

The Gospel Witness

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

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"He Hath Done All Things Well."

This was the verdict of a multitude of people who were wonder-struck when they beheld the works of Jesus. They observed that whatever He did was done thoroughly, perfectly. The miracle they had just witnessed was but typical of His whole career: He not only made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, but He did all things well.

We have here a great doctrine. The truth is that whatever Christ does is well done. This will appear from an inspection of Nature's workshop. Look at the perfection of Nature's order: the correlation of its multitudinous and widely varied systems; the co-ordination of means with ends; the interrelation of different forces; the conservation of energy; the facilities for repair; the utilization and transformation of wastes; the combination of utility and beauty; the beauty of the useful, and the usefulness of the beautiful; the marvellous reproductiveness of nature; its perfection of balance; its media of light and sound, optical and acoustical adjustments; the invariability of the order of the procession of the seasons, the fitness and essentiality of climatic productions, and the consequent general adequacy of its commissarial supplies; and over all and through all the universality of the reign of law. Survey this wide field and what is the judgment of intelligence? Get your answer from a little child who wonderingly views the beauty of flowers and fields; or from some humble worshipper, the ears of whose soul are attuned to catch the music of wind and wave; or from the cool, calm, careful and dispassionate man of science, as he magnifies the infinitesimal, and examines the nervous system of an animalcule, or projects his vision through some mighty telescope for the study of immeasurably distant planetary systems—the universal verdict is this, "He hath done all things well".

And if you bring under review the sphere of divine activity which we call Providence, you will observe the same faultlessness of design and perfection of execution. The book of Esther contains no mention of the name of God. And yet if you read its story

from Mordecai's bringing up of Hadassah, her entrance into the royal palace, the wickedness of Haman, the sleeplessness of the king, the subsequent exaltation of Mordecai, and the ultimate conquest of evil and the triumph of righteousness, you will understand the saying:

"Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell,
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible."

Esther is as full of God as the Psalms or the Gospels. And Esther is an epitome of all history. There is an invisible Hand which shapes, as there is an unerring Mind which plans the affairs of men, and by that plan and purpose, Haman is judged in the end of the day, and Mordecai is exalted. And it is always true: the law has not been repealed which decrees, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

We say, therefore, that in the wide realm of Providence, concerning the divine actions, the verdict is the same: "He hath done all things well."

And in that part of it which particularly concerns us, there is no room for other judgment. We know that life to us, at close range, is a noisy, clanging, loom, wherein we see a thousand strands which appear to be inextricably tangled; but if you will go behind the loom and lift a little corner of the finished web, and look back upon the years gone by, you will join, in the approving verdict of the people of the coasts of Decapolis, and declare, "Here, too, He hath done all things well."

And to the host of believers who will read this article we need only mention the third sphere of divine operations: In the realm of grace, perfection is absolute. Read again the record of the eternal planning and the long unfolding. Then behold the star, and follow it until you bow in adoration at the manger-cradle with the wise men from the east, and worship

with the shepherds to whom the angels sang. Then follow that prolonged Manifestation of divine kindness in the ministry to human need, which culminates in the Cross, and the open grave. Behold the opened heavens—the Christ ascending and the Spirit descending; and follow once more the path along which redeeming grace has journeyed with its abounding benedictions. And as you follow the footsteps of God through the centuries, observing the triumph of the gospel in all lands, you will be constrained to say again, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. He hath done all things well."

"See where it shines in Jesus' face,
The brightest image of His grace;
God in the Person of His Son,
Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

Such, in brief, is the doctrine of divine perfection. We are constrained to exclaim, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."—"He hath done all things well."

A Few Comments on the Organ of the Women's Missionary Society

The organ of the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada is named *The Regular Baptist Call*. It carries on page two every month, under the name of the paper, these words: "Definition of Regular Baptist: 'That churches which restrict their communion to baptized believers, and administer the ordinances generally through ordained elders, should be considered Regular.' Adopted by the Convention in Brantford in 1853."

We have long objected to this definition, and on many occasions have expressed our objection. The reason for our objection is that, as applied to our present situation, it misrepresents the Regular Baptist position. The Editor of this paper is a Baptist by conviction. He has stood uncompromisingly for Baptist principles for many years. He believes in the equal authority of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances of the New Testament. He believes they should be observed in their primitive order. He believes also that it is the minister's duty to declare the whole counsel of God, and that the pulpit should teach the proper relation of the ordinances as being indispensable to a proper presentation of the truth. We do not believe, however, in playing policeman at the Table of the Lord.

The resolution printed monthly at the head of *The Regular Baptist Call* was passed at a Convention in Brantford seventy-seven years ago, when the question of the relation of the ordinances was a vital issue among Baptists. That resolution was to define the Baptist position in relation to the ordinances, but it was never intended as a comprehensive definition of what constitutes a Regular Baptist.

Within the last few years we have had discussions respecting the inspiration and authority of Scripture, and the expiatory value of the Atonement. Supposing that, in relation to these discussions, a resolution had been proposed to this effect: That such churches as believe and teach the divine inspiration, infallibility, and supreme

authority of the Bible, and the expiatory value of the death of Christ, shall be considered Regular? Would that be a definition of the Regular Baptist position?

On the other hand, are churches necessarily Regular Baptist churches simply and solely because they practice restricted communion? The Exclusive Brethren are restricted communionists. Certain High Anglican churches are restricted communionists.

That the second part of the definition is rather indifferently regarded, even by the Women's Missionary Society, is evident from the fact that we have heard no protest whatever against the practice of the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper by unordained students.

In our view, the Communion question is incidental to the Regular Baptist position. It is not the fundamental thing at all. And to call such a resolution a "definition of Regular Baptist" is utterly misleading. It does not fairly define the Regular Baptist position. And yet we find many people nowadays who imagine that the alpha and the omega of the Regular Baptist position is the practice of restricted communion.

We are confident that this disproportionate emphasis has wrought untold injury to the fellowship of our churches; and we protest against it as being but a half truth, and, taken by itself, as constituting a misrepresentation of the Regular Baptist position. This Editor at least refuses to be known as one who is a faddist on the Communion question.

On page ten of the last issue of *The Regular Baptist Call* there is an article entitled, "Must All Missionary Work Be Conducted By Or Through the Local Church?" The third paragraph in bold type reads:

"We challenge anyone to find in the New Testament any example of a missionary work of the churches being under the control of those churches or of any collection of churches associated together for that work."

We know of no one who ever contended for the principle here challenged. During the war the Editor remembers visiting a military camp in England where he saw men being trained in the use of the bayonet, and as we now recall it, there were sacks of straw about the size of a man suspended from racks, and the soldiers were taught how to drive their bayonets into these sacks of straw. No blood was shed, and we suppose the soldiers were thus trained to know how to drive their bayonets into the bodies of real men. But, doubtless, there were a few troops who learned bayonet-fighting who stayed in England, and who never did drive a bayonet into anything but a sack of straw.

In this practice *The Regular Baptist Call* has obviously become quite expert. We have a fairly intimate acquaintance with the ministers of the churches of the Union, and we cannot identify one of them as being worthy of *The Call's* deadly bayonet thrusts! We therefore consider it is idle to discuss the two and a half page article on this subject in *The Call*.

We therefore propose as something far more interesting the following challenge as a suitable subject for *The Regular Baptist Call* to discuss in the next issue. We put the case in this way: We challenge anyone to find in the New Testament any example of a Women's Missionary Society organized on the basis of a constitution the major portion of which "shall never be changed"; thereafter organizing, or causing to be

organized, in each local church a society auxiliary to "the parent society", constitutionally permitting persons not members of the local church to be members of the Auxiliary, and stipulating in its constitution that no one person in the said Auxiliary, nor the Auxiliary as a whole, shall ever be assumed to have sufficient spiritual wisdom to know how their missionary gifts ought to be disbursed, but requiring them to send all money collected to the treasury of the parent Society, which parent society constitutionally forbids any Auxiliary to spend a dollar of its missionary funds in any other way than forwarding to the General Treasurer, without the permission of the parent Society.

We further challenge anyone to find in the New Testament any example of such a missionary society as hereinbefore described being organized, and the constitution providing that its Board shall be hand-picked and selected by the Board itself, and the Board shall be constitutionally authorized to renominate itself. We further challenge anyone to "find in the New Testament any example" of any one person, either man or woman, presuming to say, in respect to the benevolences of any church, "We cannot allow the auxiliaries to designate their funds. It would open the door for Auxiliaries to give their money to organizations that are not Baptist."

We believe the genius of the Women's Missionary Society is unscriptural; and that it is contrary to the whole genius of New Testament, that is to say, Baptist church polity.

Once more: "We challenge anyone to find in the New Testament any example" of any Society collecting funds from societies auxiliary to itself, parasitically operating within nearly ninety churches, and spending those funds according to its own will, without reference to the desire of the churches or the desire of anybody else in the whole world, but that of its hand-picked, practically self-appointed Board, and spending them in a direction having no connection with the missionary work of the church itself.

We suggest the foregoing as a subject that would be of great interest to the readers of *The Regular Baptist Call*. While *The Regular Baptist Call* has in it from time to time articles of real worth, it is our judgment that the editorial policy of *The Call* is divisive in the extreme. It will tend to the impairment, if not the destruction of the pastor's influence in his church; and, carried to its logical conclusion, it would tend to the disruption of the most ancient of all divine institutions, the family itself. We are ourselves convinced that in its editorial policy it is not the "call" of God, it is not "Baptist", and it is anything but "regular".

OUR NEW POSITION.

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

A recent writer says, "The substance of the message of Paul to the churches of Galatia is found in the words, 'Our liberty which we have in Christ.'" That is true. This letter is a great proclamation of freedom. What the proclamation of the British Government was to the slaves in Jamaica in the year eighteen hundred and thirty-eight, this letter was to the Galatian Christians of Paul's day. In chapter three, verse twenty-five, he says, "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Then in chapter four, verse five, he speaks of the "adoption of sons".

The privilege of adoption is not always understood. It is a privilege radiant with joy. Paul says, "Faith is come", and there is a ring of triumph in the words. And it cannot be otherwise, for faith is the true emancipator of the human mind. It lifts the soul from the dungeon and sets it in the palace of the King; it raises the prisoner and the slave to the place of a son in the Father's Home.

Let us try to discover THE MEANING OF THIS PRIVILEGE OF ADOPTION. It differs from the new birth. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a wonderful privilege too. It means our being made the children of God. The new birth gives us the nature of sons. Our Lord speaks much of this in His conversation with Nicodemus. He tells us that it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is, indeed, a divine work, a new creation; it is the implantation of the life of God in the soul of man. And the Word of God is the instrument of it. It may be set forth thus: The Word of God is the living seed. The human heart is the soil in which the life of God is to unfold. The preacher or teacher of the Word is the sower of the living seed. And he drops the seed upon the soil of the human heart. The Holy Spirit inclines the heart to open to receive the seed, as He did the heart of Lydia at Philippi. Then the hearer receives the word into his trust and confidence. The Holy Spirit, like the sunshine and the rain, and all the growing influences of spring, broods over the seed and calls it into life in the receptive heart. The new divine nature then breaks forth out of the divine Word, and the soul is born again. Now the person has passed from death unto life—a new creation has taken place, the soul is regenerated.

This is the new birth, and it means a new nature. It is only those who are regenerated who receive the privilege of adoption. And adoption is a comprehensive term, embracing all those glorious things which, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Adoption is a new position. Regeneration gives a soul the nature of a child, but adoption gives the child the place of a son. With us in human families adoption is to take a child of another family, a stranger, into one's own family, as son and heir—to take one who is not one's own child, and to treat him as one's own. But the adoption of the New Testament is quite another matter. It gives the one who has the nature and relation of child, the place and position of a son. The illustration used by the apostle here is that of a Greek boy. Such a boy, so long as he was a minor, was placed under a pedagogue. The *paidagogos*, or boy leader, was generally a refined and trustworthy slave, who had charge of a boy, giving the child his constant attendance until he came of age. This authority of the pedagogue wholly ceased when the child became a son,—when the *minor* became an *adult*, or came of age. The pedagogue is forever dismissed from his charge when the boy takes the place of a son, who has now to do directly with his father.

So the soul who has been regenerated, being redeemed from the law by the finished work of the Lord Jesus, is placed in the family of God in the position of an adult son. This position carries with it a world of wealth. It is grounded on Christ. We are predestinated to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ. It is because of what

He, the only begotten Son, is and does that He adopts us who believe. In Christ He loves us and gives us the place of sons. It is by His death for us, that He secures a family of sons: Christ was "alone" until He died: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And so our Lord, having given up His life in death, has redeemed His people, and produced a mighty harvest of sons. Never let us forget that it is not a matter of human merit, or effort, or personal holiness, but a matter of free and wonderful grace streaming from the Father's heart through Him Who died and redeemed us.

Here, then, is the privilege: adoption comes to those who are the children of God; they are given the place and position of the sons of God. Wondrous grace!

Now consider THE TIME OF THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS PRIVILEGE. *Dispensationally, it was the coming of the gospel.* The law was the pedagogue until Christ: until the gospel of the grace of God came, the law commanded and threatened the children of God amongst the Jews. And a very hard governorship it was.

It is said that among the Greeks, boys were thought to need very severe discipline. It seemed to be thought that the tree of knowledge was the *birch*; and that it was through the skin that instruction was imbibed. This resembles the work of the law upon those early believers. It was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.

The dispensation of the law is past; the gospel is come, the message of love. "When the fulness of 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." This is good news indeed, for we, by welcoming the gospel, are freed forever from the law. Sinai's thunder is heard no more. In the holy Mount of Transfiguration we have this set forth: Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, and Peter said to the Lord, "It is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." But immediately there came a voice from the clouds saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye *him*." And as the three disciples looked up, "they saw no man save Jesus only". Moses had gone: the law as a means of life retires in the presence of Jesus. The pedagogue is no longer required. The revelation of the Father is given in the face of Jesus. What sweet truths are here declared! Eternal life, redeeming grace, and covenant faithfulness, are now unveiled. The pedagogue retires, for the Father has come. The law shrinks back into silence for the Gospel appears. The thunder of "Thou shalt not", is hushed by the wonderful music of the Saviour's "Come unto me". What a message is this for the anxious heart! How should the trembling sinner rejoice to welcome a message like this! Now is the dispensation of grace; now the theme is love, love that flows from the Father's heart, and welcomes the soul into the Father's home. Blessed news! Glad, glad, gospel!

Experimentally, the enjoyment of this privilege is known at the coming of faith. The trusting one passes from the hands of the pedagogue the moment faith comes. He enters a new world. The "do—do—do" of the law is past, and he sees the work is done. The "It is finished" sounded from Calvary's cross dismisses forever the "do—do" of Sinai. The moment the soul gives up the slavery

of seeking salvation by his own effort, or even partly by his own effort, and trusts wholly the Redeemer, he is given the place of a son, for "Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus". This is a vast and wonderful discovery for the believer. He is brought into a new and glorious country, a land of infinite treasure, as soon as he enters the realm of faith. Toiling and labouring to do his best, there is no rest or joy for the poor struggling one; but peace and joy break in upon the spirit like the light of a beautiful summer morning, when the eager and tired soul looks to Jesus, by faith, and trusts His saving power. He is no longer a slave, but a son. How great the release! How delightful the comfort when the soul, set free from doing, trusts, and trusts utterly!

Why does not the anxious heart get rid of the pedagogue, and enjoy the Father's love? Why not come out by one simple step of faith from the frowning darkness of the law into the warm, glad, sunshine of the Saviour's love? Why not leave the threats of the pedagogue, and enjoy the embrace of a loving Father? The moment a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus as his own Saviour, all the terrors of the law cease. "I see it all now!" has often been the word of a soul who, long groping in darkness, had seen the meaning and beauty of the way of faith. Oh, it is beautiful to trust and then at once to enjoy the full blessing of sonship. Yes; adoption in all the richness of its meaning, is yours the moment you give up your own doings as a ground of salvation and trust in Jesus wholly and only.

The enjoyment of the privilege is known manifestly at the coming of Christ. In Romans, chapter eight, verse twenty-three, we read, "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The event waited for in this text is the resurrection of the holy dead. This takes place when Jesus comes again. The archangel's trump shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Then the body will know its full redemption, and so enjoy its adoption, too. And we shall be manifestly the sons of God, for "when Christ, Who is our life, shall be manifested; then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory." We shall, in our glorious body, be like the Son, and so it will be seen that we are sons also. The world may ignore our claim to sonship to-day; but then it will be manifest whose sons we are: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And so we shall be manifestly sons enjoying the place and privilege of sonship to the full. Oh, wonderful prospect! Oh, glorious heritage! "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Have You Answered
The Editor's Letter
Of January 28th Yet?
Write Him Today

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

MORDECAI THE JEW, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 22nd, 1931.

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(Stenographically Reported)

"For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

—Esther 10:3.

Prayer Before the Sermon.

We would draw near to Thee, O Lord, through Him Who is our Saviour, and by Whose precious blood we have been redeemed. We thank Thee again this evening for the Fountain that is open for sin and uncleanness. We remember our Lord's saying, If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me. We thank Thee that many of us have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and we know that our sins are forgiven for Thy name's sake. We come this evening to bring to Thee our tribute of praise and adoration. We cannot understand such matchless love as Thine. We have never been able to see why Thou shouldst have set Thy heart upon us, why Thou shouldst have given Thine only begotten Son to die for us. But we rejoice in the fact of it, and we rejoice to know that in Thy boundless grace Thou hast saved us and made us to be partakers of the divine nature. Thou hast brought us into such intimate relationship to Thyself that we have become members of the body of Jesus Christ.

We pray for any in this assembly this evening who do not know that their sins are forgiven, who are not sure of salvation. We pray that the oath-bound promises of God that cannot lie may this evening, by divine grace, be put beneath the feet of their faith that they may be able to sing, as we have sung this evening,—

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to make this service a means of grace to multitudes of people this evening.

We pray, first of all, for those who are within these walls. There are some who are seeking Thee doubtless, saying, Oh that I knew where I might find Him! There may be some who, in their hearts, are asking, What must I do to be saved? They stumble at the very simplicity of the gospel. They are waiting to see signs and wonders, and have not learned that the way of life is by faith in the word of God. We pray this evening that many such may pass from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

We especially pray, too, for any who have lost their first love, who have wandered away from Thee, who may have said bitter things even about themselves. They may have sworn with Peter that they are no longer Thy disciples. They have been warming themselves at the enemy's fire, walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful. They have lost the blessedness of that life that is spent in communion with God. Some such, perhaps, may be driven almost to despair. We beseech Thee to recall such an one from the far country to the Father's house. Forbid that any should despair. We thank Thee that there is grace in Jesus Christ for every sinner, that Thou art ever ready to receive and warmly to welcome those who come unto Thee by faith. Call such an one back, we pray Thee.

And for all such who are not within this building, but who hear this service, we pray. Enter the family circle this evening. Save the husband who is not a Christian, and for whose salvation his wife has long been praying. Save the children who are far away from God. We pray Thee, O Lord, to deal with those who will seem to hear this service by accident. There are no accidents with Thee. We pray that any to whom the word of Thy grace may come may be

made aware of their nearness to God by the teaching of the Divine Spirit. Break the hardened heart, and subdue the stubborn will, and quicken dead souls into newness of life.

We pray for some who would not come within the walls of this place. We think this evening of Thine ancient people. It may be that some who are called Jews will listen to the testimony of Thy Word over the air. We thank Thee, O Lord, for all Thou hast wrought in days past through the people with whom Thou art in covenant. Much advantage, Thy Word tells us, hath the Jew, chiefly that unto them are committed the oracles of God. Yet their minds are blinded. They see not the Messiah for Whom many have long been waiting. Open blind eyes to-night. Grant that many of Thine ancient people may hear Thy Word, and by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost be quickened so that they shall see in Jesus the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Bless this service, we pray Thee, to the sick and the afflicted, the aged and the infirm, and to a great host of shut-ins in hospitals and in homes—wherever the message may reach. Perhaps someone casually sitting at a restaurant table may hear Thy Word from this pulpit. May it burn its way into heart and conscience, and find the prodigal and bring him home.

Bless us in our meditation. May we be peculiarly conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit, that this service may be glorifying to Thy great name. We ask it for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

The book of Esther is remarkable among the books of the Bible for the fact that in it, from the beginning to the end, the name of God does not appear. And yet He is there in all His grace and power and glory. He is there, but He is there incognito. These ten chapters of Esther are like the record, thus far written, of the lives of some here this evening, or who hear me in distant places. Your own consciences shall testify to you of whom I speak.

Your life's story is full of interest; its pages are thronged with thrilling events. It is a picture of lights and shadows; a tale of trial and triumph, of enemies and friends, of hatred and love—a tale of the coming of spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter, and, mayhap, of spring again. If all your life were written in a book—all your doing, and speaking, and thinking, it would contain more pages than compose this book of Esther, in which there would be no mention of God. And yet God has been in your life, and His hand has been upon you for good. But only the pure in heart see God! Otherwise the goodness and mercy which have followed you all the days of your life would proclaim His presence as the opening flowers proclaim the spring.

The book of Esther is the story of some of those "who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away". It tells of their oppression and threatened destruction by Haman, "the Jews' enemy";

and of how an unseen power thwarted his purposes by laying help upon one who was mighty, and exalting one chosen out of the people; and who at last "was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

But, behold, a Greater than Mordecai is here! This story will tell us of Him Whom God has exalted and given a Name that is above every name. I shall speak of His authority, of His grace, and of His universal renown.

I.

Let us consider MORDECAI'S POSITION OF AUTHORITY AND HOW HE ATTAINED TO IT. He was not always "next unto king Ahasuerus". He had greatly "humbled himself", and had been "made of no reputation" before he was thus exalted; and the story of his rise to power is full of moral inspiration and of spiritual suggestiveness.

He had been the object of a bitter enemy's hatred, which promised anything but a seat of power next to the king. There was a man in Persia who loved the preeminence. Haman was possessed of an insatiable ambition. Nothing would satisfy him but to be known as the man whom the king delighted to honour, to appear before the people as reflecting the power and glory of the king, that all men might bow before him. And he sagaciously managed to "set his seat above all the princes that were with him". But when "all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed and revered Haman . . . Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence."

That was the head and front of Mordecai's offending: while one man refused to fall down and worship him, Haman could not be content. When he had recited to all his friends, and to Zeresh his wife, the royal honours and preferments which had come to him, he exclaimed, "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

Unlawful ambition, desire for preeminence, is older than this history of Esther. However evil originated, and wherever it first made itself known, one thing is certain: it is older than Eden, and antedates the dawn of human history. There are veiled suggestions in Scripture that it was by ambition angels fell. When, in the wilderness, Satan showed the second Adam "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said unto him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me", he made no new proposal; nor did he announce a new ambition. Satan had challenged Jehovah before the days of Herod the king. It is well for us to remember that before "the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden", before this terrestrial sphere was fashioned, or ever in a material universe "God divided the light from the darkness", somewhere these principles of good and evil, of righteousness and unrighteousness, of light and darkness, were set in battle array. As surely as the soul of Haman was filled with murderous hatred because Mordecai, being a Jew, refused to bow before him, but would worship only the Lord his God, so before time was measured, somewhere, in some dark spiritual intelligence, there resided that spirit of lawlessness which challenged God's sovereign right to rule.

And that is sin! Nothing less than that. It is hatred of and opposition to the divine preeminence.

But will you observe that *in order to wound Mordecai, Haman planned the destruction of his race*: "He thought

scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone . . . wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews", thinking by so doing to accomplish the destruction of Mordecai.

And that is the philosophy of the story of Eden. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." Satan had no power to disgrace the throne of the divine glory, nor to cast the faintest shadow upon His awful holiness. Shall I be understood if I say that it was not until God had made man in His own image and likeness that divinity became vulnerable? As Herod slew the little children lest one of them should grow up to challenge his authority, as Pharaoh destroyed the male children of the Hebrews to stop the progress of the race whose rapid increase threatened Egyptian supremacy, as Haman designed the destruction of the Jews to remove the man who stood in the way of the realization of his limitless ambition, so when the human image of God appeared in Eden he became the target for the Infernal's darts, that thereby he might wound the heart of Him Who sat upon His throne of power, and would not give His glory to another. He who could not touch the Eternal Father sought to stab Him to the heart by the ruin of His human child. The words of Jesus might have been spoken in Eden, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

Again I say, that is sin! It is more than a human weakness, more than an infirmity of the flesh, or than a bit of puerile human petulance unworthy of divine notice. Wherever you find it,—behind the primeval chaos, in Eden's flowered paths, among trees that are "pleasant to the eyes", on Pharaoh's throne, with Haman in Shushan the palace, in Herod's court, where Pilate fears the loss of power, in your own life where your will is pitted against the omnipotence of righteousness, or, where every human life is pictured and all history is epitomized, where the multitude mockingly cry, and a soldier stabs Him to the heart, "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross"—wherever sin is found it is always the same in nature and intent: it challenges divine authority, it lays its protest at the throne of God, and aims its spear at the heart of Deity.

It may be remarked, moreover, that *Haman's ambition appointed Mordecai to death*. The measure of his murderous hate was the gallows fifty cubits high, and the decree which doomed all his kindred to death.

Whatever be the meaning of the cross of Christ as a measure of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God, it is an infallible indication that the enemy of human souls was "a murderer from the beginning", and that whoso contends with him contends with the power of death.

It may also be said that *Mordecai came to honour by the king's decree, and for service he had rendered the king; and that quite independently of the Jews to whom he was related*. When Haman had issued his proclamation authorizing the massacre of the Jews, and had built a gallows for Mordecai, "on that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records and of the chronicles: and they were read before the king. And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's

servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

"And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

"Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour."

And that is a parable and a prophecy. Messiah has prophetically declared, "Though Israel be not gathered yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Although the glory of God is supremely manifested in the redemption of men, the divine glory is independent even of human redemption. Jesus is One Whom the King delighteth to honour; and the principalities and powers which have opposed Him shall be made to contribute to His exaltation. Even Satan himself shall be sovereignly compelled to proclaim the honour of the Son of God, and to put the crown royal upon His head.

But it was the people's need, the Jews' danger, which necessitated Mordecai's being given the king's authority. All the Jews whom Haman had appointed to death were given to Esther and Mordecai for Mordecai to save, and he was given authority over all.

And that is the gospel. By virtue of the sacrificial work and gracious intercession of our Redeemer, though we were under sentence of death, we have been given to Jesus, and He has been given authority to save us. It was thus Jesus prayed when "he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

And to-night we are called to contemplate our exalted Lord, and to remember that He is next to the King, that He shares the throne of His Father, and will put all enemies under His feet. The spiritual Haman reared the gallows for Him, but "him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

II.

Let us think now of THE GRACIOUS MINISTRY which Mordecai exercised in his place of authority and power.

Other men have been "next to the king", and have had authority over the lives of others. But the Pilates, and the Herods, and the Ahabs, and the Pharaohs, of ancient times, and the Henrys, the Napoleons, and the Kaisers, of more modern days, who have used their authority for the impoverishment and enslavement and destruction of others have ever been more numerous than the Daniels and the Mordecais and the Josephs who have sought the wealth of their people.

Does not Mordecai's use of power illustrate the ministry of Jesus in this, that *his first authoritative proclamation which he signed and sealed with the king's ring was a promise of life to those who were appointed to death?* His first work was to "put away the mischief of Haman", even as Christ was manifested to destroy the work of the devil. All the king's scribes were requisitioned to write to all the lieutenants, and the deputies, and the rulers of the provinces from India to Ethiopia; and Mordecai sent letters by post on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries, to publish the glad tidings that the king had granted the Jews to gather themselves together and stand for their life: "So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment."

But the gospel of grace is still better than that. It were useless for us to "stand for our life" against the black legions of hell. Our great Champion has won the victory for us, and we are victorious in Him. Moreover, God has given Jesus Christ authority over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as God has given Him. He is next to the King: He is seated with His Father on His throne. At the right hand of God He makes intercession for us. He is authorized to pardon and to save. He is there on the throne to seek the wealth of His people,—

"Great God of wonders! all Thy ways
Are matchless, Godlike, and divine;
But the pure glories of Thy grace
Beyond Thine other wonders shine:
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who hath grace so rich and free?"

But Mordecai was not content merely to save his people's lives. That were in itself a great achievement. But he "sought the wealth of his people." He gave them life, but resolved that they should have it more abundantly, that they should live a life that was deep and full and rich. Hence all his thought was for his people. He was next to the king, but he used his power to seek the wealth of his people. Hence it is written: "And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. And the Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came the Jews had joy, and gladness, and a feast and a good day."

And that is the effect of the gospel. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound." Our Lord is not next to the King to make you poor, but to make you rich. Do not, I conjure you, believe the devil's lie, that Jesus of Nazareth has come to torment you before the time. This is His programme as He Himself announced it: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath

anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord . . . to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

Surely we know the grace of our Lord Jesus that though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be rich. He did not come to lessen our enjoyment of life, but infinitely to increase it. He does not call thee, sinner, that thou mightest "perish with hunger", but that thou mightest return from the far country to wear the best robe, and the ring, and the shoes; to eat, and be merry.

He has come to *enrich our lives physically*. Life has a new meaning and purpose, and is lived by a new power, to the man whose body belongs to God. There is not a lawful exercise of any physical power whose pleasure is not intensified by the consciousness of His approval.

The intellectual life is enriched. I verily believe one's mental capacities are enlarged by being exercised with thoughts of God. When the barriers of time are dissolved, and the shackles of the material are broken, and the human mind begins to think eternal thoughts, and to set for itself some timeless task, and to address itself to infinite comprehensions—who shall measure the wealth of a life like that?

But *the spiritual riches of the redeemed soul* defy computation. To keep company with angels, to be clad in the garments of salvation, to be adorned with the jewels of grace, to dwell in the Royal Presence, to be heir to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and live in the present enjoyment of the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory—that was the Saviour's meaning when He said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

Our Mordecai is seeking the wealth of His people; and if it be so that we desire a better country, that is an heavenly, He is not ashamed to be called our God, for He hath prepared for us a city. And what a city it is! Shall I tell it you again? That we shall have no gold in our pockets—it shall be put to its proper use beneath our feet. As for precious stones, the foundations of the city shall be made thereof, while the walls shall be of jasper and the gates of pearl. The commonest things of the city are made of those materials which represent the highest standards of value of which we have any knowledge. The very sun in the heavens, the creator of our wealth, shall not be bright enough to lend its glory to that city to which we are going.

And it is all because our Mordecai is next to the King, seeking the wealth of His people. He will never rest until He has made us eternally rich. His parting words were these: "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"—and that will be next to the King!

And Mordecai *spoke peace to all his seed*. Other words

than words of peace had issued from Shushan the palace before the days of his gracious intercession in his place next to the king. A decree had gone forth in the king's name which had been as the shadow of death to all the Jews, and Mordecai himself, because of it, "rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry". But now that Mordecai is next to the king, his people have no fear. Shushan is a palace of peace, and only the most gracious messages are sent forth in the king's name.

And what was heaven to this sinful world before Jesus ascended on high, and as the Mediator of the new covenant took His seat next to the King? What message did men hear from the Skies? How did men think of God before His holy anger was turned away on Calvary? There was no peace for the wicked. Consider the religions of the heathen, or the heathen conception of God which is natural to every unrenowned heart, and you will find that men have ever thought they heard God speaking in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire; but never imagined that Omnipotence could whisper in "the still small voice". But since Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross, and the gates of light have been thrown wide to the sons of men, we may be justified by faith and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever will cry, "Lord, save us, we perish", shall hear above the thunders of wrath and tempests of trouble, the voice of Him Who is next to the King, command, "Peace, be still". No sweeter word was ever whispered to the human heart than this, our Mordecai's benediction, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

"Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

"Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus hath vanquished death and all its powers.

"It is enough; earth's troubles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace."

III.

Suffer me to speak of MORDECAI'S UNIVERSAL RE-
KNOWN: "He was great among the Jews, and accepted of
the multitude of his brethren."

The Jews had reason to honour him, and therefore he was great among them. To him they all owed their lives, the lives of their wives and of their little ones, the happiness of their homes, and the security of their property. Therefore they must forever hold him in grateful remembrance. In other quarters, and among other people, his benignity may be questioned, his faithfulness impugned, and his wisdom challenged, but he was always "great among the Jews."

And so reads the story of our Mordecai. He is great among the redeemed. Of old they doubted His word, and impugned His motives, and mocked at His lineage; but among some from their first acquaintance with Him He was always great. He had healed the leper, had made the lame man leap as an hart; He had opened the eyes of the blind, and had made the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear—and He was great among them. When the

Pharisees said He was a sinner, "They say unto the blind man, what sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet." And he knew! Yonder in Bethany they know Him. They are not disturbed by prevailing unbelief. Lazarus, who was dead, is there sitting at the table with Jesus. Yes; He was great in Bethany.

We were thinking of Mary and of Martha this morning. You remember how Tennyson celebrates that great event? Of Mary he said,—

"Here eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits:
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

"Then one pure love doth supercede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face
And rests upon the Life indeed.

"All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears."

Oh, He was great in Bethany! And He is still great in the hearts and homes of the redeemed. Others may challenge His pre-eminence, and doubt His word, and dispute as to His origin, but we know Him, and among us He shall be adored as our Redeemer, and worshipped as God.

Is Jesus Christ "great" to you? Do you love Him above all others? Do you honour Him above all others? Do you obey Him above all others? Are you willing to be crucified, to be cast out, to be humiliated, to be obliterated and forgotten, if only Jesus Christ may be exalted? The Haman-spirit, the passion for preeminence, would even take the crown from the brow of Jesus Christ, and usurp His authority. The desire to be the greatest has wrought greater injury to the church of Christ, and to the life of individual believers, than all other evils combined. Let us humble ourselves before God, but let Jesus Christ be esteemed "great". Be you as small as you can, but let Him always be exalted. We shall have the fulness of the Holy Ghost in this place, and shall see men and women brought in contrition and penitence to the feet of Christ only as it becomes our supreme desire to see Jesus Christ exalted.

It is the peculiar function of the Holy Ghost to exalt the Son of God, making Him great by revealing Him as being great. And only as we give Him the preeminence in all things shall we accord the right-of-way to the Spirit of God. God is great in Zion: let Him be great among us.

And Mordecai was "accepted of the multitude of his brethren". It was not by a very few he was hailed as a deliverer, but the great multitude of his brethren—the multitude of captives in a strange land—rejoiced in his exaltation and "accepted" his grace.

And that is the future of the kingdom of God: Jesus shall be "accepted of the multitude of his brethren". Is it not written, "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong."

Let not the wicked presume to strengthen himself against Him. That was a wise saying of Zeresh the wife of Haman to her husband. "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him." And Jesus Christ is destined to reign. We had better "fall before him" as His worshippers, or we must fall before Him as His enemies.

And yet believers in Jesus "look up and lift up their heads, for our redemption draweth nigh". The battle still rages. Some are still ignorant that Haman's power is broken. Here and there on the wide battlefield it looks as though the forces of evil, of doubt, and of unbelief, were winning their way at the expense of truth; but from the hilltop our Mordecai surveys it all without alarm, well knowing that victory is in His hand. Whose chariots are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; and when His hour shall come He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. And He shall be accepted of the multitude of His brethren, "wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." There shall come a day when the books shall be opened, and they shall sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And you shall behold and hear the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands: saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, shall be heard saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

What a day that will be when He shall come! What folly to attempt to stand against a King like this! Zeresh was very discerning when she said there was no chance of winning against Mordecai. Nor is there any chance of winning against the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King, and will for ever be a King.

Shall we accept Him? Shall we yield to His sceptre? Shall we rejoice in His authority? There is some man here this evening who has almost lost hope. He has tried to manage his life, and he has failed. He has tried to withstand temptation, but he has been overcome. He has battled against the enemy again and again, and has been defeated. He says that whatever the future may hold for him, he has had a taste of hell even now. Is there any hope for him? Is there any hope for the man who has tried everything, and who once walked with God and has wandered from Him? Is there any hope for a backslider of that character?

Yes, there is. I tell you in the name of the Lord that the Lord Jesus never lost a case. If ever you were really His, you are His to-night,—soiled, stained with sin, utterly discouraged, and almost despairing; in the company of the enemy, far away from God, yet if ever you were begotten again by the Holy Ghost, if ever you were made a partaker of the grace of life, the very life of God is in you. You have but to turn your face toward home, and

God will bless you even yet. Remember Peter. Poor Peter! cursing, and swearing, and declaring that he was not even a disciple. Yet he came back, and became one of the foremost of all the servants of God. He waits to be gracious still. Will you yield to Him to-night?

How many are there who would like to vote for a new government—I mean a new government of your own life? How many of you would like to have a new Manager, Somebody Who will manage your life? How many of you would like to have a new Treasurer, Somebody Who

will pay all your bills, cancel all your obligations, and give you a clean sheet, a new heart, a new nature, a new start in life? You may have a new Master, even Jesus Christ the Lord. Will you come to him this evening? Will you trust Him, and let Him have His way with you?

Let us bow a moment in prayer: We beseech Thee, O Lord, to constrain many to yield themselves to this mighty Saviour. We thank Thee for all Thy grace. Work Thy will in us this evening, and may many turn to the Lord, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

THE MEANING OF THE NEW BIRTH.

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Fifth in a Series of Week-Evening Lectures on the Doctrines of Grace.

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(Stenographically Reported)

The way of salvation is so simple that even little children may be saved. There is much in the Word of God which is suitable for the understanding of spiritual infants. We are admonished, as newborn babes, to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby". Therefore, even the youngest may come to the Word of God and therein find instruction. And yet no one can measure the height and depth and length and breadth of this treasury of truth. It is higher than the heavens, it is deeper than the sea; it is, indeed, the word of the Infinite.

We need to begin very simply in the things of God, but we ought to leave the first principles and go on to perfection. We ought to desire to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". The Christian life ought to be one of continuous progress and enlargement. This evening, therefore, we shall think a little of this great central doctrine, not merely that we may learn more perfectly how to lead an enquirer to Christ, but that we may ourselves be more firmly established in the truth.

I knew a minister once who was a very thorough workman. He was really a genuine scholar, and was also profoundly taught of the Spirit in the things of God, a man of real intellectual strength; yet he was one of the simplest preachers I ever heard. One day a gentleman in his church, a member of the church, a banker, I think he was, came to the Pastor at the close of a service and said, "Pastor, I have thought a little about the subject you were discussing this evening. Has such a view (naming a particular line of thought) occurred to you?" "Yes", said the Pastor, "it has." "What do you think of it?" the member enquired. "Well, it is a large subject, Mr. So-and-So", replied his Pastor, "could you find a free evening some time when we could sit down together and talk about it?" He said, "I should be delighted."

They arranged a time mutually convenient, and the banker came to the Pastor's study. "Now, Mr. So-and-So, about that view of yours", said the minister, "what did you wish to say about it?" They talked for an hour or so, and I heard that man tell afterward the result. He said, "Because he gave us water in a little cup out of which a child could drink, I was foolish enough to wonder whether he could do any more, until I had an evening with him in his study, and then I learned that he had a better understanding of our capacities than I, at least,

had of his. I found that he was a deep-sea-diver, and that he had gone to the bottom of things, that he had explored the subject in the height and length and breadth and depth so far as the human mind could, and that what he brought to us was simply the result of his long investigation."

If you have a thorough knowledge of a subject, the unspoken word will give authority to that which you speak. It is often the reserve of knowledge of a certain subject that makes the authoritative teacher; and as we grow up as Christians, and become more mature in the things of God, our minds ought to be enriched. We ought to be thinking of these matters, and while dealing with enquirers, we shall still be as the traffic policeman who says, "Go this way", or "Go that"; but we shall have behind all that a wealth of knowledge of the whole subject that will give authority to our teaching, and will enable us to deal with it far more exhaustively as opportunity affords.

I am aware that this chapter makes the way of life so simple that it leaves everybody without excuse. There are verses in this chapter that are favourites with children: verses fourteen and fifteen, and particularly the sixteenth. Millions of people have committed these portions to memory. On the other hand, there is not a chapter in the whole Bible that is more profound than this. There is no subject that can engage our thought that requires a keener spiritual—and indeed intellectual—discernment than that of the new birth.

I.

Very simply, in the first place, we are to learn its indispensability. "Ye *must* be born again." Whether you understand it or not; is another matter, but here it is laid down as a condition precedent to our seeing the kingdom of God, that that radical change, whatever it is, that is called being born again, must take place with every one of us. Not, Ye ought to; not, Ye may, but "ye *must* be born again"; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

There is a vast realm of truth before which the veil is drawn to the natural man, which no science, which no strength of human intellect, can possibly penetrate. There is a something behind that veil for whose understanding, naturally, we have no faculty to discover nor capacity to receive.

We are told, in the first place, not that we cannot enter it, but that we cannot even see it unless or until we are born again. Let us accept that truth, that it is an absolute necessity, that *it is indispensable to salvation*. We may no understand how. But sometimes we can understand the *why* of things when we cannot understand the *how* of them. There are a good many people now who are facing situations which they say must be remedied. They cannot tell how they are going to remedy them, but they know why they "must" be remedied. That some change must be effected in order to a man's continuance in a certain position may be understood, but how it is to be effected is another matter. We can understand the why of it more easily than the how.

It is not difficult to understand why we must be born again. We face, first of all, *the plain declaration of Scripture*, that it must be. Whether we understand either the how or the why of it, if we are wise, we shall accept the fact of it, and adjust ourselves to this indispensable requirement, "Ye must be born again."

We might begin at that point by saying this, that even our meagre knowledge of the character—or, let me use a deeper word than that—of the nature of God, that He is spirit, and that He is infinitely holy, must teach us the necessity of it. Or, take the concept that knows no limitation, absolute holiness, that fact in itself suggests to us that if ever we are to dwell with Him in His immediate presence with any comfort to our own souls, to put it mildly, some very radical and thorough change must be effected in us. The divine holiness necessitates a great change, not in our outward character, but again to use the stronger word, in our very natures; a change must be brought about if we are to be at one with God.

That is why, in our study of this question, I first of all spoke to you about God, the absolutism of Deity in respect to all the qualities of the Godhead, because our understanding of God will determine our understanding of what is necessary in order that we may be rightly related to God. God being what He is, infinitely holy, and we being what we are, surely it is not difficult for us to understand that any salvation that can fit us for the immediate presence of Deity must be of a most radical sort.

And that is what the Bible says it is: it is so radical that it affects the entire nature: "Ye must be born again."

I say, *a further consideration of what we are* will show us why a new birth is necessary. Last Thursday evening we gave our thought to the teaching of Scripture respecting man's natural state, and I think we found from a study of the Word itself that there is sound scriptural warrant for the old-fashioned theological doctrine of total human depravity, that we are really depraved, not only in our outward character, in our general conduct, but in the very nature and essence of our complex being; that what we are is of such a quality that we must be made new if we are to abide with God. Thus the new birth is the inevitable corollary of the truth of natural depravity.

If, of course, there be something good in us, and if that can be developed; if there be truth in a divine development theory, that there is by nature something in us that is divine, and which may be developed, then that obviates the necessity of a new birth. But if there be nothing good in us at all, then it must be put there; and the only way it can be put there is through the impartation of a new life from somewhere; something that will change us at the very base, at the very root of things. It must be

radical, it must be a salvation that goes to the root, or we are not saved at all.

The necessity of the new birth is further emphasized by a consideration of *the nature of the kingdom itself*. You cannot see the kingdom of God. For illustration, we might speak of many kingdoms, realms if you like, categories of human thought and desire.

There is a realm of music, of harmony. You cannot train everybody to be at home there. You can make a mechanical musician of somebody, one who can strum away on an instrument. But you cannot make a musician. You have seen a little child of only four or five years who is an incarnation of music from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. Sometimes we hear of some youthful prodigy, a child that is almost an infant, who amazes people by reproducing some great symphony he has heard. Brother Hutchinson told me of hearing a famous orchestra in the city not long ago, that was conducted by a man every fibre of whose body participated in his conduct of the orchestra. He conducted with his shoulders, his head, his arms, his whole body, and you could tell bars ahead when a great climax was coming, as he gathered himself together and ultimately hurled himself at his players. You cannot make such musicians: they are so born. There are qualities within them that cannot be acquired. They can be developed, but they cannot be acquired.

Consider the world of art. There is a boy yonder who can sketch anything. He can take a pencil and put you on paper in a minute. It is probable he did not learn it at all. Most of us, were we to sketch a horse, would have to put underneath it, "This is a horse." Otherwise nobody would know what it was. But the true artist is born. He is native to the aesthetic realm of shade and proportion and colour. He sees things that you cannot see, and because he can see them he can reproduce them. All the training in the world will not make an artist of a man who is not so born.

Some people are ambidextrous. They use both hands equally well. Other people use their left hand almost exclusively, whereas most of us use our right. When people knew less than they do to-day they used to try to break their children of what they supposed was only a habit,—using their left hand instead of the right. But usually they could not. Why? Now we know that it is due to a certain construction of the brain, and that a left-handed person is left-handed because he is so born. You cannot make him otherwise. You may force him to use his right hand, but you are going against nature when you do it.

There is a spiritual realm, a spiritual kingdom where God dwells, for "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth". This chapter says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." I am speaking of a realm that does not belong to the flesh at all. As for the spirit: spiritually we are dead in trespasses and sins. Our spiritual nature has come under the dominion of sin, and under the curse of sin; and we have died. We have no correspondence with that spiritual realm in which God dwells, and which is God.

"God is a spirit." There are some people who would still try to define the kingdom of God in terms of the material and physical—as though a man's religion could consist in the sort of clothes he wears, or in whether he wears a tie-pin, or whether a woman has a ring on her finger.

They would make religion consist of external things,—“forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.” But spiritual qualities are neither determined, nor necessarily manifested, by what we eat and drink and wear. These things are not without proper relation to the spiritual, but they are incidental. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

The kingdom of God is a spiritual domain, and in order to enter it we must be born of the Spirit. It is thirty years since I read it, but I think I can recall, in principle, something of the teaching of a certain book. I could not subscribe to much that Henry Drummond taught. Much that he says must be carefully checked, and yet there is a good deal of truth in his book, “Natural Law in the Spiritual World.” Those of you who have read it may remember how he explains that even in the natural world it is possible for a member of one kingdom to enter into another kingdom only as it is born from above.

The mineral kingdom cannot enter the vegetable kingdom of itself, but only as the roots of the tree go down into the soil, and lay hold of those mineral elements and transform and transmute them into wood and fibre and bark and leaves and fruit—only thus can the mineral kingdom get into the vegetable kingdom, by being born from above. The vegetable kingdom stoops and lifts it up to itself.

Nor can the vegetable kingdom get into the animal kingdom of itself: only as the animal stoops and lays hold of the vegetable kingdom, and potatoes and cabbage and all the rest of it are converted into blood and bone and muscle, and even brain tissue, can the vegetable kingdom be elevated to that of the animal. Thus the lower kingdom is lifted up into the kingdom above it only as the higher kingdom stoops and lifts it up into itself. There is in this principle at least a suggestion.

We can enter the spiritual kingdom only as the spiritual stoops and lays hold of us. Certainly if we are to be brought into harmony with its nature, then we must be made spiritual beings, we must be born of the Spirit.

The new birth is indispensable for many other reasons than the three I have mentioned: the nature of God, our own natural depravity, and the nature of the kingdom to which we are to be introduced.

II.

We cannot understand this mystery. It is AS INSCRUTABLE AS IT IS INDISPENSABLE. Nicodemus was a great man, a man taught in the law; but when our Lord laid down the principle of the necessity for the new birth, Nicodemus immediately responded, “How can these things be?”

And you will note that *our Lord did not try to explain it to him*. And where He did not essay an explanation it is the part of wisdom surely for us not to do so. We cannot explain the new birth. Nobody can explain it. The *how* of it no one can possibly understand,—albeit we can all experience it.

For your comfort, however, let me say that when Nicodemus said that, our Lord replied, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Just as we cannot see the wind, nor tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes, but can see the effects of it and hear the sound of it, so this radical change is wrought in the souls of men. The effects of it are unmistakable enough. We may

know that the change has taken place; but how, we could not understand even if it were divinely explained.

You called in a doctor in a case of illness, and he tried to tell you what was the matter with the patient. He gave you a long name, and even if you are a Latin scholar and knew what it meant, you could not understand unless you had a thorough medical training. The doctor did not stop to explain it to you—not because he could not. He could explain it. He could make it as clear as day to one who had his capacity for understanding, to one who had his training; but he does not waste time explaining to you because he knows very well you could not understand it; one must have technical training in these matters. Instead, he very likely uses a general term to tell you what is the matter, and prescribes a remedy.

That which is a mystery to us is perfectly understandable to God, of course. He knows why and how; and the reason He does not tell us is that we could not understand it if He were to tell us. And furthermore, He affords opportunity for the exercise of faith, and leaves us to trust Him in the premises.

There is a theory abroad that in matters of religion everything ought to be measured by a square and compass, and that a man is somewhat of a simpleton who believes anything he cannot prove or cannot understand. Yet there never was a greater fallacy than that, because, as our Lord Himself here suggests, we believe a great many things that we cannot understand or explain.

There are many things about our own physical systems we cannot understand. Yet you know very well that if you are hungry, when you get a meal you feel better. You know you do! You do not know why! You do not know how, but you know that you do. I do not suppose you know exactly what sleep does for you. I do not know how you can, because you are asleep when you are asleep, and you are perfectly unconscious of the process! But you know how you feel if you do not get any sleep, do you not? And you know that what is written in the Scripture is true, not that He gives His beloved sleep, but that He giveth to His beloved *in* sleep, or while they sleep; and we awake refreshed and ready for the next day's task.

There are a thousand things that you and I believe most profoundly that we cannot explain; nor do we attempt to explain them. Therefore faith accepts this as a divine pronouncement: we believe it, though we cannot explain it: “Ye must be born again.”

III.

But though we cannot explain it, we know something of HOW IT IS ACCOMPLISHED after all. We do not know how the Spirit works within, but we know something of how this new birth is brought about,—by what Power, through what agency. How they work we cannot tell.

You take some medicine. The doctor says it will “tone you up”. After you have taken it; perhaps you may feel “toned up”, and you know there is some relation between that changed condition of yours and the medicine you have taken; but how it works you cannot tell. The doctor knows, but that is beyond your province, beyond your ability to understand.

Now this we know, that *the new birth is not natural, but supernatural*. We know that it is effected by a supernatural Power. The Bible tells us that we are “born of the Spirit”. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”,

and the Agent which effects that change is the Spirit of God. We know that. There is a theory that the new birth can be psychologically explained, *that the new birth is really effected by resolution of the human will*, that it is wholly subjective, within the man himself, and worked out by his own power.

I am ready to grant you that many great changes are wrought in human life by the power of a human will; but the will is exercised because back of it there is that which always affects the will, namely, the emotions, the affections. You can never move any man's will until you engage his affections. The will and the affections are inseparably connected in a normal man. I have known the case of a young man who was very careless of himself, of his personal appearance, slovenly in his habits, careless in his general deportment. People have brought all sorts of pressure to bear upon him, in order to effect some transformation—but utterly without avail. Suddenly the man has changed. Now he appears in an entirely different guise. One wonders whether he has just come from the hands of a valet. His clothes are pressed; his hands are clean; he walks with the air of one who desires to create a favourable impression. Someone says, "See what the man's will has accomplished at last!" His will did not do it: it was his affections. You know what I mean! At all events, *she* knows!

Thus you may see a man possessed by a passion for gold. He has not been a very brave spirit. He has run away from many a duty. But he is out there somewhere on the frontier, and he hears of the discovery of a gold vein. It involves the greatest possible hardships to get to the place where it is to be found, yet that man is galvanized into action, into new life; he is willing to face death and everything else. You say, "What a transformation! What an iron will he has!" It is not his will: it is his affections, his latent covetousness, his passion for wealth, that have sent him forth to do the thing that he would not otherwise attempt at all.

I could multiply illustrations of how, when the affections are engaged in any particular direction, the man's will is brought into play, and his character apparently is transformed.

But that has nothing to do with the spiritual realm, for the reason that you cannot engage a man's affections toward God. He may learn to love some other person, or to love gold: he may learn to love a hundred things in the material world. But, on the other hand, he cannot see God, and he cannot love God Whom he has not seen. His affections are not engaged, and therefore his will is not exercised in that direction.

There is more than the will engaged in this matter of the new birth. The affections must somehow be laid hold of, and they can be laid hold of if the understanding is enlightened and that hidden kingdom becomes real to this blind man. It is not in the will. Somehow he must be born again; he must be born of the Spirit; He must have that divine anointing that will make the unseen real to his spiritual vision: then he will believe with his heart.

There is a great body of people in the South, and some in Canada, who teach *that the Spirit of God never works apart from the word*, that the truth of the gospel is the only instrument that the Holy Ghost employs, and that the Spirit of God is resident within the truth, and that whenever the truth is preached spiritual life will result apart from any subjective preparation of the heart by the Spirit.

For example: I remember once in London, Ontario, preaching a sermon on this text: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." A day or so afterward I received a letter from a gentleman who was not a member of our church, but who regularly attended the services. His father had been a minister in the denomination to which I refer, the Campbellites, sometimes called Disciples. (They are essentially Arminian in their doctrine, not Calvinistic.) He said, "I enjoyed your sermon last Sunday evening very much, and I could see no reason why anyone present in your congregation could not be saved if he wanted to be saved. But your prayer following the sermon spoiled it altogether: for", said he, "having made the way of salvation as plain as it could be made, you asked God by His Spirit to lead men to an acceptance of the gospel. I write to ask you, What had the Spirit of God to do with it? The way of salvation was there: all they had to do was merely to accept it."

That is a very common theory, that the Spirit of God does at that point cooperate with the human will, and that the man accepts Christ; but that it is jointly a work of the will of God and the will of man. Oh no! "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

I said to you the other day that the Holy Ghost never uses a metaphor without recognizing all its implications: when Jesus Christ described salvation as a new birth, He knew the new birth was as much a work of grace, as much of God and independent of man himself, as our natural birth was independent of ourselves. It is all of God.

In the parable of the sower there was the seed that fell by the wayside, the seed that fell upon stony places, and that which fell among thorns; other seed fell upon good ground and brought forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. What was the difference? The seed was the same in the six instances. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." What did he sow? The Word of God. The seed that fell by the wayside brought forth no fruit. Why? Because it was not fruitful, because it had no life in it? No! Because there was no preparation of the soil for its reception. The seed that fell upon the stony ground—what did that do? It sprang up quickly; it gave promise of life, but by and by when the sun came up, it withered away. Why? Because the seed was defective? No! Because the soil had not been prepared for its reception. In the third place the thorns and briars choked the growing seed. What was the difference there? The seed was the same, but the ground was full of other seed; they grew together, and the thorns and briars choked the good seed. What about that which brought forth thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold? Why was it fruitful? Because the ground had been cultivated, prepared for the reception of the seed.

The work of the new birth is the work of the Holy Ghost. While it is true that the Word of God is the instrument employed always,—"*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,*"—yet there is a very direct operation of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, preparing the soil for the reception of the seed. There is a difference between a capacity and a faculty. The subjective work of the Spirit of God creates in us a capacity for the reception of the Word. Then, when the Word of God is preached, and it falls into some heart which God has opened, it is energized by the divine Spirit and brings forth fruit.

That is why we have our prayer meetings, to pray that when the Word is preached it may fall into good ground. Let us learn our absolute dependence upon God. "Mary, supposing him to be the gardener"—her supposition was not far wrong: He is the Gardener. "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." He prepares the soil; He makes all the difference between the good ground and the stony and thorny and hard-trodden ground of the wayside. It is all His work. The Holy Spirit then, in His own way, imparts the life of God to a soul that is dead in trespasses and in sins.

How does He do it? Through what instrumentality? "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"; "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The Word is described as a sword—whose sword? Yours? No! "The sword of the Spirit." And it is when the sword is used by the Holy Ghost that it cuts. David could not have done anything with the sword to the living giant, but anything will do to chop the head off a dead giant. When you are going to meet a giant on his feet you must have an instrument you can use. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and the Holy Ghost is the only one Who can use that sword. He knows how to use it that the slain of the Lord may be many. The word of the Lord is the instrument employed.

"We are begotten again by the truth of the gospel." The virgin birth is repeated in the conversion of every soul that is really born again. God in infinite mercy stoops to these dead and barren and lifeless natures of ours; the Holy Ghost communicates the life of God; and behold, there is a new life within,— new affections, new desires, new understanding; the understanding is opened, the heart is enlightened, the conscience is cleansed, the memory is revived, reinvigorated, the will is enfranchised—a new Tenant takes possession. Is that all He is? Nay! He is more than a tenant. I trust He is a new Master. The Holy Ghost comes to dwell within. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But if we have indeed been begotten again by the Holy Ghost, then He dwells within us.

IV.

Is there an unconverted man or woman here who says, "That does not help me, sir. It is all a mystery to me. Can you tell me how I can get in?" It is very wonderful that the Lord said in that connection, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." As though He had said, "Nicodemus, salvation, from My point of view, is a new birth, a radical transformation, a work accomplished by a new power, the impartation of a new life, a new creation wrought by the power of the creative Spirit. But I will not tell you how it is done because you could not understand it. But I will tell you this, that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." That was a miracle. The people were dying by the thousand, and somebody said, "There is a brazen serpent. Look at it; look and live." And some wise man who had just graduated from college said, "Do not talk to me about that; that is all nonsense"—or did they not have colleges in those

days? Russell Conwell once spoke in a sermon about Martha taking down something with her lead pencil. Afterward someone said to him, "Don't you know that there were no pencils in those days?" To which Dr. Conwell replied, "Poor Martha! It is about time we gave her one!"—"But", says someone, "I do not see any value in looking at that serpent. That will do no good." No; you cannot understand it. But if you will simply turn your eyes to the serpent God will work the miracle. Your looking to the serpent indicates the surrender of heart and intellect and all that you are, to God. If you do that, God will work the miracle. The man stands and looks, and as he gazes he is healed. Thus, says our Lord, the serpent of sin has bitten you, the poison is in every part of human nature. There is no remedy at all; you will die unless God intervenes. Look away to Him Who was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Look away to Him, and the instant you look you will be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. The instant you look, the miracle shall be wrought. May He bless His word for His name's sake!

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET.

The prayer room was crowded Saturday evening, and a volume of prayer ascended for blessing on the Lord's day both within the church and over the radio. The attendance at School was 1,238, and in view of the prevailing—we had almost said epidemic of colds and other illness, this was very good. At the morning service the Pastor preached from John 11:28, and two responded to the invitation. At the evening service there was a fine congregation. The sermon appearing in this issue was preached, and two responded to the invitation.

One of the especially encouraging features of our church life at the moment is the great gathering each Monday evening, when the departmental workers come together first for prayer and conference, and then assemble in the Lecture Hall for the Pastor's lecture on the lesson. The attendance the last few weeks we believe is the largest normal attendance we have ever had. One of the teachers from the Intermediate Department reported last week that there had never been such freedom and delightful fellowship in prayer as now apparently prevails.

Every week brings us encouraging messages concerning the radio ministry, including reports of spiritual blessing coming to many.

Have You Answered

The Editor's Letter

Of January 28th Yet?

Write Him Today

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 6

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 11

March 15th, 1931

First Quarter

JOSEPH, THE PRESERVER.

Lesson Text: Genesis, chapter 42.

Golden Text: "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." v. 21.

I. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO DOWN TO EGYPT, (vs. 1-6).

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm"; and in this case He uses a famine for the accomplishment of His purpose. Many years before the prediction had been made to Abraham that his people would be afflicted in a strange land, and that after the judgment of God had fallen upon that land they would come up out of it, (15:13, 14). The going down of the brethren to Egypt was the first step; apart from the presence of Joseph in that land, in fulfilment of the divine prediction. However unlikely it may seem at the time, God's word is always fulfilled. The study of fulfilled prophecy, one of the strong lines of testimony for the inspiration of scripture, is interesting, stimulating and profitable.

It is of interest also to note the relation of the incident to the sin of the brethren. The Scripture states, "Be sure your sin will find you out", (Numbers 32:23). These brethren had sinned against Joseph many years before, and they were destined to have this sin brought forcibly to their attention while visiting Egypt. The remembrance of it was still fresh in their minds, conscience reminded them of it, and the things which befell them on their journey were accepted as being in retribution for their evil deeds. It should be realized and emphasized that it never pays to sin. We reap what we sow, (Gal. 6:7), and sooner or later, in some form or other, we come face to face with our sin. It pays to do well, for then there is a clear conscience, no dread of the future, and the reward is certain. In addition thereto, it is the will of God that we do well, having first by faith received Christ as Saviour, and that ought to settle the matter for all.

The famine recorded in this chapter must have been widespread, for, "all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn because that the famine was so sore in all lands", (41:57). One of those lands was Canaan, the dwelling place of Joseph's family. The severity of the famine is evidenced by the state of despondency into which Jacob's sons had fallen. Their father having heard that there was corn in Egypt, asked them, "Why do ye look one upon another?" (v. 1). They had formerly been so active and independent, and now, apparently, they had been reduced to inaction and despondency. Food is essential to life, and when this is not procurable people are in sore straits and become

discouraged, and at times desperate. The world has experienced famine in various places at different times; within recent years thousands have suffered on account of it, and in the future it will not be free from the experience, (Matt. 24:7).

The family of Jacob was in sore straits, the sons evidently did not know what to do, but the father assumed the lead in their perplexity, and gave direction to go down to Egypt for food. He said, "Get you down thither, and buy us from thence; that we may live and not die," (v. 2). The ten sons went down but Benjamin was not permitted to go with them, "Lest peradventure mischief befall him," (vs. 3, 4). Jacob remembered the mischief which had befallen Joseph while in the company of his brethren, and he did not wish a recurrence of the misfortune. Perhaps also there was a doubt in his mind concerning the story told by the brethren on that occasion. Many were going to Egypt to buy corn, and among them went the sons of Israel, (v. 5). And Joseph was governor over Egypt when the brethren reached that land, and they "bowed themselves before him with their faces to the earth," (v. 6). In this action they were fulfilling Joseph's dream, (37: 6-11), though they knew it not. Note the typical teaching in this in relation to our Lord.

II. JOSEPH'S TREATMENT OF HIS BRETHREN, (vs. 7-16).

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly to them," (v. 7). "And Joseph knew his brethren but they knew not him," (v. 8). Joseph had an advantage over his brethren in that when he left home he was but a lad, whereas they were grown men, and not subject to so much change in appearance. In addition to that they were ten in number while he was but one, and he would be expecting them, while they would never think of seeing their brother in such a high station.

Joseph's treatment of his brethren has given rise to some criticism; but it should be remembered that he was acting a part. He evidently felt it necessary to test his brethren. He remembered their treatment of himself, and the disposition they then evinced, and he knew not if any change had come over them. The test, though severe, did them good; it brought home to them the consciousness of their sin, and led to their admission of guilt concerning it. Joseph charged them with being spies, (v. 9), not an unusual charge in relation to foreigners. They denied the charge, and stated they had come for the purpose of buying bread, (v. 10); they were all one man's sons, and true men, (v. 11). They were true men so far as spying was concerned, but in relation to their brother, as they and he knew, they were decidedly untrue. When the charge of spying was again made, (v. 12), they informed Joseph of their affairs, relating to their number, of the youngest brother with their father, and of the one who was not, (v. 13). Note the probable reaction in Joseph's mind in relation to this statement. The accusation of being spies was no doubt hard to bear, but a test of a more severe nature was to be given the brethren concerning their youngest

brother, Benjamin. Joseph informed them they would not be allowed to leave Egypt unless he should be brought down, (v. 15). This was testing them on a most delicate and trying point. They had miserably failed in their trust in relation to Joseph, their father desired not Benjamin to leave home, and yet they must bring him down to Egypt, if they were to escape the wrath of this ruler. The test is a most suitable one, in reminding them of their former sin, and in testing their loyalty to their brother. It gave them an opportunity of manifesting their change of heart, and possibly Joseph was trying them in order to ascertain if, perchance, a change had been wrought in them. Probably also he desired to see his brother, the only full brother he had. The brethren were yet in ward for three days, (v. 17), then Joseph suggested that one of them should stay behind as a hostage while the others went home with the food, and brought back their youngest brother. To this they agreed, (vs. 18-20). An interesting conversation ensued among them, concerning their sin against Joseph, wherein a threefold testimony to the guilt of that sin is given, (v. 21); of conscience, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother", of memory, "in that we saw the anguish of the soul", and of reason, "therefore in this distress come upon us." Note Reuben's defence, (v. 22), Joseph's actions, (vs. 23-25), and the departure of the brethren, (v. 26); also the reality of sin and its punishment here and hereafter. And it may be noted in relation to the attitude of Joseph that it was strict, just, considerate, and productive of good.

III. THE BRETHREN RETURN HOME, (vs. 27-38).

Having received permission to leave Egypt, the brethren no doubt would be glad to escape from one whom they would esteem to be a tyrant, but they would realize they were not completely out of his power as long as Simeon lay bound in prison, (v. 24). Strange things had happened unto them which they could not understand except as a measure of retribution from God for their former sin. It was no doubt due to this, yet unknown to them, their salvation and future prosperity were being wrought out thereby. In all His chastisements God is merciful: He seeketh the highest good of man. On the way home one opened his sack and discovered his money in his sack's mouth, (v. 27), and informing the others, they were all afraid, "saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" (v. 28). They sought a divine cause for each experience. A guilty conscience makes men very sensitive. "And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them", (v. 29). Strange indeed, and in reference to Benjamin and Simeon, alarming would be the story. And then when the sacks were opened and every man's bundle of money was found in his sack, fear came upon them, (v. 35). The whole matter was of such an unusual nature that it could not be understood, but God was in it, working out His purpose. Let us trust when we cannot understand. Note Jacob's discouragement, (v. 36), Reuben's offer, (v. 37), and Jacob's decision concerning Benjamin, (v. 38).

The Union Baptist Witness

This page is the Official Organ of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

GANG AFT AGLEY.

We know that the plans for the Union pages "Gang aft agley" and that is the reason that from time to time, we need to make some corrections and explanations. In connection with the article, "With Our Foreign Missionaries," appearing in several issues, and being an outline covering the work in Liberia, we notice that one part was overlooked by the printer and that the matter appearing in the February 19th issue, while supplementary, did not complete the sketch. As much of the information may be obtained from current reports, however, it is not now given, but will be supplied on request.

* * * *

BOSTON.

The Regular Baptist Church, Boston, closed three weeks of evangelistic meetings on Sunday, February 15th, with Rev. W. F. Mesley, of Zorra, assisting the Pastor, Rev. A. J. Loveday. Two young men accepted Christ as their personal Saviour, and others are under conviction. An encouraging feature during the meetings was the wonderful soul-stirring season of testimony. The devil is very busy these days, but we rejoice in the saving and keeping power of our God.

* * * *

WESTBORO.

Westboro Baptist Church sends word of blessing that others may rejoice with them and continue to pray that the Lord will visit them with revival blessing. "We are glad to report that the work is progressing under the faithful ministry of our Pastor, Rev. Donald Fraser. Last Sunday morning following a strong message there was a significant consecration service of practically the entire membership. In the Sunday School the same afternoon there were four surrenders to Jesus Christ, while one at the evening service accepted the Lord, the latter being the husband of a woman recently converted from Romanism. Two young men who had been previously dealt with by the Pastor expressed their desire for baptism at the following Sunday morning service. During the Sunday School session, two boys and one girl accepted Christ as Saviour and four girls asked for baptism."—Reported by Mrs. Cummings, Church Clerk.

* * * *

ANOTHER DISSOLUTION.

It has been called to our attention that the Westboro Regular Baptist Church's Women's Missionary Auxiliary, affiliated with the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada, dissolved and disbanded on January 8th last. The Auxiliary has now reorganized as a Missionary Auxiliary of the Church with the missionary interests of the church and Union.

The editor of the "Union Baptist Witness" apologizes for overlooking this important announcement which came to the office on January 28th.

To date the office has been advised definitely that twenty-eight auxiliaries have been dissolved as of the Women's

Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada.

* * * *

WHEATLEY.

Word has been received that the Women's Missionary Auxiliary of Immanuel Regular Baptist Church, Wheatley, has disbanded and withdrawn from the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada. They will shortly be reorganized as an auxiliary of the Church with their missionary interests those of the Church and the Union of which it is a part.

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CALVARY, EAST WINDSOR.

While we do not often have reports of the splendid work carried on by Calvary Regular Baptist Church, East Windsor, it is well to remember that Mr. F. S. Kendall, the Pastor, is laboring faithfully in the midst of much opposition and that he gives his services to the church. Souls have been saved in Calvary Church and the following letter, received from Mrs. Galloway, the treasurer, will be read with interest: "I am enclosing herewith a cheque for \$— for Foreign Mission work from the Calvary Baptist Church Women's Missionary Auxiliary. The above mentioned Auxiliary has ceased to be an Auxiliary of the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada, although, I believe, we were unique in that we never were a separate organization from the church. The election of our officers for the Women's Missionary Auxiliary was subject to the approval of the Church and for almost a year, the monthly meetings have been attended by the male friends of the church as well as by the ladies. The meetings have been held in the evenings. We are now affiliating ourselves with the Union and shall be glad to have all the missionary news you can give us from time to time."

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AMBASSADOR, WINDSOR.

A splendid report covering the opening services of Ambassador Baptist Church's new building has been in our hands for a week or so, but it is not possible to publish it in its entirety. Extracts are, therefore, given. The week of January 18th was observed as Opening Week and visiting Pastors assisted Mr. Fraser. Dr. A. G. Johnson, of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, brought the message on Monday evening; Dr. T. T. Shields, Toronto, on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings; Rev. F. W. Dyson, of Essex, on Thursday, and Rev. Earl Griffith, of Toledo, on Friday.

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HUGHSON STREET.

As noted in last week's issue of "The Witness," Sunday, March 1st, has been set aside as the day upon which contributions to care for the amounts outstanding in connection with the Hughson Street Trial costs are to be received. A hearty response from our Churches is looked for and we are publishing to-day a cut of this splendid Church, within the walls of which so many have found the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour even while

the work was seriously affected by the suit brought by the minority against the trustees.

There are surely many whose hearts will be overflowing in thankfulness that they were not called upon to suffer such an experience and will rejoice to have a share in helping clear the indebtedness. The smallest gifts will be acceptable although it will take some large gifts to ensure the total amount being cared for.

MT. PLEASANT RD., TORONTO.

For some little time we have been looking for a report from the Mt. Pleasant Rd. Baptist Church, Toronto, Rev. Alexander Thomson, Pastor, and are now happy to give the following encouraging review:

"Great is our Lord, and of great power, His understanding is infinite. The Lord lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground." Psalm 147:5, 6. "This is the testimony of Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church," writes Miss McIntee, "for truly our Lord has been proving Himself of great power in our midst. At our recent annual meeting splendid reports were heard from all branches of the work, giving much cause for encouragement. The Scriptural teaching in Church and Sunday School is producing many converts. At the Pastor's anniversary in December, six young people were baptized and since that time others have come—three from the Junior Department of the Bible School. During the past two months, eleven have definitely accepted Christ. For this we praise Him."

"The Children's Meetings held on Friday evenings, under the Pastor's supervision, are proving a great success. On the 20th of February, an interesting and profitable Lantern Lecture on Liberia was given by Miss Gertrude Green, Office Secretary of our Union, and was an exceptional treat, there being one hundred and seventy-five present. This lecture will long remain in the minds of the children whose interest was manifested by their untiring attention."

"On February 12th a congregational Fellowship meeting was held. The Pastor outlined his Scriptural convictions on church activities and applied them to our local church life, expressing his desire for a forward movement effecting all our church work. This was followed by an impromptu speech by one of the deacons who paid high tribute to the Pastor stating that he had never known a man who so consistently lived what he preached; a man who stood for his convictions in such a quiet, firm, yet kind way. 'This is a man of God, sent by God to us,' said he. 'His consistent character deserves our most loyal support.' These remarks brought a chorus of Amens from those present."

"On Sunday, February 22nd, we enjoyed the ministry of Rev. John Hall and about twenty-five of the young people of the church went forward dedicating their all to Christ in response to soul-stirring messages. One young man went forward for baptism."