chromosomes may lie dormant for some time, until by a “cross-over” (to adopt

a convenient phrase) it is brought into the somatoplasm (i.e. the cells of the body, not the germ cells) and appears externally as a mutation, but unless present originally in the chromosomes, *there is no way in which it can get in from without*. Mutations such as those above mentioned occur in a certain fixed ratio, in nature, and can be definitely calculated in advance, for the *Drosophila* for example, but these mutations always are produced by the *loss* of certain genes present in the ancestors (usually, if not always, through a “cross-over”), and never by the *addition* of new factors.

It has been claimed recently that this process can be speeded up by exposing the germ plasm to X-rays, so that the mutations which have to be waited for patiently in nature can be artificially produced by the effects of X-rays almost at will.³ In announcing the discovery of this fact the statement was made that it was the process of evolution that was speeded up. This, of course, is directly opposite from the fact, for it is *devolution*, or degeneration that is speeded up, not *evolution*, if by evolution is meant progressive changes, with the production of new and more complex organisms.

The fact is, as has been stated above, that every possible cause has actually been examined and found wanting. Nothing now known to science could have produced evolution, and there is nothing left to examine. Yet strange to say, instead of abandoning evolution, or re-examining the alleged evidence for evolution, scientists fall back on *faith*! They say that they still *believe* in the fact of evolution, though they do not know what could have produced it!

Now to the outsider, this situation seems ridiculous. In fact, were the whole subject not so closely entwined with moral and religious implications, the scientific attitude toward evolution would be amusing. After so many scientists for so long a time have ridiculed as unscientific the Christian's faith in the Word of God as a divine revelation and have spurned miracles as contrary to natural law, all because we believe that God can control nature and can intervene in nature whenever He desires, to find these same scientists depending upon *faith* to prove evolution is interesting, to say the least!

In any other phase of human activity, if all possible causes which might have produced a thing have been examined, investigated, and abandoned as explanations, were the thing in question an intangible theory, the evidence in its support would begin to be seriously examined and questioned. Why are not scientists doing the same thing in regard to evolution? If there are no known causes which might have produced evolution, why is not the fact of evolution having occurred brought out into the light of day and given a careful re-examination? To the outsider this would seem the natural and inevitable thing to be done, but it is not done by the scientists themselves. One is reminded of a banker whose funds and credit are exhausted, yet who keeps a bold front before the world, and becomes even more vociferous in proclaiming the solidity of the bank when that solidity is challenged by sceptics.

From *The Evangelical Quarterly*, Edinburgh, July, 1929.

¹ Kellogg: “Evolution, The Way of Man”.

² Kellogg: “Evolution, The Way of Man”.

³ “Science”, N. S., Vol. LXVII, No. 1728.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A LOVER'S IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 28th, 1929.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."—Ruth 3:18.

Prayer before the Sermon.

In the quiet of this evening hour, O Lord, we approach Thy throne of grace with confidence; indeed, we come boldly, because Thou hast commanded us so to come. We thank Thee for the story of Thy redeeming love, for Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness hast Thou drawn us. We rejoice that we are not left to grope in the darkness, to attempt to discover that which is undiscoverable; but that Thou hast given us Thy Word of truth to instruct us, and the Spirit of Truth to enlighten our understandings and to lead us into the treasures of wisdom which Thou hast stored therein.

We beseech Thee this evening to grant us a special consciousness of Thy presence. We thank Thee for this privilege of worshipping Thee. While many have been prevented by the storm from coming, we are here in the house of God, with the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, and the Son of God to be our Saviour. Lead us all by Thy gracious Spirit this evening so that we may leave this place rich in Thy grace, with the assurance in our hearts that we are heirs with Christ Jesus the Lord. Command Thy blessing upon us now as we study Thy Word, and if there be one in Thy presence who has never known the love of God, who has not yet been made to rejoice in His pardoning mercy, we pray that such an one may be brought from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. We ask it in the name of Him Who is our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

"Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." The book of Ruth is one of the sweetest love stories that ever was written. It is impossible for anyone with spiritual discernment, it seems to me, to read this story without seeing in it the story of the gospel, of Him Who is our Redeemer.

This text which I have read to you belongs to a chapter which approaches the climax of the story. Naomi, you remember, returned from Moab's land. She had gone with her husband and two sons, and had buried them all in that far country. Returning, she was accompanied by the wives of the two sons, Orpah and Ruth. She bade them return to their own land, and not forsake their kindred. One of them kissed her mother-in-law and returned, but the other replied in those lovely words so frequently quoted, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

When Naomi saw the determination of Ruth she left speaking with her, and they returned to Bethlehem together in the time of barley harvest.

Ruth went out to glean after the reapers, and her "hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz". I read you the sweet story in the second chapter this evening. Then later, under the direction of her mother-in-law, she made known her interest in Boaz—but more about that later. When she returned the second time and told her mother-in-law what Boaz had said, that he had acknowledged that he was one of her near kinsmen on account of his relationship to Elimelech, Naomi said, "Ah, there is something in prospect. Now you be careful. Sit still, my daughter, and see how the matter will fall. I think I know Boaz. I think I know the family to which he belongs; and I know the man will not be at rest until he has finished the thing this day. He will prove himself the determined lover. He will go all the way, and perform his duty as a kinsman." That, in brief, is the history.

I.

I want you now to look first of all at SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS MOABITRESS, Ruth, who came back from the far country.

First, I remind you that *she was a widow*. She was a woman who had met with many disappointments. She had tasted of the springs of life, and e'en as she stooped to drink, the waters had failed her. She had been in the valley of the shadow. She had found herself stripped and left alone. So she left her own country to go to Bethlehem, for Naomi had heard that the Lord had visited her country in giving them bread.

It is thus, dear friends, that people come to Christ. When they have tried everything else, and everybody else, when they have exhausted, so far as it is possible, the possibilities of life apart from God—it is then the majority of people turn to Him. Not until he had spent all and began to be in want did the prodigal return to his father's house. No! No! this is not a love story of the sort that men write. This is a story that tells of a new beginning, of a new hope, of a new prospect, after all the hopes of life had been withered and were dead. This is not the love story of a fair maiden, lovely as a June morning; but the story of a poor widow, who, after hope had died in her breast, began to live again. What a mercy it is that He Who is entitled to the first place, and Who is the "firstborn from the dead"; that in all things he might have the preeminence, in the condescension of His grace stoops to take, alas! alas! not only the second place, but in the beginning sometimes the last place! It is thus we all have treated Him, not making

Him first but putting Him last. Yet His grace abounds and there is hope for every widowed soul, for every man and woman who has tasted of the disappointments of this earthly life, who have found that the springs dry up, and the treasures become empty, and the granaries sometimes become bare; and who come from a famine country at last to God.

I would remind you, too, that *this widowed soul was very poor*. She did not come from the far country to boast of the land she had left behind. Her mother-in-law said, "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. All that I had I lost. I went to Moab's land in the hope of finding wealth; instead of that, I lost all that I had." And Ruth returned with her, without means of sustenance, poor as she could be. Will not somebody write a love story in which the hero and heroine are poor people? Will not somebody write the romance of the poor? Why is it that we insist upon reading of princes and princesses, of fabulous wealth, of great palaces? Here was a poor woman, a widow at the end of herself, with no skill to earn a living. Ah, yes, the bride of Christ was once very poor, very, very, poor! She came from a famine-stricken country, and she came without dowry, not with rings on her hands and wealth to her credit. Is that your condition this evening? Have you to confess that your hands are empty—

"Nothing in my hands I bring"?

This Book tells us of the possibilities of a high and holy romance, of One Who has compassion on the poor.

Will you notice, too, that Ruth *had no skill to acquire wealth*? She was not trained for any particular kind of service. How very human the story is! As these two women came to Bethlehem they conferred with each other and said, "Now, what next? Here we are at last with no bread and no money." I think Ruth said, "But I must go out to work. I must try to earn something. Yet I cannot do that. I will tell you what I shall do: I will go out as a gleaner; I will go out and beg somebody's kindness; out into the harvest field I will go and gather up the few straws that are left behind, which the reapers have neglected." Naomi said, "That is about the best that you can do. I know of no other opening than to go after the reapers. You have come back with me, and here we are two poor beggar women, in Bethlehem, in the house of bread."

That is how people come to Christ. You remember the unjust steward said, "I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed." But you cannot get to heaven if you will not beg. You will have to humble your pride, you will have to be dependent upon somebody's grace, because you cannot serve God as His angels serve Him—"who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Can you serve after that fashion? Yet we read that even the heavens are unclean in His sight, and that He charges His angels with folly. What chance have we of finding a place of service in the kingdom of the Holy One? No chance at all. We shall have to begin as Ruth did, as those who glean after the reapers. It is a pretty dark picture, is it not?

But there is another point to which I must call your attention. *Ruth came from Moab's land*. She was not an Israelite. She was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and a stranger to the covenant of promise,

without God. She did not belong to the favoured people. She was not of the same race as Boaz or Naomi. And we are aliens, all of us. We are strangers. We do not belong to the heavenly company. We do not know God's language. We have not His nature. We are not akin to God, but are enemies in our minds by wicked works, children of wrath even as others. Is there any chance at all that the Prince of Glory will ever set His love upon such as we are, poor Moabite gleaners, begging a supply of barley, that we may have merely our daily bread?

Had you been writing that story, would you thus have written the foundation for it? *Nothing is said here about the personal appearance of Ruth*. No, it is not said, as it is said of some in the Book, that she was "fair to look upon". I do not know what she was like. She may have been in many respects a most unattractive woman. I know we are unattractive! Can you tell me why anybody should love you? Can you? I never have been able to find any reason why anybody should love me. We are a most unlovable lot, all of us. I never try to explain marriages. They are inexplicable. But here is one of the strangest stories of all; a beggar, a stranger, becomes the heroine of the tale, and the ancestress of the Lord of Glory!

II.

Let us look at THE INTERESTING STEPS WHICH CULMINATED IN MARRIAGE, but which are ordinarily described as courtship,—how two people got to know each other. I am always interested in that, to find out how it happened, where they met; and sometimes a strange tale is thereby unfolded.

Let us look at this. If I were to ask you this evening, those of you who are Christians, how you were converted, there is not a man or woman here who could tell me. You could tell me, perhaps, most of you, that at a particular time and at a particular place, there came to you the consciousness that you were a child of God. There was a time when you were betrothed to your Well-Beloved. But if I say, Will you explain the gracious processes that led you on step by step until you came to know the Lord, you could not do so. Few of us write our own spiritual biography, and some of us would have to write it just as Ruth did, or at least as Ruth's was written.

Let me pause a moment to talk to you who have had long experience in the Christian life. Some of you want everybody to be run into your mould. I sat some years ago with a pastor and his deacons when certain young people were being examined as to their fitness for baptism and church fellowship. There was one deacon there who told his story again and again. He told how he was deeply convicted of sin, how for two weeks he was unable to sleep or to eat, and how at last one night in desperation he went down by one of the piers of a bridge that crossed a small river in the town, and there he found peace. And he insisted upon just such an experience on the part of everyone. It seemed to me that the dear brother could hardly believe that anybody could be converted at any time, anywhere, but down by that pier where he had been converted! and that nobody was genuinely a Christian unless he or she had at least two weeks of sleepless nights! Blessed be God for such a work of grace as that, when deep repentance is wrought in the soul!

Some are brought to the Lord in a very different fashion, however, but it is still grace,—

“Grace first contrived a way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.”

How did Ruth come to know Boaz? In a very natural way. Yet, it was very supernatural, too; and sometimes the supernatural is the most natural thing in the world—at least it seems to be the most natural. Ruth went out to glean in the field; in the quaint old record it is written, “and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz.” It just *happened*, did it? What do you mean by “it happened”? If you mean that it was without human design, yes; but if you mean by that that it was mere chance, then a thousand times, no. Things do not *happen* to Ruth! Things do not *happen* to God’s elect people. “She went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.”

My dear friends, long before we knew Him we all gleaned in the fields of Boaz. He had laden us with benefits all our lives long before we knew Him,—

“When all Thy mercy, O my God,
My raptured soul surveys;
Transported with the view I’m lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

“Unnumbered comforts to my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From whom those comforts flowed.

“When in the slippery paths of youth
With heedless steps I ran,
Thine arm unseen conveyed me safe,
And led me up to man.

“Through hidden dangers, toils, and death,
It gently cleared my way,
And through the pleasing snares of vice,
More to be feared than they.

“When worn with sickness, oft hast thou
With health renewed my face;
And when in sins and sorrows sunk,
Revived my soul with grace.

“The bounteous hand with worldly bliss
Has made my cup run o’er,
And in a kind and faithful friend
Has doubled all my store.”

And when at last we come to know Boaz, and we sit down with him and talk it all over—as they do, you know, explaining to each other how the thing occurred—we have to say, “How strange it was, that that should have happened!” It may be that in the glory some man or woman will say, “How extraordinary it was! I was going to another church, I had not the slightest intention of going to Jarvis Street; but you remember that wet night? You remember when it rained almost as it did in the days of Noah? Well, I could not go very far, and because I could not go anywhere else I *happened* to go in there. I *happened*

to hear the gospel. And I *happened* to be saved that night.” No! No! Nothing *happens* to those upon whom our gracious God has set His everlasting love.

Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz, and then *she talked with the lord of the field before she had any hope or interest in him*. He asked somebody, “Who is that young woman yonder?” “Why”, they said, “it is Ruth the Moabitess who returned with her mother-in-law Naomi from Moab’s land. She came and asked if she might glean after the reapers, and we told her she might. She is here with the other poor women gleaning.” Boaz talked to Ruth, and still she did not know who he was. He said, “It is all right. You follow after the reapers. Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.” She thanked him, she expressed her gratitude that she had found favor in his sight.

“When did you begin to pray? I remember reading a story that Mr. Spurgeon once told. When he was a young preacher he said, speaking on one occasion, that the Lord had answered his prayer before he was converted. Some very strict theologian came to take him to task at the close of the service. Now Spurgeon was one of the greatest theologians the world has ever known, yet this man came and said, “You made a mistake this morning.” “How is that, sir?” Spurgeon enquired. “You said the Lord answered your prayer before you were converted. The Lord never answers the prayers of people before they are converted. He answers the prayer only of His children.” Then some mother in Israel overheard it, and said, “Go away with you, and do not bother the young man. Do you not know that it is written, ‘He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry’? Are the ravens converted? Yet the Lord heareth them.” You may call it contradictory as much as you like, but I am positive the Lord answered my prayer before I knew I was a Christian. I know I met Boaz in His own fields before I knew Him; I know that I talked with Him and He with me. You say, “You must have been the Lord’s child and did not know it. When did it begin?” I do not know: I know only that I remember the day when I was positive it was finished; when it began, I do not know.

If we go back over our Christian experience I am confident that we may recall many a day in the fields of Boaz when we talked with a Stranger. Yes, there are times when we walked with the Lord, and our hearts burned within us, yet we did not know who the Stranger was Who talked with us. But there is the story: Ruth is gleaning after the reapers.

Then, it is rather a sweet touch, that when mealtime came, and the reapers sat down to eat, *it happened that Boaz was among them!* I wonder why? He had come from Bethlehem and had said, “The Lord bless you”, and they replied, “The Lord be with you.” But he stayed! He stayed! When the reapers at mealtime sat down, Ruth accepted the invitation given and sat down with the rest. Then Boaz reached her some parched corn, and she ate it. He played host that day,

and saw that this poor widow from Moab's land was cared for, was looked after. Oh, turn back the pages of your life-story, and if your memory is quickened by the Holy Spirit you will recall many a time when a Stranger reached you some parched corn; many a time when you had got to the end of yourself, and Somebody stepped in Whose name you did not know. But you felt as though you had had a heavenly vision. When the bread was broken, and He vanished out of your sight, you said, "Perhaps it was a very ordinary circumstance after all." No, it was not: it was Boaz finding His place among the reapers.

Then Boaz said, "You stay in my field. There is plenty for you here. Stay in my field; keep fast by my maidens; do not glean anywhere else; you follow after them until the end of barley harvest." How often have I seen people gleaning in the fields of Boaz! There is a man who goes to church every Sunday. He loves to go; and not infrequently he goes to the place of prayer. He is interested in religious services; he would rather hear a sermon than see a play any time. He loves to hear about the things of God. I come to him and say, Are you a Christian, sir? "No", he replies. You have not been born again? I continue. "No", he again admits. You do not know Jesus Christ? "No". But you come to church? "Yes, I love to come to church. I would rather come to church than go anywhere else. Have you not noticed me among your regular hearers?" Yes, and I am glad you are here. I am glad you are in the fields of Boaz. I am glad you are where the blessing may be had. Ah, yes! And again and again, Somebody has reached him a little parched corn! And some day Somebody will introduce Himself.

Then somehow or another as Ruth was gleaning *she found there was a good deal of barley on the ground*,—not just an occasional straw here and there, but sometimes she would gather a whole handful. Do you know why? Because Boaz had whispered to the reapers, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." So she gathered, and when even was come her hands were full. She threshed it, and took it home.

There was something I noticed as I was reading that chapter to you this evening that I had never noticed before. It is a fine thing to read the Bible over and over because one finds something new with each reading. "And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat and was sufficed, and left." She had some left over of that which Boaz gave her. Then when she came home it is said, "And she brought forth, and gave to her (Naomi) that she had reserved after she was sufficed." She came home to Naomi and said, "Mother, I have brought you just a little bit of that which I received from his hand." It was not what she had threshed out, but it was what Boaz gave her. She had a little bit left over, and she said, "I will take that home to mother."

People take some corn home from church sometimes to those who are not there. It is like a piece of wedding-cake taken home to those who were not at the wedding. You cannot sit down with our Boaz among the reapers without having something to take home.

He not only sufficeth us, but gives us a little bit over to feed others who are hungry.

When Ruth came home, and Naomi saw all the barley she had, she said, "Ruth, where have you been? Where hast thou gleaned to-day? People do not bring home as much as that when they go gleaning. In whose fields have you been? Who has been good and kind to-day? Blessed is he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead." Then Ruth told her mother-in-law the story: "I was gleaning in the fields of a rich man. I met him, and found out afterwards his name was Boaz. I just happened to go into his field. He was so kind to me that he said, 'At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.' And when mealtime came I sat down with the reapers. I had a good meal, and I brought you a little, mother. Then I went back to my toil and I found that the field was thicker; and see how much I have at the end of the day."

Naomi had had experience, and she said, "There is something in that! Boaz, did you say! He is one of our near kinsmen. How extraordinary that you should happen to get into his field! What did he say?" "He said I was not to go anywhere else." "That is right", said Naomi, "it is good for you that you stay fast by his maidens, that you abide in his fields. Shut yourself up to Boaz; depend upon Boaz; and it will be all right."

It is parallel to the story of the unfolding of the purposes of grace in the life of many a believer. I cannot tell you how many people I have seen with their hands full of barley. I have felt like saying to them, You are not a Christian? "No." But you have a great deal of barley. Where did you get it? "I am not a Christian, but I am interested in Christ. I like to go to church." You glean with the reapers, do you? Boaz has had His eyes on you many a day, and He will do more for you and with you after a while. That is how the Spirit of God sometimes works, long before we are aware that God has a purpose of grace in our lives.

There may be somebody here whose case I have been describing. Some man or some woman perhaps says, "Yes, I confess that there was a time when the Bible was very dry to me, but now when I open it I find"—what do you find?—"I find some handfuls of purpose for me. I go through the pages and it seems that I find something especially for me. No, I am not a Christian; but I do delight in the things of God, and I hope some day—I hope some day that I may be saved. But I should not like to say that I am saved as yet." If thus far you have come, let me give you Naomi's advice to Ruth, "It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. Stay in the way of blessing. Glean after the reapers until at last the secret is out, and you meet Boaz in another way."

III.

HOW DID THIS INTERESTING COURTSHIP CULMINATE IN MARRIAGE? How does the Lover of our souls at last disclose His purpose and claim us for His own? How does He do it?

I wish you would read, at your leisure, the third chapter. Of course this is an old-world story, a very

ancient story, and some people would say that it is quite obsolete. But as you read the third chapter you will find that *Ruth helped a little*. Of course women are not supposed to do that! Each is supposed to be like a sphinx—just not interested at all! It is supposed to be all one-sided! Boaz must make all the advances! That is what they say—and perhaps this is rather old-fashioned! Perhaps this is the way it used to be done. But I am rather inclined to believe the fact to be that this Book, unlike other books, tells the truth; because I have a shrewd suspicion that this is how it is usually done even in our day! There is a mutuality about it. No! No! It is not all on one side!

And *Naomi put Ruth up to it!* She really did! She told her what to do.

Why should it not be mutual? I know that salvation is all of grace. I *know* it is: And I am positive that Ruth would never have responded to the suggestion of her mother-in-law *if she had not, almost unknown to herself, first of all, fallen in love with Boaz*. She was not reluctant to do it. She began to feel that he was a great and good man. We love Him because He first loved us. It ought not to be immodest to answer the appeal of love. And while salvation is all of grace, I know that our Boaz has a way of winning the affections of His beloved, and moving their wills, so that they do exactly what he wants them to do. Yes, it was with Ruth as it is with every saved soul. Somewhere I have read it,—

"For ah, the Master is so fair,
So sweet His smile on banished men,
That they who meet Him unaware
Can never rest on earth again,

"And they who see Him risen above
On God's right hand to welcome them;
Forgetful stand of home and land,
Desiring fair Jerusalem."

What is the philosophy of conversion? How does it happen? Like this: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." That is how it happens. God calls: we answer. Boaz proposes: we accept.

What did Boaz say? He said, "I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I, and I have not the first right to redeem the inheritance of the dead. There is another kinsman nearer, and I shall have to give him his first chance. I will call the elders together, and I will summon him and will challenge him to exercise the office of redeemer. But, Ruth, I do not think he will do it; and if he does not, I will do it. But we shall have to observe the law."

Ruth went home, and told her mother-in-law, "I have had another interview with Boaz. He told me a wonderful story. He said he was a near kinsman, but not the nearest of kin; and that he cannot redeem the inheritance until the other kinsman is out of the way. If the other refuses, then Boaz will do it." It was then Naomi said, "It is all right, Ruth. You do not need to worry any more. Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day. You can trust Boaz. He will see the thing

through. Make no mistake, there is going to be a wedding! Boaz will finish his work. I know him. I know the stock of which he comes."

You remember how the custom of that day was observed: the elders assembled at the gate of the city. There were ten men, elders of the city, and they sat down. Then Boaz said to the next kinsman, "Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. If you are going to take the farm, you will have to take Ruth with it." "Oh", said the kinsman, "that is another story. I am willing to redeem the land, but I do not know about her! I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."

Then Boaz plucked off his shoe, as was the manner of that time, confirming these things. Boaz bought the inheritance. He said to the elders, "Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife." He paid down the money in the sight of the elders, and said, "It is all settled."

Naomi was right: he finished the thing that day. He did not stop until it was finished. He said to Ruth, "Everything is now out of the way"; and he took the inheritance, and took Ruth the Moabite to be his wife. And the record, while it says nothing about the appearance of Ruth, does say that he was a very great man, and a mighty man of wealth; and the poor widow-gleaner became the bride of a millionaire.

How did he do it? There was another kinsman, nearer than Boaz whose duty it was to redeem the inheritance. And our Lord Jesus was not our kinsman. We were Moabites. He was not our kinsman. But when flesh and blood did in Adam fail, God saw to it that flesh and blood "should strive again, against the foe, should strive and should not fail". "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He became our Kinsman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, in order that He might have the right to redeem us. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Our Boaz, our Redeemer, has paid the purchase price. He has bought the inheritance, and He has bought us with the inheritance; and beyond all peradventure some day there is going to be a wedding! The marriage of the Lamb will come! Nothing can stop it. And when it comes, the universe shall be advertised—to use the old phrase in our text; "I thought to advertise them", to inform

thee—the universe shall be informed that His wife made herself ready.

You have read the parable of the pearl of great price. What does it mean? A merchantman seeking pearls, who, when he found a pearl—what does it mean? Is that sinner seeking everlasting life? No. You cannot obtain everlasting life by selling all you have and buying it. The merchantman was Jesus Christ Himself, and the pearl of great price was the church, His bride, His own possession. When He found her, He sold all that He had and bought her. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, if I may dare to say so, invested all heaven's wealth in the enterprise of redemption. And He is going to have the purchase of His blood. Our Boaz will have His Ruth.

And when the wedding day shall come, the wedding shall be furnished with guests. There will be no vacant seats; when by and by the celestial city is occupied, every mansion will have a tenant. There will not be one with a sign, "To Let". There will be no vacant houses, and there will be no single vacant chair at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Why? "The man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." Our Bridegroom is not easily discouraged. Our Bridegroom will not be turned aside from His purposes. He "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Let us sing that hymn we have been singing a good deal in our prayer-meetings of late,—

"Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know;
Spirit, breathing from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so!
Oh, this full and perfect peace!
Oh, this transport all divine!
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green!
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine.

"Things that once were wild alarms
Cannot now disturb my rest;
Closed in everlasting arms,
Pillowed on the loving breast.
Oh to lie for ever here,
Doubt and care and self resign,
While He whispers in my ear,—
I am His, and He is mine!

"His for ever, only His;
Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss
Christ can fill the loving heart!

Heaven and earth may fade and flee,
First-born light in gloom decline;
But, while God and I shall be,
I am His, and He is mine."

"ALL THESE THINGS ARE AGAINST ME."

(Continued from page 3.)

Sweet after bitter, hope after fears,
Home after wandering, praise after tears.

"Sheaves after sowing, sun after rain,
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;
Joy after sorrow, calm after blast,
Rest after weariness, sweet rest at last.

"Near after distant, gleam after gloom,
Love after loneliness, life after tomb;
After long agony, rapture of bliss,
Right was the pathway leading to this."

A NEW EVANGELICAL PERIODICAL.

We have before us the third number of *The Evangelical Quarterly* published by James Clark & Co., London, and W. F. Henderson, Edinburgh, and at Amsterdam by Kirberger & Kesper. The Editorial Committee are Rev. Professor John R. McKay, D.D., and Rev. Professor Donald Maclean, D.D., Edinburgh.

The magazine is described as "A Theological Review, International in Scope and Outlook, in Defense of the Historic Christian Faith."

We welcome this able ally in the great war for the faith once for all delivered for the saints. The practical neutrality of many professed Evangelicals, and the guilty silence of hosts of ministers and professors who privately profess their allegiance to historic Christianity lays a heavier burden upon those who are endeavouring to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. *The Evangelical Quarterly* will greatly assist both the Munitions and Commissariat departments in the Evangelical army. Pastors, missionaries, professors, students, and Christian workers generally, will find in its pages a tonic for their faith, food for their soul, and weapons for their armoury.

The intellectual quality of this periodical may be judged by the following Table of Contents: THE DATE OF THE EXODUS, by Rev. Professor Robert Moore, B.A. (Oxon.), B.D., Edinburgh; THE REALITY OF PROPHETIC REVELATION, by Professor Dr. G. Ch. Aalders, Amsterdam; OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Rev. Alexander Ross, M.A., B.D., Swift Current, Sask., Canada; THE MESSIANIC PROMISE OF SALVATION AND THE LATER DISCOVERIES, by Professor Dr. J. Ridderbos, Kampen, Holland; THE PRESENT STATUS OF EVOLUTIONARY FAITH (Reproduced in this issue of *The Gospel Witness*), by Rev. Professor Floyd E. Hamilton, Korea; THE CHURCH THE WORLD NEEDS, by Rev. Professor John R. McKay, D.D., Edinburgh; THE IDEA OF PROGRESS, by Professor Dr. A. A. Van Schebeen, Haarlem, Holland.

The price of *The Evangelical Quarterly* is ten shillings per annum, or per copy, post free, two and ninepence. Every Evangelical minister of all denominations should subscribe for this magazine. Order from James Clarke & Co., 9 Essex St., London, W.C. 2, or from W. F. Henderson, George IV. Bridge, Edinburgh.

The Union Baptist Witness

These pages (13, 14) are the Authorized Official Organ of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Ontario and Quebec.

W. GORDON BROWN, Editor.

Communications for this department should be addressed direct to W. Gordon Brown, Box 502, Orangeville, Ontario.

FUNERALS IN LIBERIA.

A letter from Missionary A. J. Lewis, dated June 2nd, contains the following interesting account of the work in that devil-beridden country:

"We find that the only way to get the people at this time of the year is at night-time; so we have been going out and holding services at night in the villages. These services have been well attended, and people have asked us to come back often; so I believe the seed is finding a lodging-place in many hearts.

There have been several deaths in the villages around, and it is pitiful to hear the bitter wailing. Their method of burying the body is gruesome. After the person dies, the body is washed, rubbed with chalk, dressed, and laid out in the kitchen or open hut at the rear of the house. A fire is maintained at night, and the people keep mourning, singing, and drumming, and finally sleep beside the body through the night. Next morning, rice is placed upon the breast, and in the ears of the corpse, and a man, holding a chicken aloft, calls upon the body to witness if it is displeased with them. The chicken is then placed where it can eat the rice. If it eats the rice, the indication is that the person dead bears no malice; but should the chicken refuse the rice, then there is anger in the heart of the dead person. By the side of the body a large pan is placed, and the mourners place rice therein, and then the rice and the chickens are given to those who bury the dead body. The wife, or husband, as the case may be, calls upon the body to remember all the good things they have done for him, and to be their friend in the next world, after which, the body is taken away to be buried. The body is cut into pieces at the grave, so that the person cannot return to the village and do harm to the inhabitants. This is done in most cases, unless the relatives state that the body must not be cut. Fear, dark, terrifying fear, is what fills the hearts of the native in life, and dread of the most fearful kind grips them in death.

"Truly we are bringing light to a people who 'sit in darkness', and life to a people that sit in the 'shadow of death'. Into this prison-house of fear and devilish bondage we have come to take away some of Satan's prisoners; and as we labor on the devil's own territory, where for so many years he has held sway, we are conscious of a great need of prayer and divine help. We feel that we are utterly helpless without the real prayer of the people at home. Only prayer in the Holy Ghost will do for

Africa. Such prayers will never be wasted; for He always prays according to the will of God. He will so set us free from self-interest, and selfish praying, that we shall be free to pour out our hearts for His interests and Kingdom."

PREACHING TO AN UNTOUCHED TRIBE.

"The work is giving us cause for prayer and praise. We had a wonderful time last Sunday. There was a conference of the native chiefs for the whole of this district, and we invited them over to hear the Gospel. It was my turn to preach, and I spoke from that great and well known chapter in I Kings 18. The interest was great, and I asked them plainly if the spirits their fathers worshipped were really helpful, or what they had seen them do for their people. Then I told them of God and His wonderful works and His dealings with the children of men, and brought in the Gospel, and finished up with an earnest appeal to these men to serve and follow the only true God. One of our boys, who was educated at the Lutheran Mission, and is, we believe, truly saved, and has a great love for the Word and preaching, told me afterwards that my message had struck home, and that it was just what these men needed. I do pray that they may take the message home, and that the Holy Spirit will burn it into their hearts, and that it may bear fruit.

Last night I had a talk with the oldest woman in this town. She is very near eternity. She is poor, and I have given her a little food now and then. I told her of the love of Christ for her, and begged her to accept Him. She said she did pray for help every day; so I asked her to pray for Him to cleanse her heart. It is so hard for these people to understand their depravity. They seem to have a fatal delusion that somehow or other all will be well. Oh, the horror of so many of them dying with this false and satanic hope, and waking up in a long, lost eternity! I tell you, M—, it makes your heart ache to see it. Do tell the people to pray that the Light may burn through these darkened minds.

"The Paramount Chief of this district has given me his little boy, and asked me to train him in the way a child should be brought up. This gives me a great hold on the Chief, and I am hoping that I may be the means of helping lead this man to the Saviour. He is very powerful and has large numbers under his control, and the son will ultimately be chief; so that my responsibility is great. The little chap seems very happy in the new sphere. He is quite playful, and I often forget and think that it is my own boy I have with me. I trust

that he may early in life see the need of accepting Christ as his Saviour, and thus perhaps lead his tribe to the feet of the Master. We are in the midst of heathendom, separated entirely from the coast and white folk, and among an untouched, unsaved, unevangelized tribe. Pray on, pray on, pray on. This is our request. If the people at home do this, we shall be able to report the victories; if they fail, then, we fail too, and precious souls perish."—Missionary H. L. Davey, of Liberia.

ROUYN.

The Wellington Brothers are busy with house-to-house visitation in Rouyn. They have had some very interesting talks with people there, and the other day they had the great joy of leading a French Romanist to Christ. Some others are under conviction. Pray for their conversion.

ORANGEVILLE.

A young lady, brought to Christ in this church, was baptized Sunday evening last.

HUMBER SUMMIT.

Mr. Ernest Root, a first year student of our Seminary, who attended the Toronto Bible College before coming to our school, is doing fine work at Pine Grove, near Woodbridge, and also at Humber Summit a few miles away. He reports a morning attendance of around eighty. This good congregation is due to an increase since he first took over this work, in which Rev. C. L. Rumball, now pastor of Oakwood Baptist Church, used to labour. While these churches are not officially Baptist they have an immersed membership.

EMMANUEL, MIMICO.

This new cause suffered a severe setback last May. Mr. Maitland Jones, a student who came to McMaster University from New Zealand, took charge as a Regular Baptist, saying publicly that he was prepared to stay for three years. He did good work for a time, winning the affection of his people, together with that of a good number of attendants who were not members. Suddenly, however, he renounced our position, and in a written statement declared that he did not believe in the ordinance of baptism. To him it was Jewish, unchristian, and unscriptural. He said also that he did not believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. To him it also was unscriptural. When his resignation was requested, although the members of the church were unanimous in their decision, a large part of the congregation, who were not members, many of them not Christians, found it difficult to understand his dismissal. A number of them, nevertheless, have

lately been returning to the services. Mr. Jones is now working under the old Convention in Palmerston.

* * * *

A JEWISH GIRL'S CONVERSION.

We have seen a singular case in the conversion of a young Jewish girl, 13 years old. She has been attending the services at the mission for nearly a year, and for a long time was a source of great annoyance to the work. She would disturb the services and fight with the children. When ejected, she would throw stones at the windows and bang on the doors. She frequently followed those attending the meetings to their homes, calling them all sorts of names, and announcing to others that they attended our mission (which is, of course, a great reproach among the Jews). On Sunday she was so unusually troublesome that we had to put her out, when she began throwing stones and pounding the door, until at last it was necessary to call a policeman from across the street. Immediately she began to argue with the officer, until at last he had to take her away,—almost carrying her by force. As soon as he was out of sight, however, she was back again, and so conducted herself as to seem to us almost demon-possessed. We then took her into the mission office and prayed with her. She broke down completely and cried. Then she began to pray, confessing her sins to God, and then, turning to one of the girls with whom she had fought, asked her forgiveness.

Since that day there has been a most decided change, and a gradual softening in her attitude and actions. She has confessed Christ as her personal Saviour, not only to us at the mission, but to her Jewish playmates. When the missionary was leaving the city recently to conduct a special evangelistic mission in one of our churches, she came to him and said, "Mr. Kendall, I want you to know that I will pray for you every day while you are away." She has since been baptized.—A Messenger of Grace, Rev. G. W. Allen, Editor.

* * * *

SUNDERLAND ASSOCIATION.

On Wednesday, July 26th, the Sunderland Association of Regular Baptist Churches met in Orillia and enjoyed the hospitality of the Bethel Regular Baptist Church of that town. There were fourteen churches represented: Baker Hill, Barrie, Bobcaygeon, Cannington, Fenelon Falls, Lindsay, Markham I, Markham II, Mitchell Square, Orillia, Scotch Line, Stouffville, Sunderland, and West Oro. At least one hundred and fifty people gathered in the Orange Hall, where the Orillia folks meet for the present. The West St. Assembly very kindly allowed the use of their basement, and the Orillia ladies satisfied the visitors with a fine meal.

Rev. C. M. Carew, of Fenelon Falls, the first Moderator of the Association, was in the chair, and the afternoon session opened with a season of prayer and praise. In answer to Clerk Fawcett's roll-call, the various churches submitted short reports, which were indicative of prosperity and progress. The interest of missionary endeavour among our

churches was especially noticeable to those who had attended Association meetings in the old Convention. The Moderator's message told of how faith enters into every activity of both the individual Christian life and the church life. After another short song service, Rev. C. J. Loney, who came all the way from Hamilton to speak to us, delivered a stirring and searching message on "Four Principles Which Should Govern." The New Union is blessed in having men of this calibre, who are willing to put themselves at the disposal of their weaker brethren, even to the inconveniencing of themselves. It was Mr. Loney's something-or-other wedding anniversary,—we dare not guess at it, and confess to having forgotten which one he said. Mrs. Loney was along, too, and they both agreed that it was an ideal way to spend an anniversary of such an important event.

Immediately after the opening of the evening service the Nominating Committee brought in its report, and the officers for the ensuing year were chosen. The new Moderator, Mr. J. Bonthron, of Orillia, assumed charge of the meeting, and in a few words thanked the gathering for the honour bestowed. He reviewed the organizing of the Association a little over a year ago, and spoke of the spiritual uplift and the good fellowship that had been the result so far. He suggested that, where possible, the churches group themselves into small and frequently-meeting pastors'-and-people's conferences. Among other things, the Resolutions Committee suggested a Fall meeting at a date to be set by the executive, at which no business would be conducted, but the time entirely given over to prayer and fellowship and the preaching of the Gospel. This meeting is to be held at Stouffville. The Barrie church invited the delegates to meet with them next year for the annual association gathering, and the invitation was accepted unanimously. Rev. C. J. Loney gave us the closing address. His subject was, "The Second Coming, Its Purifying Influence and Its Serious Aspect." We will not soon forget either of Brother Loney's addresses and the Christian fellowship at Orillia. We are eagerly looking forward to the Fall meeting at Stouffville.—Rev. A. C. Whitcombe.

WYMAN, P.Q.

Not waiting for any board to give him a "field" in which to labour, Mr. K. M. Cutler, a second-year student of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, started off independently for the Ottawa Valley, taking his material equipment in a haversack. Unable to find at one place suitable work with which to support himself, he travelled on to another, settling at Wyman, Quebec. He visited every home for four miles, reading the Scripture and praying with the people, and he held a service Sunday morning. Most of those whom he visited came to hear him preach the old Gospel from the old Book.

ST. THOMAS.

Most church progress is uphill. That is the kind of work that Hiawatha Street Regular Baptist Church is doing. They have lately improved their position, for

one thing, by painting the outside of the church building, and another, by declaring for self-support. Rev. Donald Fraser has been with this church for six months, and the Lord has certainly used him in a remarkable way.

WINNIPEG.

A group of Regular Baptists in Winnipeg have Mr. J. F. Dempster as their student pastor. Their membership is twenty-two, but all are active Christians—as all Christians ought to be.

The first advertisement of this church appearing in the Winnipeg papers reads: "Bethany Regular Baptist Church: Sunday services, Morning, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 12.15 p.m. Evening, 7 p.m. Norman Hall, Sherbrook St., just south of Portage Avenue. J. F. Dempster, Des Moines University. In full sympathy with the Baptist Bible Union of North America, and the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Ontario and Quebec".

MISHAWAWA, INDIANA.

Dr. M. E. Hawkins is pastor of the First Baptist Church. Here is a summary of his work for the first six months of this year: "Since Jan. 1st, 64 people have come forward and confessed Christ; 37 of them have been baptized, 8 have come into the church on confession of faith, and 6 by letter, with no special meeting at all. During this time the pastor has officiated at 35 funerals and united 14 couples in holy matrimony. Beside this, over 400 personal calls have been made, to say nothing of the regular work of the busy minister."

* * * *

OHIO.

The President of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ohio says:

"The Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ohio is now about eight months old. Friends will be interested to know that there are now 13 churches listed in its membership. These churches have, by vote of their membership, severed every connection with the old convention and associations, and now have no other affiliation than the Union of Regular Baptist Churches. The membership of these churches totals close to the three thousand mark. Following is the list at present: Central, Columbus; Emmanuel, Toledo; Tabernacle, Toledo; Fostoria, Elyria, Camden, Wellington, Medina, LaGrange, McDonald; Trinity, Lorain; and East Side, Lorain. The church pastored by Rev. C. M. McKay Smock, of Charleston, W. Va., has also united with the Ohio Union. Other churches are planning to unite in the near future."

* * * *

CALVARY, GRAND RAPIDS.

Sunday, July 14th, was a happy day for Pastor Wm. Headley and the saints of Calvary Church. It was the occasion of the dedication of the completed unit of their new house of worship. The dedicatory service took place in the afternoon, and was well attended. Several of the former pastors took part in the service. A fitting climax to the day was the baptismal service in the evening, in which four young people were buried with Christ.

Coals for the Altar Fire

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

Sunday, August 4th.

Spiritual Freedom.— Mark i:21-34

Jesus loved to give freedom to men. He loved to remove the restrictions which disease and infirmity placed around their activities. His miracles of healing were proclamations of liberty. Whether it was arm, or eye, or ear, or tongue, or limb that was bound in the grip of disease, Jesus said "Disease loose thy hold and let him go!" and it found its jubilee. So with the human mind, when that had been led into captivity, when He found reason shut up in a dreary dungeon, He loved to loose the captive from her chains and bring back the banished one to her throne again. He thus proclaimed a mental jubilee. *These, however, were but figures of the spiritual—i.e. the emancipation of the spirit of man.* The disciples sometimes seemed to think that the liberty which Jesus came to bring was merely political—a release from the hated Roman yoke. But if that were all He came to do He need not have come at all. The Eternal Son of God was not needed for that. Another Moses could have led them out of that bondage, Jesus had a much higher and grander work to do. His sphere was not merely local or political, but in the secret of man's heart. He came to save us from our sins, from the captivity into which sin had led us, "to deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, so that we might serve Him without fear in righteousness and holiness all the days of our lives." He came to give a liberty of soul which will ultimately mean the entire emancipation of spirit, mind, and body, for the race.

Monday, August 5th.

Freedom from sin's penalty.—

Isa. liii:1-12

The Lord Jesus looked down and saw us to be a world of law breakers, and therefore bound over by justice to punishment. He saw that among us there was no deliverer and no escape. And so, like Moses, only infinitely greater, He left the palace of the Eternal King, laid aside His robes and titles of royalty. He assumed our human dress and came down to redeem; and as no other ransom was sufficient to deliver us, He offered Himself "without spot to God," our Passover sacrificed for us, and so He sprinkled the doorway of the New Exodus with His own blood. The infinitely Just and Holy One could remit the penalty due to sin only in this way. The death of Jesus upheld the dignity of law, gave to justice its full demand, and to love an unbounded expression. So Jesus, by allowing Himself to be bound, becomes the deliverer and emancipates the guilty from the bonds of punishment.

Tuesday, August 6th.

Freedom from sin's power.—

Romans vii:14-25, viii:1-4

The Redeemer came not simply to save us from the guilt and condemnation of sin, but from the sin itself; to lift men above its power, and to have dominion over it. "Sin shall not have dominion over you" is a divine promise, and Jesus

seeks to make it good in us. "He breaks the power of cancelled sin." Many persons think themselves free when, alas, they are the veriest slaves. Some are enslaved by covetousness, others by evil desire, some by passion, others by drink; some by falsehood, others by self, and all these and many others need to be delivered from sin's power. Do we know what deliverance means? Or is some chain of evil habit still holding us in bonds? Jesus came that we might reign as kings over self and sin. He has conquered every sin for us, every temptation, every enemy has been met and mastered by the all-conquering Lord and Saviour. Now He seeks to conquer every sin in us, so that even every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This will mean freedom indeed when a man is freed utterly from the power of sin. This is the New Covenant promise that the law shall be written in the heart.

Wednesday, August 7th.

Freedom of sonship.— Romans viii:5-17

Whatever tendencies may yet remain in our nature, acting like the law of gravitation to draw us downward, the life of Christ in the soul may be so empowered by the Spirit of God, that like the life in the tree, it does not yield to these tendencies, but grows upward towards perfection. How delightful is this freedom—freedom to do all the will of God! The freedom of sonship is another delightful advance in the path of liberty. It means a freedom from all kinds of servility and fear, and enjoyment of the privileges of sonship. This follows on what has been said: for if the spirit of Christ possess us, and we are led by the Spirit of God really under His control, then we are indeed the sons of God. "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Thursday, August 8th.

Perfect Freedom.— Acts xvi:22-34

If a man accepts the full liberty which Jesus brings, nothing can really cage his spirit. Paul and Silas as to their bodies were thrust into the inner prison at Philippi, and their feet were made fast in the stocks, but their spirits were free, they were mounting to the very throne of God and laying their tributes of praise and worship there. John the Beloved was a captive at Patmos, but "in the spirit" he moved amongst the glories of the heavenly world, amid angelic company, and saw the glories of the Lamb and the new Jerusalem. Bunyan was shut up in Bedford jail, but in spirit he was away travelling with the pilgrims on the heavenly road, in the house Beautiful, on the Delectable Mountains, in the land Beulah, and up to the Celestial City. How glorious is such liberty!

Friday, August 9th.

Freedom known.— Luke iv:14-21

We must know the word of freedom. There are many who do not know there is such a freedom to be enjoyed. Shortly after the Emancipation of the Slaves Act had been passed in the United States by President Lincoln, this incident oc-

curred. Some travellers were journeying in the backwoods of one of the States in the Far West. They put up for the night at a wayside inn, where they were waited upon by an aged negress, whose heavy downcast look and weary tread told too plainly that she was still a slave. "Auntie," they said to her, in the familiar title often given to slaves, "Are you not free?" "Me ree, Massa!" said the poor woman. "Oh, no, I'se not free; I'se only just slave." "Well, but auntie," said they, "don't you know that all the slaves have been set free? Haven't they told you that President Lincoln has passed an Act in Congress that there are to be no more slaves in the United States?" "Well, massa," said the negress, "I did hear something about it, but my massa said it had nothing to do with me; I must go on as I was before; I must be just a slave still." "Now, auntie," said the visitors, "you go straight to your cruel master and say to him, 'Massa, I never do any more work for you as a slave.' You tell him so, and you stick to it. The Government of the country has set you free, and your old master can't compel you to be a slave another hour." At last she was prevailed upon to do it. She claimed her freedom and she got it. There are many to-day kept in bondage by the Devil's lie. Jesus says, "I am come down to deliver." Do you not know it? If you know it, why do you remain in bondage another day?

Saturday, August 10th.

Freedom enjoyed.—

Gal. iii:26-29, Gal. iv:1-7

The Lord Jesus Christ, who won our liberties for us by His own blood, now offers them to us in His word. They are not to be experienced by struggle, or effort, but in union with Christ. The chains of sin, which we can never break, fall into sin, which we can never break, fall into fragments when we accept His hand. "He sets the prisoner free." Oh, take His hand then, and in Him enjoy the freedom which is now your blood-bought right. And then having accepted, *we must abide in it.* Or rather we must abide in Him, and so shall we continue to be free. The enemy's effort ever is to induce us to leave our place of liberty in Christ. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." In the old slave days a lady brought her black servant on board an English ship, and she laughingly said to the captain, "I suppose if I and Aunt Chloe were to go to England, she would be free?" "Madam," said the captain, "she is now free." The moment she came on board a British vessel she was free. When the negro woman knew this she would not leave the ship—not she. She was in the place of liberty, and she was not going back again to the realm of bondage. So let us abide in Christ, and we shall never be slaves again. "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. IV.

No. 3.

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 33.

August 18th, 1929.

Third Quarter.

RUNNING THE RACE.

Lesson Text: Hebrews, chapter 12.

Golden Text: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Heb. 12:1.

I. RUNNING THE RACE WITH PATIENCE, (vs. 1-4).

1. The teaching of these verses is illustrated from the public games which were common in those early days, the athlete in his preparation and actual striving for the prize being a fit figure of the Christian in the spiritual realm, endeavouring to gain the reward. The witnesses of the race are first referred to "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses", (v. 1). These are mentioned in the previous chapter as examples of faith, persons through whom God has wrought marvellously. They have already gone over the course, their race is finished, they bear witness to the faithfulness of God and the sufficiency of His grace, and their example is meant to stimulate to greater effort those who are still in the race. 2. The preparation of the athlete is then mentioned in the exhortation to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us". The runner in the ancient days went through a strict course of training to fit him for the race and without such training he had little chance of gaining the prize, if indeed he was admitted at all to the race. He carried no excess weight, physical or otherwise, and he was willing by dieting and exercise to fit himself for the ordeal. If he did this to gain an earthly prize, what should not the Christian be willing to do to gain a heavenly one? There are certain things at times in the Christian life which are not named sins but they nevertheless hinder progress and occupy the place of weights and should be put away. A safe guide in this matter is to put away and be done with all doubtful things as well as all known sin, and leave the life unburdened. 3. In the race itself we are enjoined to "run with patience", with quiet confidence and trust. It may seem long and it may be trying but complete trust in God will sustain us. There are many attractions on either hand to allure and tempt us to stop, but these will have no power over us if our look is straight ahead, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith", (v. 2), our "Prince-leader and perfecter of faith". He has gone ahead of us, having "endured the cross", and is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God". We are further exhorted to consider Him lest we be wearied and faint in our minds, (v. 3), and we are informed we have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin, (v. 4). The purport of these words is that we should

think on our Saviour in His redemptive work and present exaltation, and thus receive encouragement to resist sin. In teaching, attention may be given to the character, purpose and significance of a race, to the necessity for fitness and concentration in the race.

II. ENDURING CHASTENING WITH SUBJECTION, (vs. 5-11).

1. This paragraph is one which the Christian ought to study for his enlightenment and encouragement. He is called upon to go through certain experiences which are anything but pleasant, and he cannot understand the reason for it. May it not be contained here? There is not a perfect life among us; we all need correction and chastisement at times, and we are the better for it afterwards if we submit to it. We are instructed not to despise such chastening, nor faint when the Lord rebukes us, because it is administered in love, (vs. 5, 6). The divine purpose is the perfection of the individual, his guidance in the way of righteousness and the development of his character like unto that of his Lord. 2. The enduring of chastisement in the life means that God is dealing with us as with sons, (v. 7); the absence of such treatment is proof we are not members of His family, (v. 8), therefore we ought to submit to it; the more so as we have given submission to our earthly fathers in correction, (vs. 9, 10), and on account of the special blessing received thereby, (v. 11). Chastisement in itself is not pleasant but afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. It mellows the character, takes the attention from the world, centres it on the Lord, teaches patience and leads to the taking away of the hindrances to the growth of righteousness in the life. Note the nature of chastisement, its purpose, the duty of submission to it, and its beneficent results.

III. FOLLOWING HOLINESS DILIGENTLY, (vs. 12-17).

1. A word of encouragement follows the teaching of the previous verses. The Hebrews are enjoined to lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, (v. 12). They are not to be faint or discouraged. The Christian is desired to remain strong and hopeful despite his trials and such an attitude is possible in the strength of the Lord, (Phil. 4:13). There is a further exhortation concerning the walk of the saint, to make straight paths for the feet for the sake of the lame who are following, (v. 13) implying that we should be extremely careful of our conduct lest others go astray through our example. A great responsibility rests upon each child of God in this respect. 2. A further exhortation is given to "follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, looking diligently", etc., (vs. 14-17), implying that offence should not be caused needlessly, that peace should be our aim, keeping in mind that it is not peace based on righteousness, and not peace at any price. The way in which to pursue such a course is to follow "holiness" or sanctification. Our God is holy and no one can see Him who is unholy, therefore holiness of character is a necessity. We cannot make ourselves holy, but if the will is surrendered to God He will work

out His life in us. Our desire should therefore be to become like unto Him, and earnest endeavour should be made to accomplish this in His way. 3. A caution is then given concerning backsliding, "lest any man fail of the grace of God", going back from the spiritual to the carnal, "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you", be a source of corruption in the assembly, "lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau", one who knows the truth yet puts earthly things first. There was no possibility of change in reference to Isaac's blessing for that had already been given to Jacob, (v. 17). Note the nature of holiness, its manifestation, the necessity for living a holy life, and the power, responsibility, and consequences of example.

IV. COMING UNTO MOUNT ZION FEARLESSLY, (vs. 18-24).

1. In the previous verses there is the thought of law, here the apostle shows that in the fulfilment of the same the Christian has greater blessing. There is a reference first of all to Mount Sinai with its terrible scenes which caused the people to fear, (vs. 18-21), then to Mount Zion, the place of peace, the one denoting law with all its threatenings, the other grace with its blessings. It is something for which to give God thanks that He does not deal with us on the basis alone of His justice, but rather in accordance with His mercy. 2. Christians are a heavenly people with citizenship on high, (Phil. 3:20) affection centred on things above, (Col. 3:2), and even now seated there, (Eph. 2:6), so we are informed here we have come "unto the heavenly Jerusalem and to an innumerable company of angels", (v. 22), also "to the general assembly and church of the first born", (v. 23), the called out people of God from all nations among whom each Christian is numbered, whose names are written in heaven. We are come also to "God the Judge of all" and "to the spirits of just men made perfect"; God perfects those who are His, the work begins on earth, but is completed in heaven, the full consummation taking place at the resurrection when body and spirit are brought together. "And to Jesus the Mediator", etc. It is through Him we are brought nigh unto God in such a blessed manner. Note the connection between law and grace, the heavenly nature of the Christian's calling, and the prominence and efficacy of the blood of Christ.

V. SERVING GOD ACCEPTABLY, (vs. 25-29).

1. These closing verses contain a warning against disobedience. The Israelites under Moses refused to obey the voice of God, and suffered the consequences, so the Lord's people are urged not to refuse the voice of God for they will not escape the consequences of such disobedience, (v. 25). The scene at Sinai was terrible when God then shook the earth, and this He has promised to do again including the heavens, (vs. 26, 27), and this will occur at the return of our Lord. It will be a time of judgment for the unsaved and a time of blessing for the saved. 2. In the light of such an overturning of nature, and in view of the fact we have a kingdom which cannot be moved, we are exhorted to serve God with reverence and godly fear, (v. 28) for He is a consuming fire, (v. 29).