

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES AND
IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

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

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Vol. 9. No. 49.

TORONTO, APRIL 23rd, 1931.

Whole No. 466.

"ON THE BOARD"

Of our adversary who goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, an inspired apostle wrote, "We are not ignorant of his devices." He does not always roar like a lion. Sometimes he appears as an angel of light.

In the Great War the enemies of the Allied Cause showed marvellous ingenuity in the many devices to which they resorted to cripple the Allied Cause. Sometimes they sent their agents abroad posing as being ultra-loyal to the Allied Cause. Their loyalty was so intense they endeavoured, of course in the interest of the Allied Cause, to destroy confidence in the allied leaders. Sometimes they fomented a strike in a munitions factory; occasionally they resorted to violence, and blew up a railroad, or some other utility indispensable to the Allies' industrial and military efficiency. Sometimes they made use of an abnormal mental condition, as exemplified in the tragic career of Sir Roger Casement. But the particular form of attack upon the unity of the Allied defence was unimportant: they were ready to resort to any trick that could effect a disintegration, or any measure of disunion among the allied forces, or that could divert the attention of the allied peoples from the prosecution of the war to their own internal affairs.

Thus the great adversary attacks the forces of Evangelical Christianity. He is the open, uniformed leader of all the armies of Modernism. He dictates the strategy of all the anti-Christian cults, such as Christian Science, Russellism, Unitarianism, Theosophy and what not. But he is equally engaged in directing the forces of the Super-Emotionalists, the brigade of Excitables.

Nor does he fail to find recruits from the ranks of the orthodox. The khaki colour was adopted for military uniforms, we understand, because of its comparative invisibility, its likeness to the earth about. But if one had the power of rendering one's opponents colour-blind it would not matter how gorgeously arrayed a company of soldiers might be when taking the field. And ability to blind the minds of men is one of the peculiar and distinctive powers of the adversary. Thus he can array his troops in colours which appeal to their own vanity, with-

out rendering them on that account peculiarly vulnerable to their foes. And even the most pious seem to be subject to certain forms of vanity.

We have seen little children playing soldiers, and all of them wanting to be officers. We remember some years ago a choir made up, in the main, of good people, but two people who were permitted membership in the choir—and who had the poorest voices of any—each wanted to sing all the solos.

We have seen not a few people manipulate others by ministering to their vanity. We fear that men are not wholly immune to such temptation but we have sometimes fancied that some women are peculiarly susceptible. When one person, for instance, was to manage the whole meeting and do all the speaking, we have seen a great array of ladies seated on the platform. We always wondered why! In our Union meetings we have sometimes called ministers to the platform, merely that in their representative capacity their presence might indicate, with some accuracy, the representative character of the meeting. But in such cases we have invariably found that it usually takes a great deal of pressure to pry the dear fellow loose from his seat, and to get him on the platform. He is so used to it that to be off the platform would be a luxury. Not so with some of the ladies' meetings. Perhaps it adds interest to the service. It must be admitted that the faces of the ladies are far more interesting than the backs of their heads, especially in these days of bobbed or near-bobbed hair and the accompanying millinery atrocities that are called hats!

But what inspired this little article was the frequent repetition of the phrase, "On the Board". We have heard it of this one and that one, here and there, that this person has become a person of extraordinary distinction by being put "on the Board",—not by a popular election, but by being carefully "sought out". We have often wondered what, precisely, are the duties of those who are "on the Board"? Surely it involves a very high honour and heavy responsibility. A person who is "on the Board" should be properly aware of the dignity and solemnity attaching to so exalted a position.

What, then, are the duties of such as are "on the Board"? The question answers itself: simply to be "on the Board". How human nature loves to belong to some sort of circle from which others are excluded! What a passion the ordinary person seems to have for special privileges, even though it should carry with it special responsibilities! A public meeting is open to everybody. Anybody who desires may attend, but "the Board"—ah, that is restricted. That is made up of a select circle. That meets within shut doors, where, in some instances, people are charged to hold that which is communicated to them in strict confidence, not even sharing the mighty mystery with their husbands.

"On the Board"? It is to be admitted to some mystic shrine, to sit within some charmed enclosure, to be envied of ones' sisters. In short, to be "on the Board" is to have arrived at a place, and to have attained to a position of great distinction and honour.

Coming to our office we pass a very fine place of worship that is used exclusively by the deaf and dumb. What an interesting meeting that must be when people worship in spirit, and communicate with each other, so far as they do at all, for mutual edification by a silent sign language. But to be "on the Board", with very many people, means to be equally mute, though all attention. Members of a "Board" may be very much like letters in a rubber stamp: all necessary in their place, in order properly to decide great issues—provided always there is someone who knows how to use it.

Have any of our readers detected a vein of irony in what we have said? Shall we be criticized for our sarcasm? If so, we humbly plead guilty to the intention. And our justification is that we have an innate abhorrence of the artificial and the sham. The only kind of "hum-bugs" we ever liked were the black and white variety flavoured with peppermint that we used to buy when we were young. Why not split "the Board" into kindling wood, and let those who are "on the Board" employ their time somewhere and somehow where their own thinking and initiative will count for something? Scrap "the Board", and substitute one good comfortable arm-chair, with a table in front of it. After all, as our good friend, Dr. J. Frank Norris says, there is not much scriptural warrant for Boards as administrative bodies. They are useful chiefly in time of shipwreck: "Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land."

"MY FATHER'S HOUSE!"

Rev. T. I. Stockley, D.D.

In last week's meditation our closing thought was familiarity. The phrase also carries the idea of *sublimity*. Here we carry on the idea of the temple, as well as the idea of a father's home, and combine the two, and then we have a better conception of the heavenly life. There was sublimity even about the earthly temple. There was a sense of sublimity in the buildings and the worship. As the people passed in they knew that they could not enter into the Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah glory was; that was not for them, but for the high priest alone. There was something magnificent about it all. Heaven is a place of marvellous sublimity, where God shall be revealed. We shall see God—God as He is revealed to us in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the Saviour combines the two beautiful ideas, familiarity and sublimity, in the one phrase, "My Father's house".

SECONDLY: HIS WORD ABOUT IT. That word of Jesus tells of *spaciousness*. Perhaps the poor disciples thought that Jesus was going to be lost to them: He was going away from them; they could not tell where. What His departure meant they could not fully understand; and perhaps they thought that they were going to lose Him forever. "Oh, no," says Jesus. "I am going to My Father's house; and in my Father's house there is not only room for Me, but for you also, for there are many mansions." The Saviour thus comforted them by the assurance that there was ample room for them in the Home to which He was going; and not only for them, but also for the "great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds and tribes and tongues". And the Saviour, looking down the ages must have had His heart filled with joy, when He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions". Just as Abraham went out and gazed upon the glorious stars of the Syrian sky, and as he beheld their multitude, God said to him, "So shall thy seed be"; so Jesus looking into the sky of the future saw that sky studded with myriads of souls, who should take part in His joy, and should find ample scope in His presence and glory. "In My Father's house are many mansions."

The phrase suggests also largeness of life. Our life to-day has many limitations; we are hemmed in on many sides, mentally and physically, as well as spiritually. We are constantly being reminded of our limitations. But there we shall be constantly reminded of the vastness of our life.

It may suggest also to us the idea of diversity as well as multiplicity—not one grade of experience only, but many grades. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this in speaking of the resurrection. He says, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." There will be some great planets that will move in an orbit near the sun, and there will be others smaller and more distant; some large and gorgeous in their splendour as the glory of God shines upon them, others smaller and less glorious, but still altogether beautiful, and altogether blessed.

Then He tells of *permanence*. The word "mansions" suggests that. The noun "*mansion*" is associated with a verb which the Lord uses so much in the fifteenth chapter of John. He speaks there of "abiding". The word used here is a noun from the same root. He says, "In my Father's house are many abiding places". Your life to-day is a mere tent life. Beyond, there is to be an abiding place.

McDuff gives us a description in one of his books of an Eastern traveller who, having had his tent pitched, seemed to regard the little spot of ground enclosed by his tent as extremely sacred. He was there but a very few hours; but it seemed very precious to him. He dreaded to see the tent moved. But it must come down. And then there was nothing but a few pegs and cords, and some canvas. And then that little spot of ground went out again into the great waste, and was lost to him.

This shall not be so in heaven. Our life to-day is a tent life; but "in my Father's house are many abiding places". The shadow that falls upon the choicest joys of

(Continued on page 12.)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ARE PRESENT-DAY PREACHERS SENDING SOULS TO PERDITION?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 19th, 1931.

Broadcast from Station CKGW, 690 k.c.—434.8 metres.

Short Wave: VE9GW, 6095 k.c.—49.22 metres.

(Stenographically Reported)

Luke 16:1-17.

Prayer before the Sermon.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the ministry of the Holy Ghost Whom our exalted Saviour has sent to us. We thank Thee for the Wind that bloweth where it listeth, carrying the message of salvation to many weary hearts. Here in this place this evening we unite our hearts in humble petition that Thy blessing may rest especially upon those who hear this service this evening, but whom we cannot see. Bless, we pray Thee, the people in Toronto, particularly those who are in affliction, in hospitals and in sick-rooms at home. Give to them the comfort of the assurance of Thy favour. We pray also that Thine arrows may be sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies whereby the people fall under Thee. May a deep conviction of sin be wrought in the hearts of all who shall hear Thy word this evening.

We pray for those who hear in our own country: in Ontario, in Quebec, down by the sea in the Maritimes, and out west in Manitoba and elsewhere. We pray for our listeners in Michigan, in Illinois, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, in the western States; wherever Thy word shall go from this place may the presence of the Holy Spirit accompany it! May no one feel that he or she is listening to a machine, but may it be the very voice of God to the hearts and consciences of men!

While we pray this for others, we pray also for ourselves, that the Holy Ghost may preside over this service, and that great blessing may come to us all. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

Dr. Stockley has already given you the text in reading the sixteenth chapter of Luke, the parable of the unjust steward—or was it indeed a parable at all?—the story, at all events, of the steward who wasted his lord's goods.

In coming to the Word of God we ought not to read our own thoughts into it, but to endeavour to ascertain precisely what the Word of God teaches. And that is my object this evening, to examine this story of the unjust steward that we may learn exactly what the Lord designed to teach in speaking after this manner.

Students of Scripture will be familiar with the ordinary interpretation of this story. The key to the whole story is said to be in the ninth verse: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." I have read many sermons on that text, and on the parable in general, and the usual interpretation is that we are here admonished to make such use of our substance, the mammon of unrighteousness, that when at last we reach the end of life, as a result of our wise use of our money, there may be many to receive us into everlasting habitations. A great many effective missionary sermons, I have no doubt, have been preached with this verse as a text.

Years ago my attention was attracted to this story, and I was never able to satisfy myself that that is what this chapter means. For years I felt that I did not know what it meant, but I felt reasonably sure that it did not mean that.

The objection to that interpretation is this: the very

principle of the hymn we have been singing. We are saved by grace, and by grace alone. If you had the millions of a Ford and a Rockefeller and all the other rich men combined, and were to spend every dollar of it in the interests of other people, you could not by any possibility lay up a store of merit which would entitle you to admission to heavenly habitations. We are not saved by "works of righteousness which we have done".

It seems to me that that interpretation does violence to the whole scheme of redemption, and runs counter to the fundamental principle of salvation by grace. I believe there are many passages in the Word of God which find their interpretation in the experience they are designed to meet. You may get on a railway train in a city where the sun is shining. Presently you may find all the lights turned on, and you wonder why the officials seem to be so foolish as to endeavour to compete with the sun. But when your train slips out of the city and in a very little while into some dark tunnel you will understand why the lights were lighted. There are many passages of Scripture which do not yield their treasures, even to the most diligent student who sits in his study and pours over the Book. This Bible is a guide-book, designed to direct us in our passage from earth to heaven, and as we come to circumstances for which directions are here written we shall often get to the heart of a somewhat obscure scripture by reason of the experience through which we pass.

I say, I had long wondered who this unjust steward could be, and what principle was here set forth in this extraordinary story.

Some years ago I went to visit a certain pastor, to hold evangelistic meetings with him for a week or ten days. I began with him on a Monday night—it was not very far from home. It was a country church in which there were many people who were well-to-do. They were eminently respectable, and intensely worldly—and as orthodox as they were worldly. About the third night, I think, of the services an old gentleman came up to me and said, "I am Deacon So-and-So of this church." I shook hands with him and said I was glad to meet him. "Yes, sir; I have been a deacon of this church more years than you have lived." He seemed to think that that was a serious reflection upon me, that I had arrived so late! I told him I was sorry that my youth offended him, and that I was doing my best to overcome that objection! "Yes, sir, I am not only a deacon of this church, but I am a Baptist; I know what Baptists believe." "I am glad to know that you are so thoroughly grounded in the faith", I replied, "and that you are so true a Baptist." "Yes sir", he repeated, "I am a Baptist from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet. I am a Baptist." I said to him,

not knowing its aptness at the moment, "I have met, sir, with a large number of people who are thorough Baptists but who are leagues removed from being genuine Christians." He said, "I do not like this doctrine you are preaching"—I knew he did not—"I do not believe in this higher life." I said, "I have said nothing about the higher life. I have endeavoured to teach that men are saved by the grace of God, solely on the ground of the precious blood, but that, being saved, Jesus Christ becomes Master and Lord, and that henceforth there is a new direction given to life, and a new power communicated by the indwelling Spirit, so that we are to serve Him with all our hearts." "I know what it is to be a Christian", he replied, "I am a thorough Baptist."

I bowed to him, and turned from him to speak to somebody else.

Saturday the Pastor came home from a visit downtown. "Downtown" there meant four corners, with a blacksmith shop on one corner, perhaps a cheese-factory on another, the postoffice on the third, and the departmental store on the fourth. The Pastor had gone for his mail, and he found the deacon there the centre of a group of ungodly men, men who made no profession of religion at all, and they were talking about the meetings in the Baptist church. The old deacon said, "I tell you, boys, I met that young preacher the other day, and I told him I was a Baptist, and that I did not believe many of the things he was preaching about: the higher life, and the Lordship of Christ. I told him the way of salvation is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is all there is of it. Do not let his preaching worry you; do not allow him to prevent your sleeping. I was a Baptist before he was born."

The Pastor said to me, "I found this officer of the church healing the wounds which the Spirit of God had inflicted upon ungodly men, and trying to lead them to abandon their repentant attitude, and to accept his theory, in which there is nothing more than a profession of religion in the salvation that is in Christ."

I said to myself, I wonder if I have not seen that gentleman somewhere in the Book? I have met the same principle hundreds of times since, and I feel confident that we have in this sixteenth chapter of Luke a special admonition to the Lord's professed people, to Christians generally, to the church at large, and very particularly to the ministers of the church.

Our Lord speaks of a certain rich man who had a steward. *Have we no other stewardship than that of money?* Are there not values in life which cannot be estimated by dollars and cents? Are there not some things which money cannot buy? Are we not described as stewards of the manifold grace of God? Are not believers generally, the blood-bought church of Christ, made stewards of the gospel? Are we not "put in trust with the gospel"? Is not the teaching of Scripture to the effect that it is our duty as believers in Christ faithfully to represent our Lord's claims to the world about us?

This steward was accused of having wasted his lord's goods. I wonder who of us would not have to plead guilty if that charge were laid against us? Is there a Christian here, or one among those who hear me over the air, who would dare to say that he has never failed in his faithfulness to the trust committed

to his charge? Have we not all failed at times clearly to witness for Christ. Has not the preacher been filled with fear, and has he not somewhat diluted the gospel and lowered its standards, and failed properly to represent his Lord? I know I have met a few people who profess perfection, but a careful—or even a cursory—examination of their record has led me always to the conclusion that they are greatly mistaken. I fear we have all, as Christians, at some time or another, failed in the full discharge of our duty. I cannot, indeed, turn to the Bible and read it at any time without finding it has an accusing voice for me, calling me to account, bidding me be more faithful in my ministry. And I venture the assertion that if you abide by the Book, and store its precepts and principles away in your memory, you will find that again and again you will be accused of unfaithfulness, and you will find the value of that scripture which says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This man was *called to give an account* of his stewardship to his lord, for his lord said to him, "How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." Have you not been called to give an account? Of what value is the Word of God if it does not search and try our hearts? Is it not true that any faithful biblical ministry, any true exposition of the great principles of the gospel applied to the heart and conscience, will call us every one to give an account? I have read of the great Spurgeon, after preaching to assembled thousands, and after being used of the Lord in the conversions of hundreds, going to his home and spending hours mourning before the Lord that he had not been more faithful. And if we do but see our privileges and responsibilities as Christians, and bring our lives under the judgment of the Word of God, we shall find that every day the word of the Lord will come to us saying, "Give an account of thy stewardship."

Is there a man or woman here professing the name of Christ who will dare to say that he or she has done everything in his power to make Christ known to-day? Might we not have doubled our efforts, tripled, or quadrupled them? Will anyone dare to say there is a church anywhere that is one hundred per cent for Christ, that every flying minute is given something to keep in store? Is it not true that we are like this unjust steward—unfaithful to our charge, even the most faithful of us? failing in a hundred particulars to fulfil the will of our God?

What are we going to do when thus by the spoken word, or by the testimony of Scripture, we are called to give an account. I have been frequently asked whether I believe in a second blessing. I always reply very decidedly that I do, and in a forty-second blessing, if you can get it. I believe in getting as many blessings as God has in store for us, and I believe that every time God's Word accuses us of faithlessness, and points us to higher heights in the Christian life, it is our privilege to reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord, and to go on to greater things and richer usefulness in the service of the Lord. I pity the man after he has even fifty years of service behind him if he does not see that there are larger blessings for him in Christ Jesus than any to which he has attained.

When these crises come in the Christian life, and when our hearts and consciences are moved by the Spirit of God and by the application of His truth, *what answer do we make?* This unjust steward said within himself, "What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the

stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I cannot go on in a false light as I have been doing. I cannot continue to represent my lord, and to waste his goods. What shall I do? How shall I meet this accusing voice? What answer shall I make?"

He considers *the possibilities before him*. One is by the principle of works, by earning his own way, by making up the deficit by his own efforts, adjusting the balance, and then presenting a clear balance to his lord and saying, I have not wasted thy goods. Here is my account made up to the last item." But he says, "I cannot do that. It is beyond my power to overtake the arrears?"

What is the other alternative? To seek forgiveness, to beg for mercy, to seek help in the emergency. The greatest unkindness that can be shown to any man or woman is to bring him or her into the membership of a Christian church unconverted. When once a person is numbered among the stewards of the Lord, when once the name of Christ is named upon a man, it makes it exceedingly difficult for him to beg.

I remember some years ago there was an evangelistic meeting in this city, a great evangelistic meeting, when Dr. Chapman was to be the preacher. It was arranged before I came to the city. One of the terms upon which the ministers agreed was that there should be no Sunday evening meetings in Massey Hall. As the day drew near, the committee wanted to put on a Sunday meeting in Massey Hall, but many ministers opposed it, saying it would demoralize the evening services in the several churches, that people would flock to Massey Hall on a veritable religious drunk. I was a member of this central committee, and when asked for an opinion, said, "It is nothing to me personally whether you have a meeting or not, but I think you would be wise to abide by the terms of the agreement."

One member of the committee said, "What Dr. Chapman proposes is to have a late meeting to train workers, so that when the mission is over he will leave behind him a great army of trained Christian workers." I said, "We are not Dr. Chapman, but I think it is rather an ambitious programme. Some of us are trying to train Christian workers all the time, and our experience would suggest that there is little hope of six Sunday evening services accomplishing the result." At last this man said, "But Mr. Shields does not understand." To which I replied, "I do not; I wish you would explain." He said, "We all know that we have hundreds of people in our churches who are not saved." "Do you mean that what you want is to get your church members converted?" I enquired. To which he replied in the affirmative. "If that be so", said I, "that puts another complexion on it altogether. I was assuming that people who were church members were already converted, or they would not be members of a church." But this man said, "There are thousands of members of churches in Toronto who have never made any definite acceptance of Christ, and we want to get them saved."

That is a very necessary thing, but it is a very difficult task; and I am positive that it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture to bring people into the membership of any church until they are saved. They are named as stewards while wasting their Lord's goods; and comparatively few of them will humble themselves sufficiently to beg for mercy.

It is especially difficult after a man has become a minister. You all remember Mr. Fraser who was with me here for some years. He met a certain prominent

minister of this city in a public place one day, and they got into conversation on religious subjects. This minister—you would all know him were I to mention his name, which of course I will not do—said, I do not agree with you." "Well", said Mr. Fraser, with his usual frankness, "there was a time when I was converted when I believed my sins were forgiven. I believe I was made a new creature in Christ, and I have been thanking the Lord ever since. According to what you say I am altogether mistaken. Ought I then to abandon the hope I have cherished for some years, and take your position?" This minister very solemnly laid his hand upon him and said, "No; do not abandon it. Do not cast away your confidence, I beseech you. I wish I could say what you have said."

There are many men in the pulpit who have had no personal experience of the redeeming grace of God as a result of begging for mercy: "I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed."

What did the unjust steward do? He said, "I am resolved what to do. I have made up my mind." And when, in these spiritual crises a man reaches a decision one can almost imagine the angels attending and listening, to hear what decision has been made. Will he come to his lord and seek forgiveness at his hand? Will he pledge himself in future to be faithful to his trust? What will he do? "I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." He said in effect, "I will make no effort whatever to adjust my relationship to my Lord. I will make no attempt to pay up the deficit, or even to obtain forgiveness for my conduct; but I will curry favour with my lord's debtors, so that if I am put out of one position I shall have another to go to, if I am thrown out of the stewardship they will receive me into their houses."

There is a judgment to come, but *there is also a judgment that is operative in the Christian life continually*. I have been long enough in the ministry to see many, many ministerial tragedies, many a man who appeared as a steward of the Lord who has been put out of his stewardship. You remember in the fifteenth of John our Lord is recorded as saying, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The branch that is not vitally united to the Vine will show its want of vitality by its outward barrenness sooner or later. The branch that abides not in Christ is cast forth, and men—not angels—men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

There is nothing that the proverbial "man in the street" despises more than a false profession; there is nothing that the great mass of people hold in greater contempt than a church which seeks to be ministered unto, and fails to minister. What are the churches of our day? For what do many modern ministers stand? Do they rebuke sin? Long ago, Whittier said—and it is still true—

"The Church, to place and power the door,
Rebukes the sin of the world no more,
Nor sees its Lord in the homeless poor.
Everywhere is the grasping hand,
The eager adding of land to land;
And earth, which seemed to the fathers meant
But as a pilgrim's wayside tent—
A nightly shelter to fold away
When the Lord should call at the break of day,—
Solid and steadfast seems to be,
And Time has forgotten Eternity."

Verily it is true. A member, seeing my subject announced last night, came at the close of the prayer-meeting and put a note into my hand to this effect: "I went to a certain church (naming the church) not long since to return the courtesy shown me by a friend who had come at my invitation to Jarvis Street, and the minister told the story of a poor man who came to his house without food, needing clothes, needing a friend. The minister said, 'I gave him food, I gave him clothes, I gave him a little money and as the man was going away I had a second thought which I regarded as an inspiration. I called the man back, put my hand in my pocket, and gave him a little more money, saying, 'Take that and go to a show'." Oh, the horrible bankruptcy of the present-day church, when ministers of the church have no better comfort to offer to poor bankrupt human nature than that sort of thing!

What shall we do? I am positive that not a few have been compelled to make decision in this church. I trust many men and women have been called to give an account of their stewardship as they have sat in these pews. That, at least, is the object of this pulpit. And that should be the aim of every faithful minister: not only to persuade people to come to Christ and make a profession, but, having made a profession, to endeavour to teach them so to live before God as to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things".

This man said, "I am resolved what to do, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him." He makes friends of his lord's debtors at his lord's expense. How did he do it? He got them together and said, "How much owest thou unto my lord?" One answered, "An hundred measures of oil." "That is too high a standard. Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. I will allow you a fifty per cent. discount. Cut it in half." To the second he said, "How much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore." What did this steward do? He lowered the standard. He reduced the measure of his lord's debtors. He said to one, "Fifty per cent. of the bill rendered will be sufficient for you;" and to another, "You may meet your obligation by paying four-fifths of the bill."

I ask you if that be not the offence of the modern pulpit? if it be not so that in hundreds of cases the church is conforming to the world? They must have their dance, and their cards, and their dramatic association. They tell us that they are trying to keep the young people under proper auspices, that it is better that young people should dance in the church than outside it. I remind you that a man may go straight to hell from the pew of the church as well as from a saloon. Things that are wrong are not made right by being dressed up in a religious robe. And to-day, instead of rebuking the sin of the world, and bringing men back into right relation to God, large numbers of pulpits are doing exactly what this unjust steward did, lowering the standards, promising a discount, saying, "Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?"

Here in this place we set up no standards that we have not always set up. We are preaching here in Jarvis Street no other gospel than other men preached twenty-five years ago. The same old gospel was preached nearly everywhere then. We have no new gospel, no new standards, no new thing under the sun. We are endeavouring

merely to apply the principles of the Book, trying to be faithful to our Lord.

Let us see *what the lord said about it*. "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." We have heard that scripture quoted as a *justification for Christian stupidity* for a long time, and we have been told a thousand times that if you want wisdom, go to the children of this world. Is that what it means? Did our Lord intend us so to understand it? The lord of the parable commended the unjust steward for doing wisely—in what tone? in what terms? Is it a fact that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light? Did not Jesus Christ say, "I am the light of the world"? Did He not say, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness"? Are not believers described as the children of the day, and not of the night? children of the light? Did He not promise that He would send the Holy Spirit Who would guide us, not into all truth, but into all *the* truth? Have we not been given this inspired and infallible Book, "the holy scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"? And are we to believe that God's sending His Son to be the Light of the World; giving us His Word to make us wise; sending His Spirit to enlighten our minds, and to interpret the Scripture—that the result of all this is that the children of light are really not children of light at all, but in comparison with natural men, only fools?

I have met men of the world. I have met with your lawyers and educators and financiers and all the rest of them. I am not boasting; I think I may be acquitted of the charge of immodesty if I repeat what I have said before, I would like nothing better than to eat a half dozen of some of them for breakfast! Who are these men? It does not require intellect to be rich. It does not need a particularly well cultivated mind to look after number one. Some men succeed less by the keenness of their intellects than by the dullness of their consciences. But it requires light from heaven rightly to appraise the things of eternity, and to live as those who are in fellowship with God.

The children of this world wiser in their generation than the children of light? Yes! If ever there was a wise generation since the worlds were made it is ours. If ever there was a generation which was proud of itself, and which held in contempt every generation that preceded, it is ours. Men have always been proud of their superiority. Unjust stewards have always been subtle, and cunning, and clever. But there is a world of difference between cleverness and ability, between cunning and intellectual discernment. Our Lord said, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

What are we to make of that? *It is irony*. It is the most dreadful word that ever escaped the gracious lips of Jesus. He says, in effect: Make your choice, decide whether you will serve God or mammon; but you cannot serve both. If that is your decision, then make for yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, but when you fail, and you discover at last the vanity of all earthly things, when you are brought to the place where the Preacher stood who said, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity"; when all your temporal and material gain has vanished from you, and you are about to quit this mortal

life,—when they fail, let them receive you into everlasting habitations, but do not come knocking at My door; for when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord open unto us: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. We were members of the church. We have attended Communion service, we are eminently religious people.—That may all be, but depart from me; I never knew you.

Is there any scriptural parallel for such irony? You will find in the Old Testament this pregnant word: "Where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of trouble." We cannot serve the world, the flesh, and the devil, here, and then make friends of the God grace hereafter. We cannot live for the mammon of unrighteousness and expect that God will receive us into everlasting habitations. That was the most sarcastic thing that ever fell from the lips of Jesus Christ. He used His irony with reserve, but sometimes He used it,—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.”

That is the sin of the day: lowering the standard, promising the Lord's debtors that they may avoid their obligations and still be at peace with Him.

I am suspicious of any interpretation of Scripture that requires great ingenuity in discovering it. *What I have said to you can have no value unless there is authority for it in Scripture.* Is that what the Scripture teaches? "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"—and will you mark this very carefully—"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him."

You can generally tell for whom the sermon is intended, though not always. I remember a minister's telling me that he once preached a sermon for one member of his congregation—a very foolish thing for a man to do, but he did it. He ought to have gone to that man personally if he had anything to say to him. But he prepared a sermon for that member. The morning came, and the member was present. The preacher preached with all his might. When the service was over this man came up to him and said, "Pastor that was the best sermon you ever preached. I wish Mr. Smith had been here to hear it"!

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him." *Hear our Lord's reply.* What our Lord said in effect was: I am glad you have received the message. Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." He said, "**Ye justify yourselves before men.** Ye have gone to your Lord's debtors saying, Write fifty, or, Write fourscore; but I tell you that I have

authorized no steward to promise a discount on my bill. It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Then he refers to *the marriage relation.* Were I speaking to friends across the line I think I would go into that more fully, but I will say a word. This question of marriage and divorce, this lowering of standards in the church as well as outside the church, this playing with the Word of God, is bound to bring dire results at last. Let me assure you that whatever the theological professors say, there is nothing in the Word of God to justify a minister in lowering the standard: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Then I would remind you that what is spoken of as "The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus" is *part of the same discourse.* The Lord drew the curtain and said, "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom"—he was welcomed into the everlasting habitations—"the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." He prayed then for a readjustment of things. You remember the story, how Abraham is represented as saying, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed. The decision has been made. You made to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. You lived for time and the things of time; now let them help you; but it is too late for you to come here."

There is a *solemn word there,* and I do not think I am straining the story at all to call attention to the details. This man said, "If there is no help for me, if I may not have my thirst slaked by so much as one drop of water, if Lazarus may not come to me, send him to my brethren who are still upon the earth." If you could persuade me that there is no repentance in hell, I should have to believe there was a chance on the other side of the Cross. Why was he afraid lest they should come into "this place of torment"? Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. I have rendered them my account; they have the bill." "Yes", said he, "but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." "No", said Abraham, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

And in the gospel dispensation *One did go to them from the dead.* Jesus Christ came. He was crucified, He died, and was buried; He rose again, and spoke out of the open heavens to a sinful world as One Who had gone through death, and the grave—and did men hear Him? Did they receive the gospel of the resurrection? Do they believe it now? What are the pulpits of this city preaching? Some of them are faithful to the gospel of the resurrection but many explain it away. One has come to us from the dead, and still men do not believe.

Why did he fear for those who were still upon earth? Why? Were they among those to whom he had promised a discount? Did he fear lest their advent to that place of torment would add to his distress? Let me say a strong thing. I believe in future retribution; I believe it is taught in Scripture. I do not know what hell means—I do not want to know. I know it is a place of excru-

ciating suffering. I know it is a place where men suffer for the deeds done in the body. The Bible says so. And I declare that *if there is one place hotter than another, more dreadful, more terrible than another, it must be reserved for men who have denied the word of God, who have lowered the divine standard and in violation of the plain precepts of Scripture have promised men salvation on other terms than God's.*

There was a man in California who was District Attorney for nearly twenty years, and he sent hundreds of men to the penitentiary as prosecuting attorney. After a while he was indicted for corruption. His guilt was proved up to the hilt, and he was sentenced to a term in the same institution to which he had sent other men. But they did not transfer him to the penitentiary at once: they had to build a special cell for Asa Keyes. The penitentiary authorities said in effect, "If you send that man to us the convicts he has sent here will rend him limb from limb."

Why is it men thus play with the Word of God? Because they do not believe it. I come to you in the name of the Lord and say, *How much owest thou my Lord?* You must make answer; but I know it is so much you can never pay it. It is of no use to try to dig; you will never get right that way. When the rich man lifted up his eyes and saw somebody in Abraham's bosom, the only man whose presence he observed was a man who had not been ashamed to beg. There is only one way to get

to heaven, and that is by begging our way: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

How much owest thou my Lord? *It will have to be paid.* A hundred measures of wheat? It must be paid. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." How then can anyone be saved? There could be no salvation, if it were not true, blessedly true, that,—

"Jesus paid it all,

All to Him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow."

Shall we plead guilty together? Shall we acknowledge that we are all unfaithful? Shall we once again with bowed hearts and bowed heads pray the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Let us pray: O Lord, help us to pray. May thousands of hearts be uplifted to the throne just at this moment! May great numbers of people bow before Thee as beggars, seeking Thy mercy. We would not be excluded in the day when Thou shalt shut the door. We desire to be shut in with Christ, and not to be shut out from Him. Give us wisdom, Lord. May the light that never was on sea or land, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, shine into many a darkened heart, teaching us to pray, God be merciful to me a sinner. We have Thy word for it that we shall go down to our houses justified. Bless us everyone for Thy dear name's sake. Amen.

ONCE SAVED—ALWAYS SAVED.

The Philosophy of Eternal Salvation.

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

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

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, April 16th, 1931.

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson read: Ephesians 2:4-10; Romans 3:20, 21; 4:13-16; 11:5, 6.

Last Thursday evening we gave attention to a few of the explicit promises of Scripture which expressly declare that the life which God gives is eternal, or everlasting. Then we thought of some of the figures used of the Holy Ghost to represent salvation as being a life: the new birth, believers being called the members of the body of Christ, and so on. On a later occasion—perhaps next week—I want to consider some of the objections to this doctrine, objections based upon our observations of many who for a time run well, but by and by are hindered, and who ultimately cast away their confidence and abandon their profession. There are many such cases. Then, more particularly, we shall consider some of the scriptures which are sometimes quoted by those who object to this doctrine of the eternal security of the believer.

But this evening we shall think of the philosophical aspect of it; that is, to have you think of the nature of salvation itself, of its source, whence it comes, and by an examination of these things we shall see that it must be an eternal salvation, that it rests as truly on a basis of reason as of revelation.

First, let me say that, among many others this week, I received a letter from one who is still a member of this church, although he has been absent a number of years, but who is now worshipping with us every Sunday evening in our radio service. I was delighted

to observe how firmly grounded this brother appears to be in the great fact that salvation is of grace, and of grace alone, and that he discerns that lack in modern preaching, that men are exhorted rather to trust in themselves either wholly or in part, instead of being directed to trust only in Christ.

Then this brother said, "Please make it more simple still." He said in effect: I know that you have tried to reduce it to the a b c, but even then some people seem utterly unable to understand the principle of salvation by grace.

That is true. I received another letter from a brother down south, a minister who says he has been following these lectures with great interest. But he takes me to task for raising the question as to whether faith precedes regeneration, or regeneration, faith. You will recall that I quoted someone as saying that logically faith precedes regeneration, but that chronologically regeneration precedes faith; but he especially quotes a sentence in the lecture to this effect, that faith is the cry of the newborn soul, and the first real evidence of regeneration. He said, "That is the worst sort of hardshellism, hyper-Calvinism."

How important this doctrine is! It lies surely at the very basis of our Christian comfort. How can the believer have peace if he is to be uncertain of his salvation? If we are merely experimenting with God,

if we cannot be absolutely sure that the matter of the greatest possible moment for time and for eternity is for ever settled, how it is possible for anybody to have peace? Even though the man be seventy-five or eighty years of age, or but a few hours from the time when he must take passage over the river, still he may lapse if there be some element of human merit or human effort in salvation. It seems to me that an abiding peace would be impossible. I feel it is very necessary that we should clearly apprehend this great truth, that we are saved in Christ, and saved for ever.

I cannot see how we can get along in the Lord's service unless we are sure of that. If we are inviting men and women to make trial of Christ, to—I use the word again—experiment with the Christian religion and see how they like it, our service would be utterly wanting in value. I cannot see that we could reasonably entertain any hope for the stability of the Christian church. You cannot build an enduring house of blocks of unburned clay. Certainly it would be dishonouring to God to proclaim a gospel that is no gospel at all, and to offer men a salvation that might prove after all to be a thing that would wear out.

I.

What is the ground of our hope? I shall begin by saying that SALVATION MUST BE ETERNAL IF IT BE OF GRACE; for if it be of grace it is of God, for that is what grace means. Grace means that there is not an infinitesimal element of the human in it, of merit, or effort, but that salvation originated with God; He provided it, He bestowed it, He perpetuates it, and will perfect it in glory. It is something which comes from God, and from God alone.

Some years ago I was in Atlantic City, and an American friend invited me to lunch. I have been about the world a little bit, and I have seen some of its palatial hotels—invariably as the guest of another! But I think I have nowhere seen such palaces as are to be found in Atlantic City. I shall have to be careful and perhaps delete this from the printed address, lest my host should see it; yet I may not, for I believe he would not mind the pleasantry involved; but many of those hotels are built for the accommodation of people who have more cents than sense. They seem to have been deliberately built to take money away from millionaires. I doubt if there are royal palaces to be found anywhere which surpass some of them in splendour. I was invited to have lunch at one of the best of them. It was a fairly large table the two of us sat down to, but there were so many dishes that even then they could hardly put them on. There was not much on some of the dishes, but the dishes were very fine.

I doubt whether there was anything on the menu less than fifty or seventy-five cents, and five dollars was nothing. It seemed to me that a man could spend twenty-five dollars on his lunch without having much to eat. How much my friend paid I do not know. I was too polite to ask him! The lunch was not extravagant except in respect to its cost; and I know the price, to my pocket-book, would have been staggering—but I did not pay for it. I did not suggest to my generous host, as we were passing out, "Now you invited me to be your guest to-day, and I know your bill was a very heavy one, and I feel rather badly

about letting you pay it all, I wish you would at least allow me to contribute the tip for the waiter." If I had done so, I might have been sorry before I got out, for I should have had no idea how appropriately to tip waiters in a place like that. In fact, it was entirely beyond me. From the point of view of my limited exchequer, I seemed to be guilty of extravagance, but my gracious friend seemed to enjoy entertaining me, and nothing seemed more enjoyable to him than the payment of the bill. I discreetly walked on so as not to see whether he got any change or not! But I knew that it would have insulted him had I offered to make any contribution to the feast. I was his guest, and he paid the bill.

Some years ago a friend invited me to be his guest for two weeks. I used to have some rich friends! I accepted the invitation for the sake of his companionship and fellowship. We took a journey of some hundreds of miles, then found a couple of forest guides, and they took us back into the interior of the forest. We got next to Nature's heart, and had a very enjoyable time for a couple of weeks. But before we left the house this good friend said to me, "Leave your purse at home with your wife; your money is no good on this trip." He did not allow me to pay anything from the time I left my house until the time he delivered me back again. He absolutely forbade me to participate in the expense in any way at all. I was his guest, I was the beneficiary of his grace; and if half way there or half way home his supplies had run out and he had turned to me and said, "I am sorry, but I have not money enough to get home. Have you got your purse with you?" what should I have done after he had told me to leave my purse at home? I am sure he would have been mortified beyond expression if he had undertaken to entertain me for two weeks and then at any point he had broken down and been unable to carry his contract to completion.

You see, my dear friends, when the Lord undertakes to save us He says in effect: "This is My task. I will do it."—"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." He asks no contribution from us.

The member of the church who wrote me from out-of-town said, "I find that people do not understand such hymns as, 'Rock of Ages Cleft for Me', and, 'Just As I Am Without One Plea', and, 'Jesus Paid It All'." I was glad he had learned something from coming here, and that he was clear on that great fundamental that if salvation be of God He is bound to see us through. And it is of God if it be of grace, for grace means that He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending; that salvation, as our Brother Currie used to put it—you remember that phrase of his, "from start to finish"? Well, salvation "from start to finish" is of God, and "your money is no good". He is going to see us through. What is that hymn we sing?—

"His love in time past
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer
I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure
To help me quite through.

"Determined to save,
 He watched o'er my path,
 When, Satan's blind slave,
 I sported with death;
 And can He have taught me
 To trust in His name,
 And thus far have brought me,
 To put me to shame?"

Will He begin it and not finish it? "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever."

Then another thing, salvation is not only of grace in respect to its provision, that our utmost need was anticipated, and that our debts were paid, the atonement planned from the foundation of the world, but *even the application of it was foreordained also*. Call it "hard-shellism" or what you like, that is the gospel, that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. You will remember that in a lecture two or three weeks ago I published a footnote calling attention to a different translation of one passage which I had quoted, which was called to my attention by Dr. Stockley, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world", to the effect that our names were written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain. That is to say, our names were written there; even as the provision for our salvation was made, so was our acceptance of Christ, and all that goes with it, anticipated, and our names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

I cannot explain my Christian experience on any other hypothesis. I cannot understand how I became a Christian, or how I have continued in the way, apart from the assumption that God did it all. Can any of you? In spite of all, if God had left you, you would have cast away your confidence, would you not? As Christians of some years of experience, are you not conscious of the restraints and the constraints of grace?—God leading you to an acceptance of Christ, then afterward holding you by His strong hand of grace, refusing to let you go? It is all of grace: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Find a break in that chain, can you? That chain is made of metal, if I may so say, fashioned in the heavenly forges; and every link in it is of such a temper that it is guaranteed never to break.

I saw a motor-car pulling another the other day, with a chain made up of great thick iron links. The motor-car in front had plenty of power, with a great engine. That chain looked as though it could pull a battleship, but it broke asunder. On examination it was found that two of those big links were tied together with a bit of rope, and the chain was not a bit stronger than that piece of rope.

There are some people who come along with their shoe-strings and try to strengthen the cable that binds us to the eternal throne. The Lord does not need it—"Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." And because it is thus of grace it must be eternal.

Then it must be eternal too, because since it is of God God's honour is at stake in the matter: "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake." The Scripture tells us that God has "made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The Psalmist observes that the "heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." I think the general teaching of Scripture is that as the work of creation found its climax in the creation of man, God's last and highest work which he pronounced to be "very good," so the divine skill and power manifested in the new creation transcends all the glory of the first creation. The principle is true as expressed in one of our hymns,—

"God in the gospel of His Son
 Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

God is supremely glorified in Christ, and Christ is supremely glorified in the work of redemption. You will remember the context of our text of last Sunday morning. As the multitudes came to Christ desiring to become His disciples He uttered those searching words which we had for our text, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Then He goes on to say, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" There are a great many magnificent buildings in this city that are finished, and in use. There are some of them that challenge remark every time one passes them. I was passing one the other day and somebody remarked to me, "I suppose the man who started to build that did not count the cost." It was a building that must have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars thus far, but it is not finished. It is standing idle, and all that has been invested in it is lost for the time, for it produces no revenue.

When our Lord saw the crowd He was careful to warn those who would be His disciples to count the cost lest they should begin and not be able to finish. Are we to suppose that the Lord would undertake this most stupendous of all tasks, if I may without irreverence say it, that ever engaged the powers of Deity—for the salvation of the human soul is the biggest thing that God ever did—are we to assume that He begins it without being absolutely sure that He is able to finish it? Can you imagine such a thing! Can anybody suppose that Jesus Christ came to this earth on a great adventure, as an experiment? Or did He come because there had been assigned to Him from all eternity a specific task which He was divinely qualified to execute? Did He not come to this earth possessed of adequate power to carry out His programme? Can you show me one particular wherein He ever failed? wherein he changed His mind, or altered His course? Did He ever have to qualify anything He ever said? He went straight through to His goal.

There are two texts I should like to put together. I intend to preach on them some day if I live long enough—and get wise enough. On the cross our

Lord said, "It is finished", but before He came to the cross, in His high priestly prayer He said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." We have a proverb to the effect that "there is many a slip between the cup and the lip." And a wise man who has some great undertaking on hand, which he has carried forward nine-tenths of the way, is yet compelled to say, "It is not quite finished yet; I will tell you when it is done." But Jesus Christ dared to say before He had actually gone to the Cross, or shed His blood, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—"Dared to say?" No! He said the same thing in effect—and in promise—before the worlds were made—and carried it out. He never failed at any point in the execution of His plan and purpose.

Well, do you suppose, dear friends, it is possible that you are an exception? I knew a church once that was made up of Highland Scotch people, and a Highland Scotsman is like a piece of well-seasoned oak: it is a tremendously difficult thing to drive a nail into it—and when once it is in it is almost impossible to pull it out again! They say that when a woman wills she wills; you may depend on it. Well, when a Highlander makes up his mind—it may be right or wrong, it makes little difference—it is made up!

In this particular church there were two clans, two tribes. They had come across the sea, and had gravitated to the one church. Some of them were Perthshire men and some of them were Tyree men; and what they were, they were: that was all. You could not change them. Somehow or another they got across, and their Pastor said to one of them, "Brother So-and-So, you know perfectly well the teaching of Scripture." "And what is that?" he enquired. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." "I know it, Pastor." "Well, have you done it?" "No." "Why do you not do it? You profess to be a Christian." "Well," said he quite seriously, "do you really think that the Lord had such people as we have to deal with in mind when He said that?" To which his Pastor wisely replied, "And do you think He had you in mind when He died on the Cross?"

Is it not plain that from Genesis to Revelation there is never a note of uncertainty? He Who made redemption's plan was sure of His power, of His ability to execute it to the utmost; and were He to fail, having sent His Son, His Last and Best, and having sent the Holy Ghost, and having given us this revelation of Himself, which is the record of His Son—if, in spite of it all, one blood-washed soul were to fail of entrance into the Eternal City, what could be said for the honour of our God?

Why, my friends, it is unthinkable. It seems to me, if it were properly understood, it would be almost blasphemy to suggest it, that God could ever promise a thing, and fail in the execution of the thing he had sovereignly determined to do. I say, that philosophically, as a matter of reason, if there were any power in the universe superior to the power of God, or that could thwart Him in His purposes, God would cease to be God. The very idea of God requires that He shall be over all, God blessed for ever.

Very well, then, this simple word: because salvation is of grace it must be of faith, and therefore it must be eternal: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might

be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; Who is the father of us all." All that God has ever asked of us is that we repent of our sin, that we confess our moral ruin, our utter—what word shall I find to express it—our utter bankruptcy, our moral nothingness, that we have come to the end of ourselves. Our Lord expresses it thus: "When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began"—it is only the beginning—"he began to be in want." Oh, the pregnant speech of that parable! Listen: "And no man gave unto him."

Do you know what that means? It means that nobody in the "far country" can ever understand the principle of grace. Grace argues infinity always. Mr. Rockefeller is a very rich man. One who is a member of the family told me—you have seen it in the papers too—that he goes out every morning with his pockets well filled with new dimes, dimes from the mint that have never been in circulation, and to everybody who is introduced to him he gives a new dime. Everybody he meets when he is on his estate, the workmen about the place, he gives a dime as he greets them.

That is not much for a multi-millionaire to give away, just a dime. You have heard of the man who came to the Duke of Wellington asking for help. "Why should I help you?" he enquired. "Because, Your Grace, I am your brother." "You are?" "Yes, sir." "Well," he said as he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a penny and gave it to the beggar, "go and get all your other brothers to give you as much, and you will be a richer man than I."

If Mr. Rockefeller were to meet enough people, and he continued to give each of them a dime, it would make even him a poor man. As a matter of fact, nobody can give—give—give—give—be always giving without reserve to everybody, and to make that the one term of maintaining any relationship with that person, that the person receive—not give, but receive, keep on receiving, while he on his part keeps on giving—nobody could do that—not even the richest man on earth, for there is no one to whose wealth there is no limit.

I say, grace argues infinity. There are plenty of rich men in these days, but if all the world's riches were equally divided there would still be poor people the next day. You cannot enrich the world that way. "No man gave unto him." That is why people cannot understand the principle of grace. It is an idiom that is foreign to our language. It does not belong to the far country. Nobody gives anything away. Only God can give to all and give without measure, for only God is infinite.

The prodigal came back and brought the language of the far country with him. He knew there was plenty in his father's house, and his first prayer—and please do not criticize the prayer of young believers—his first prayer was a very defective one. He had it all made up before he came—but he did not get it delivered: "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. Give me a job, and let me pay for my board." When he got to his father's house he discovered that his father was not keeping a boarding-house. It was the same old man-

sion, and the fatted calf was killed. There was plenty to eat, and nobody took the last piece of bread—and nobody had anything to pay. In the far country "no man gave unto him", but when he came home everything he received he received as his father's free gift.

Salvation is of grace through faith. What is faith? What does God ask of us but to acknowledge our sin and our sinfulness, our utter inability to do anything that can be pleasing to Him of ourselves; just to throw up our hands and to say that we are bankrupt, helpless, sinners,—

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

And to trust Him. What for? What for? What do you trust God for? To give you a second chance? Then you may as well stop before you start! To extend your probation? No! What is faith? Faith is a recognition of human impotence; or, in respect to all the qualities that are required by the holy law of God, faith is a recognition of human bankruptcy on the one hand, and of the divine adequacy, fullness, infinitude, on the other; coming out of myself into Christ, trusting him. What for? For salvation? For how long? It must be eternal or it would not be salvation at all. So that when you examine into the bases of these things, and get down to first principles and see that everything is of God, of grace, through faith, you will be able to say, "Hallelujah, I have it," or, better still, "He has me." "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." We are made members of His body. He has become the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him, and their obedience is the outward evidence of that internal life, and that internal work of grace sovereignly wrought by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

It is a great thing to be saved. Many rich people lost all their money a little while ago, or most of it. Some other people have money that is no good to them, for it pays no dividends. What a world of uncertainty this is! Is it not a glorious consolation to know that there is one fixed centre, there is one Person Who never fails, one Person Who never grows old, Who never becomes poor, Who never fails in the fulfilment of His promises? We rest upon the oath-bound promises of God Who cannot lie, and are as safe as if we were in heaven.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

(Continued from page 2.)

earth to-day is the shadow that they must soon pass from us.

On one other occasion is that noun used in this gospel. In the twenty-third verse of this chapter Jesus says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him and we will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him"—our "abiding place". So we have the beautiful thought—down here in our tent life we shall have the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit living with us. "We will make Our abode with the one who obeys Our voice". This is our tent life privilege. And presently we shall rise to abide in the glory of the heavenly abiding place, where there is no shadow of fear across the future forever.

Then He tells of certainty: "If it were not so, I would have told you." How beautifully frank and child-like the Saviour is in speaking to His disciples, and at the same time how majestically decisive! In all His references to the future there is a tone of sublime certainty. Where our poor ideas are all tentative and suggestive only, our Saviour does not hesitate. Somebody has said, "He is like one who stands on a mountain top, and tells those on the plain behind Him what He sees". So our Lord Jesus beheld the realities of the future, seeing them distinctly. And there is a tone of decisiveness about anything He says in reference to the future.

There is marvellous reticence too. He holds much back; but when He does speak there is equally marvellous decisiveness. And what He says is enough to satisfy us. He begets hopes. He tells us all we need to know about heaven; perhaps not all that we would like to know. I dare say you and I have often felt we should like to sit down and ask the Saviour a few questions about the future. But when we have examined those questions we find they have generally arisen from a spirit of curiosity rather than from a deep sense of need. But when it comes to a question of need, has not our Saviour told us all that we need to know? We need to know that there is a place of joy; we need to know that God is there; we need to know that the Lord Jesus Christ will there unveil the glory of God to us; we need to know that we shall never be parted again when we come into His glorious presence. And He tells us all that. We need to know that the joyous future will satisfy our hearts; and He tells us that it will. What more do we need to know? All that would simply gratify curiosity He holds back. "If it were not so, I would have told you." The Saviour tells us all we need to know, and the rest we can leave to His all-gracious mind and heart. There are great gaps in our knowledge to-day, but there is enough for holiness of life and preparedness for the great future.

HIS GOING TO THE MANY MANSIONS. "I go to prepare a place for you." The Saviour, in effect, says, "My going is really for you. Let not your heart be troubled about My going, for My going is for your sake." And He illustrates the matter by an occurrence of His day. Travellers in His day would constantly send on someone to make preparation for them. Why, that very morning He had sent on two of His disciples to make ready the Passover Feast. And now He says, "That is what I am going to do: I am going to prepare for you." With this simple illustration does He set forth one of the sublimest of truths. "I go to prepare a place for you."

There are two stages in His going. He went, first of all, to the cross, and then He rose from the grave; and on the Bethany side of Mount Olivet He ascended into the glory in the full view of His disciples. Just as the high priest, with the precious blood, went into the Holiest of all once a year, and sprinkled the blood before and upon the Mercy Seat, so our great High Priest passes into the Unseen with His own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

Amongst the myths and stories of the past, there is this one, of certain gates that could not be opened at all by any physical force: they resisted any force that could be brought to bear upon them. But if touched with a drop of certain blood, they would fly open immediately. The gates of heaven are like that. And the Saviour's passing in is not for Himself alone, but He opens the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. His going in secures

an entrance for us also; hence, Jesus has gone to prepare the place of which He tells us, so that when we enter there we shall not pass into an unprepared place, but a home all ready for us, prepared by the Master's wise and gracious hand.

And the preparation is complete, according to some other words of Scripture. The Apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, says, "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." And the writer to the Hebrews again speaks of our Father having "prepared" a city. The work is done; the Lord Jesus has presented His sacrifice; all that was needed to be done He has accomplished, and so we may anticipate the joy and certainty of our place in the Father's home. Our elder Brother, our great Joseph, Who has passed on before us has gathered in, so to speak, the wealth of the kingdom, has prepared a place for us. There our entire being, spirit, soul and body, finds its deepest satisfaction in

the home which has been made ready by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"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"—For whom? Judas had gone out from the company when our Lord spoke these words. The rest were all true. He knew to whom He was speaking, and so He said, "For you". "For"—are you amongst them? Am I amongst them? Has this work been done for us? Is there an "abiding place" there for you and for me? Oh, may we put in that personal pronoun, "for ME"!

"For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou'rt risen—my bands are all untied;
And now Thou liv'st in me:
When purified, made white, and tried,
Thy glory then for me!"

God grant that it may be so, Amen.

The Union Baptist Witness

Is the Official Publication of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the Office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

PRAYER.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Ephesians 6:18.

"When is the time for prayer?

In every hour, while life is spared to thee—

In crowds or solitude—in joy or care—
Thy thoughts should heavenward flee,
At home—at morn and eve—with
loved ones there,

Bend thou the knee in prayer."

So begins the April issue of *The Missionary Bulletin*, which carries many notes of praise and present definite prayer requests. Are you using it and finding it a blessing? The Office Secretary would be very glad to hear that the Bulletin is proving helpful and of the uses to which it is put. Prayer is asked for its preparation and distribution.

NOSTALGIA.

Many have fallen victims of this complaint on more than one occasion. In a masterly sermon preached at Annette Street Baptist Church on Sunday morning, April 19th, Pastor W. J. H. Brown made very real to his people the 2nd chapter of Phillipians, where he noted that "Epaphroditus suffered from an old-fashioned, honest-to-goodness attack of home-sickness". "For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness". Then Pastor Brown presented the inspired writer, Paul, as he exhorted the church at Phillipi to "Receive him (Epaphroditus) therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."

It was a great message, searching, up-to-date, and to the point, for as we hear Paul saying, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts and shows us wherein, naming the Name of Christ, we have failed to put "First things First".

NEWS.

The Union Baptist Witness, pages endeavor to give to the churches in the Union fellowship reports of interest from the various churches. Some of the churches neglect to send in news items over long periods and yet indirectly we hear of blessing in their midst. The Editor would appreciate hearing from the churches as often as possible.

CALVARY CHURCH, OTTAWA.

Calvary Church, Ottawa, has much to praise the Lord for. The church recently held its annual meeting and all organizations reported a very satisfactory year.

At the annual meeting a large number of friends from the Westboro Regular Baptist Church gathered with the Calvary Church and their Pastor, Rev. Donald Fraser, led the devotions. Rev. James Hall, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, presided.

The membership report showed an increase of sixteen new members on the church roll; thirteen by baptism and three by experience.

The financial statement was very gratifying. The total contributions from all departments amounted to \$7,378.09, with a balance on hand of \$69.15. The building fund amounted to \$748.35: The total contributions to missions amounted to \$2,565.76 of which \$1,200.00 was contributed toward the support of Rev. and Mrs. H. L. Davey; \$35.00 to the general Liberia Fund; \$516.45 to Home Missions;

\$115.00 to the Westboro Regular Baptist Church and \$112.05 to the Ottawa Messianic Testimony to the Jews. The Sunday School total contributions amounted to \$851.50, with a balance on hand of \$80.93.

During the evening several musical items were rendered, including orchestral selections and a solo by Mrs. Donald Fraser, and singing by a male quartette. Preceding the meeting, a delightful supper was served by the ladies of the church.

OXFORD ST., WOODSTOCK.

Rev. J. H. Peer, Pastor of Oxford Street Baptist Church, Woodstock, has recently had the joy of baptizing and receiving into church membership, twenty-three believers and several others have been received on experience.

The Saturday evening prayer meetings continue to grow both in numbers and interest.

MOUNT PLEASANT, TORONTO.

One of the young women's classes of the Mount Pleasant Road Bible School recently held a supper meeting at the church. There were several visitors and these young people had a splendid time. The Gospel Melody Makers, with instrument and voice, praised the Lord, and Mr. Norman Pipe lead several choruses. At eight o'clock the regular weekly prayer meeting of the church was held, all the young people staying. After a time of testimony and prayer, the work in Liberia, illustrated by lantern slides, was presented. A generous offering found on the plate placed at the door was evidence of the deep missionary interest of the church.

Rev. Alex Thomson had the joy of baptizing three believers on Sunday, April 19th.

WINGHAM.

Student Wm. McIvor served at Victoria Regular Baptist Church, Wingham, last Lord's day. There was a good attendance and the church is looking forward to aggressive work during the summer months.

SUFFOLK ST., GUELPH.

The Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. W. E. Atkinson, visited the Suffolk Street Regular Baptist Church, Guelph, last Lord's day and was much impressed with the progress of the work under the ministry of Rev. Fred Kendal. At the morning service there was a goodly attendance of members and at the evening service every available seat was filled.

MOUNT DENNIS.

Since the Mount Dennis Regular Baptist Mission has been located in Legion Hall, a marked improvement in the services has been noted. Strangers are coming in and Student E. C. Wood is exercising a splendid ministry.

STANLEY AVE., HAMILTON.

Rev. Clifford J. Loney has had the joy of seeing the Lord gloriously save sinners through the preaching of the Word at Stanley Avenue Baptist Church. On Easter Sunday at both services there were those who responded to the invitation. On Sunday, April 12th, a young woman came to the Lord, publicly confessing Him. Last Sunday, a young man saved at an earlier service brought his wife and she also professed conversion. A baptismal service was held on April 12th.

The important prayer services of the church are well maintained; the Sunday

School enrolls new scholars each Lord's day and at the Young People's meetings held on Friday evening are helpful. Recently Rev. Alfred J. Lewis, of Kitchener, met with them and gave them a splendid message on Africa and the work of our missionaries in Liberia. Mr. Lewis was supported by the Male Quartette from Benton Street Church.

WESTPORT.

Mr. Charles Hardie, graduating this year from the Toronto Baptist Seminary, occupied the pulpit of the Westport Baptist Church on Sunday, April 5th. After the evening service, a business meeting was held and the Church extended a call to Mr. Hardie to become its Pastor. Mr. Hardie has accepted and will take up the work at the close of the Seminary term.

On April 12th, Rev. W. S. Whitcombe supplied the Westport Church and was gladly welcomed back to his old field. It will be remembered that the Westport Baptist Church was Mr. Whitcombe's first charge.

The Westport Church asks an interest in prayer that this summer will see many souls brought to the Lord under Mr. Hardie's ministry.

WESTERN NEWS.

From The B.C. Baptist we print the following report of the work at Mission City. Many will be interested in hearing of Mr. Dawe, who was a student at the Toronto Baptist Seminary last year.

Mission City, Rev. G. R. Dawe—We are rejoicing over the rich blessings received at our Father's hand during the past month. During our special evangelistic effort, large numbers attended

each evening. Sometimes the church was full and each evening the presence of God was felt, and also His power, in the messages delivered by our brother, A. Ted Goodwin. God's people were blessed, and many brought to a complete surrender and victory of life. Besides, we were glad to see several confess Christ for the first time.

MINER'S BAY.

The many preaching stations which are part of the Miner's Bay field and the distances which the Pastor has to travel to reach them should be enough to challenge all to definite prayer on behalf of the missionary. Pastor Boomer has recently organized a Bible School at Miner's Bay. It is hoped that it will be possible to hold this each Sunday afternoon. The services which have been held at Buller in the morning and Moore's Falls in the afternoon will be united and brought into one service at the Miner's Bay Church. The services at Uphill for which prayer has been asked have grown. The Lord has used the opposition to His glory and there are better attendances than ever before.

The Miner's Bay district is a very beautiful one, and attracts many tourists during the summer months. Pastor Boomer will welcome visitors at any time.

THE CHURCH.

Several have requested a copy of Rev. Alexander Thomson's outline dealing with "The Church," and it is therefore published that others may enjoy this comprehensive study. When there are so many vagaries and extravagances which hinder the churches and their ministry.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET.

The week-end in Jarvis Street had a touch of spring in it. There was a good prayer-meeting Saturday night, when we were glad to welcome two of our radio hearers from Ithaca, New York, a brother who is an officer in one of the churches there, and his mother. They came to Toronto exclusively to spend a Sunday in Jarvis Street. We have heard from many of our radio hearers who intend touring this summer, that they intend to include Toronto in their tour, so that they may have a Sunday with us.

The attendance at the School in the morning was 1,375. There was a good congregation, a great crowd at night, when the radio sermon appearing in this issue was preached. Seven or eight responded to the invitation. Three were baptized.

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Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 6

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 19

May 10th, 1931

Second Quarter

ISRAEL'S BONDAGE

Lesson Text: Exodus, chapter 1.

Golden Text: "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel." (v. 12).

I. GROWTH OF ISRAEL, (vs. 1-7).

Exodus derives its name from the great event in the history of Israel described by that term, and its contents record the circumstances of the event, the journey of the Israelites to Mount Sinai, and their receipt of the law from God at that place. In Genesis the family of Israel is before us; in Exodus it is the family grown into a nation. God had promised a great increase in numbers unto His chosen one, (Gen. 15:5), and the fulfilment of His promise is seen in this record. There comes most clearly before us in all these studies the certainty of fulfilment of the word spoken by God. Sometimes such fulfilment seems almost impossible of realization, but in due time it comes to pass. God is omnipotent, and omniscient. As the All-powerful One, He is able to carry out His will; and as the possessor of all knowledge, He can forecast coming events, and make them known to His servants. The lessons arising from the nature of God require continuous explanation and emphasis. We should believe His word, surrender to His will, and obey His commands. Blessing comes from the act of obedience, and loss is suffered through disobedience. Note the act of faith in claiming God's promises, and the relation of this to life, prayer, hope, and unfulfilled prophecy.

The remarkable nature of Israel's growth is seen in contrast with the number who entered Egypt with Jacob. These numbered but seventy souls, (v. 5; Gen. 46:27; Deut. 10:22). This number included Joseph and his sons, but evidently did not include the women. The company was small, but it was destined to expand rapidly in the congenial land of Goshen, not simply on account of the location, but because of the definite favour of God. Note the interesting fact that the number is a multiple of the perfect number "seven", the number of completeness. "And Joseph died and all his brethren and all that generation", (v. 6). Thus the early settlers went the way of all human beings, but this did not mean a loss of interest on the part of God. Death does not hinder Him in the carrying out of His promises. He is superior thereto. All must die unless the Lord returns and takes His living saints to glory in rapture; and we should be ready for the great change. "And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them", (v. 7). This denotes remarkable growth, and wonderful prosperity,—marks of God's favour, and evidence of Divine faithfulness.

II. OPPRESSION OF ISRAEL, (vs. 8-14).

"Now there arose a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph", (v. 8).

This may denote the beginning of a new dynasty in Egypt, as some commentators infer; or it may simply mean the advent of a new king. But whatever it signifies, it implies at least the coming to the throne of one who instituted a change in the principle of government. Egypt owed much to Joseph, and doubtless for a time recognition of this was made by the rulers, and shown in their attitude toward Joseph's people. But the public memory is proverbially short; and after the departure by death of the one vitally concerned, and those associated with him, interest in the matter would wane; and we need not wonder at the arising of one who knew not Joseph. In this lack of knowledge, and the attitude which it betokened, we have the reason for the king's conduct toward the Israelites, with its sad consequences. If he had known Joseph he would have acted differently. It is almost certain that he knew something about him, for he manifests knowledge of the Israelites. But he did not know that man of God, the saviour of his land. It is possible to know about the heavenly Joseph, without actually knowing Him. And lack of such personal knowledge means trouble and disaster here and hereafter. Note the possibility and necessity of knowing the Divine Joseph.

The special favour shown to Israel by the kings of Egypt was brought to a close by this ruler. He was manifesting wrath against the Lord's people, but God was making that wrath to praise Him in the fulfilling of His word, (Gen. 15:13; Ps. 76:10). The favour being ended, the time of affliction is about to begin. Not knowing Joseph, and therefore being ignorant of God, the king was governed by carnal wisdom in dealing with the situation, arising from the presence in his land of an alien people. He knew not the purpose of God in relation to this people, else he would not have sought to reduce their numbers. It turned out to be a contest between God and man in relation to the carrying out of the Divine purpose; and in such a contest man always fails. It is extremely foolish to fight against God. Man may do his very utmost, but he cannot prevent the fulfilment of God's word.

The Israelites growing in numbers, retaining their own worship and customs, and remaining foreigners, excited distrust in the mind of the king, and led him to take steps to retard their increase. He gives testimony to this increase in the statement that they are "more and mightier than we", (v. 9). This may be the language of exaggeration, but it bears testimony to the strength of Israel, and the fear of the king concerning them. His future action toward Israel is dictated by political sagacity. "Come on" he says, "let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply and it comes to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land", (v. 10). This was a very grave danger in the estimation of the king. The land of Goshen was situated on the border, in the direct path of an enemy entering the country from the east, and what more natural, according to worldly wisdom, than that those foreigners should ally themselves with such an enemy and fight against the Egyptians? At least

such was a possibility. And then they would leave Egypt; and evidently the king did not desire this to happen, for they were his subjects, and undoubtedly were excellent citizens. His suspicions were unjust, and had he known God he would not have entertained them; but he was reasoning apart from God. Explanation may be made of the necessity for knowing the will of God, (Col. 1:9-12).

The plan evolved for retarding the growth of Israel seems suitable for its purpose from a worldly point of view, though most unjust in its infliction. They were reduced to a state of serfdom. It was expected that such oppression would produce the physical effect of reducing the number of children born, and would aid in breaking the spirit of the people. But to the amazement of the Egyptians, such a result did not ensue, and to their dismay they found that, "the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew", (v. 12). They did not know it, but such victory over circumstances was due to Divine favour. And the Lord is able to permit His children in these days to rise above their circumstances. Part of the work assigned the Israelites was the building of the "treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses", the sites of which have been discovered. In further explanation of the work assigned them, and of the cruelty of their oppression we are informed. "The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour", (vs. 13, 14). Such service was extremely hard and well calculated to breed a hopeless feeling. But God sustained His people through all their affliction, and gave them at length a wondrous deliverance. Note God's sustaining power these days, and the blessing of trusting Him under all circumstances, that His purpose may be carried out, (Rom. 8:28), "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

III. PHARAOH'S MURDEROUS DECREE, (vs. 15-22).

The first plan of Pharaoh resulting in failure, he proceeded to put a second into operation, this time of a cruel and murderous nature. He gave direction to the Hebrew midwives, (v. 15) who were probably the leaders of their profession, that they should destroy all the male children at birth, and leave only the females alive, (v. 16). These midwives were in a position to carry out this iniquitous command, but they "feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them", (vs. 17-19). Such faithfulness resulted in the continued increase of the numbers of Israel, (v. 20), and in such increase the families of the midwives shared; for in this sense the references to houses is meant to be taken, (v. 21). The failure of his second plan led Pharaoh to decree more open violence against the Hebrews, and the command is given to all his people to slay the sons of the Israelites, (v. 22). Such a command faithfully obeyed would have led to the extermination of these people, but God protected them, and they continued to increase. Note the nature, cause, and consequences of Israel's Egyptian bondage, the purpose of God therein, the fact of His protecting care, and the encouragement to be derived these days from a consideration of these facts. God cares, God knows, and God acts. Let us trust Him implicitly.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

By ALEXANDER THOMSON, B.D.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

A Scriptural Study of the Nature of the Church.

The Meaning of the Term "Church".

The term comes from a Greek word meaning to call or summon forth. It refers to people, never to a building. It signifies an assembly of people called or summoned forth.

The Usage of the Term in the New Testament

In relation to Israel—Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:12.

In relation to an assembly of citizens—Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

In relation to the Christian Church its ordinary usage is to designate a local assembly of Christians: Romans 16:5; I Corin. 16:19; I Thess. 1:1; I Peter 5:13.

It also denotes the entire body of the saved in heaven and on earth: Ephesians 3:10,21; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18,24; Hebrews 12:23

It is never used to designate a national, denominational, or universal church.

The Inception of the Church

Our Lord's predictive statement—Matthew 16:18

It is His church—"my church"—Eph. 5:23, 24; Col. 1:18.

He is the Builder of it—"I will build"—I Peter 2:5

It is founded on a rock—"On this rock"—I Corin. 3:11

Future at that time—"I will build"—Eph. 3:5,6

To be victorious over the unseen world—over "gates of hell"—Eph. 1:10

Public inception of the church

The place—Jerusalem—Acts 1:12-14
The time—Day of Pentecost—Acts 2:1

The circumstances—descent of the Holy Spirit, signs—Acts 2:2-4

The result—witness-bearing, conversions, additions—Acts 2:4-47

The Membership of the Church

Qualifications

Regeneration—Acts 2:41, 47; John 3:7

Baptism—Acts 2:41; 10:47

Duties and Privileges:

Separation unto God—Acts 2:44, 45; II Cor. 6:13; to 7:1; I Thess. 1:9

Witness-bearing—Acts 1:8; 2:4; 8:4

Attendance at services: Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25

Financial Support: Acts 2:45; I Cor. 16:1; II Cor. 9:1-15

The Ordinances of the Church

Baptism:

Our Lord's Command — Matthew 28:18-20

Our Lord's Example — Matthew 3:13-17

Obedience of the early disciples—Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36-39; 10:47, 48

The mode—The Greek word means immersion

The nature and symbolism of the act—Acts 8:38,39; Matt. 3:16; Romans 6:4

The qualification — Regeneration—Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41, 47; Col. 2:12, 3:1-4

The significance—burial and resurrection—Romans 6:1-6; Col. 2:12
It is the outward symbol of an inward experience

And is obligatory upon all saved people.

Lord's Supper:

The Institution—Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19, 20

The Significance—Symbolical—I Cor. 11:20-34

Commemorative — "In remembrance of me", v. 24

Declarative—"Ye do show the Lord's death", v. 26

Prophetic—"Till he come", v. 26

Communion—communion of blood and body of Christ, I Cor. 10:16

The obligation—"This do in remembrance of me", I Cor. 11:24

No set time for its observance

In the early church on the first day of the week, Acts. 20:7.

The qualifications:

The first participants were saved and baptized, Mark 14:17, 22; Acts 2:41, 42; 20:7.

Self Examination enjoined, I Cor. 11:28

Consequences of unworthy participation, I Cor. 11:28-34 guilt, v. 27; judgment, v. 29; spiritual decline, v. 30.

The Officers of the Church:

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28; Matt. 10:1-4; Acts 1:22-26; I Cor. 9:1; Gal. 1:1; Acts 21:8, 10, 11.

Pastors:

Nature of the office.

The terms used respecting the office.

Pastor—shepherd—Eph. 4:11

Bishop—overseer—I Tim. 3:1

Elder—Ruler—I Pet. 5:1

These terms are used interchangeably,

Titus 1:5, 7; I Pet. 5:1, 2; Acts 20:17, 28.

Pastors given by the Lord to the Church—Eph. 4:11.

They are not employees of the church.

Qualifications for the office—I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

Duties pertaining to the office

Teaching—I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28.

Spiritual rule and oversight—I Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:7; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2, 3.

Duties toward pastors.

Honour them—I Tim. 5:17

Exercise carefulness respecting accusations against them—I Tim. 5:19

Follow them—Heb. 13:7

Submit to them—Heb. 13:17, 24.

Support them—I Cor. 9:14, Luke 10:7; I Tim. 5:18

Deacons:

Meaning of the term—to serve
Qualifications—Acts 6:3; I Tim. 3:8-13

Privilege—I Tim. 3:13

Appointment — Chosen by the church—Acts 6:1-6

Duties—to look after temporal affairs—Acts 6:2,3.

They are the helpers of the pastor in his oversight of the flock

The government of the church.

The form—congregational—Acts 1:15-26; 15:12, 22.

Each local church self-governing
Each member of a local church privileged to participate in its government.

The organization

Only one organization: that of the church.

Pastor as overseer
Deacons as his helpers

Members co-operating in the work

Principle of organization—Acts 6:1-6
Persons chosen by the church to perform the work

No separate organization formed
The church attended to the work
Any needed work in the local church should be done by the church

The administration:

Under the direction of the Holy Spirit—Acts 2:4; 4:31; 6:3; 13:2, 4; 15:28

With pastoral oversight—Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17.

Administered its own affairs:

Appointed its own officers, Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-6; 14:23; I Cor. 16:3

Disciplined its own members—Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 6:1-11; I Tim. 3:4, 5; I Cor. 5:13.

Sent out and supported missionaries—Acts 13:2-4; 2 Cor. 11:3

Had a common treasury—Acts 4:37; 6:1-3

Independent of all other churches or organizations—I Cor. 5:1-13

In fellowship with other churches—Acts 11:27-29; 15:2, 22; I Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:1-15

In accordance with the divine word—2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:14; Titus 1:9; 2 Peter 3:1, 2; Jude 17.

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