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

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PUBLIC PRAYER

A LECTURE BY C. H. SPURGEON.

(We publish herewith one of Mr. Spurgeon's lectures delivered to the students of the Pastors' College, taken from Volume of "Lectures to My Students." We publish this, we should like our readers to know, not for want of other material, but because we believe it will be of great value to ministers and to all others accustomed to lead the people to God in public prayer. We especially commend the lecture to the attention of all persons habitually taking part in prayer-meeting. Let us all study it, and see what we can learn therefrom.—Ed. G.W.)

It has sometimes been the boast of Episcopalians that Churchmen go to their churches to pray and worship God, but that Dissenters merely assemble to hear sermons. Our reply to this is, that albeit there may be some professors who are guilty of this evil, it is not true of the people of God among us, and these are the only persons who ever will in any church really enjoy devotion. Our congregations gather together to worship God, and we assert, and feel no hesitation in so asserting, that there is as much true and acceptable prayer offered in our ordinary Non-conformist services as in the best and most pompous performances of the Church of England.

Moreover, if the observation he meant to imply that the hearing of sermons is not worshipping God, it is founded on a gross mistake, for rightly to listen to the gospel is one of the noblest parts of the adoration of the Most High. It is a mental exercise, when rightly performed, in which all the faculties of the spiritual man are called into devotional action. Reverently hearing the word exercises our humility, instructs our faith, irradiates us with joy, inflames us with love, inspires us with zeal and lifts us up towards heaven. Many a time a sermon has been a kind of Jacob's ladder upon which we have seen the angels of God ascending and descending, and the covenant God himself at the top thereof. We have often felt when God has spoken through his servants into our souls, "This is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven." We have magnified the name of the Lord and praised him with all our heart while he has spoken to us by his Spirit which he has given unto men. Hence there is not the wide distinction to be drawn between preaching and prayer that some would have us admit; for the one part of the service softly blends into the other and the sermon frequently inspires the prayer and the hymn. True preaching is an acceptable adoration of God by the manifestation of his fractious attributes: the testimony of his gospel, which pre-eminently glorifies him, and the obedient hearing of revealed truth, are an acceptable form of worship to the Most High, and

perhaps one of the most spiritual in which the human mind can be engaged. Nevertheless, as the old Roman poet tells us, it is right to learn from our enemies, and therefore it may be possible that our liturgical opponents have pointed out to us what is in some instances a weak place in our public services. It is to be feared that our exercises are not in every case moulded into the best form, or presented in the most commendable fashion. There are meeting-houses in which the supplications are neither so devout or so earnest as we desire; in other places the earnestness is so allied with ignorance, and the devotion so marred with rant, that no intelligent believer can enter into the service with pleasure. Praying in the Holy Ghost is not universal among us, neither do all pray with the understanding as well as with the heart. There is room for improvement, and in some quarters there is an imperative demand for it. Let me, therefore, very earnestly caution you, beloved brethren, against spoiling your services by your prayers: make it your solemn resolve that all the engagements of the sanctuary shall be of the best kind

Be assured that free prayer is the most scriptural, and should be the most excellent form of public supplication. If you lose faith in what you are doing you will never do it well; settle it in your minds therefore, that before the Lord you are worshipping in a manner which is warranted by the word of God, and accepted of the Lord. The expression, "reading prayers," to which we are now so accustomed, is not to be found in Holy Scripture, rich as it is in words for conveying religious thought; and the phrase is not there because the thing itself had no existence. Where in the writings of the apostles meet we with the bare idea of a liturgy? Prayer in the assemblies of the early Christians was unrestricted to any form of words. Tertullian writes, "we pray *without a prompter* because from the heart." Justin Martyr describes the presiding minister as praying "according to his ability." It would be difficult to discover when and where liturgies began; their introduction was gradual,

and, as we believe, co-extensive with the decline of purity in the church; the introduction of them among Nonconformists would mark the era of our decline and fall. The subject tempts me to linger, but it is not the point in hand, and therefore I pass on, only remarking that you will find the matter of liturgies ably handled by Dr. John Owen, whom you will do well to consult.

Be it ours to prove the superiority of extempore prayer by making it more spiritual and earnest than liturgical devotion. It is a great pity when the observation is forced from the hearer, our minister preaches far better than he prays: this is not after the model of our Lord; he spake as never man spake—and as for his prayers, they so impressed his disciples that they said, "Lord, teach us to pray." All our faculties should concentrate their energy, and the whole man should be elevated to his highest point of vigour while in public prayer, the Holy Ghost meanwhile baptizing soul and spirit with his sacred influence; but slovenly, careless, lifeless talk in the guise of prayer, made to fill up a certain space in the service, is a weariness to man, and an abomination to God. Had free prayer been universally of a higher order, a liturgy would never have been thought of, and to-day forms of prayer have no better apology than the feebleness of extemporaneous devotions. The secret is that we are not so really devout at heart as we should be. Habitual communion with God must be maintained, or our public prayers will be vapid or formal. If there be no melting of the glacier high up in the ravines of the mountain, there will be no descending rivulets to cheer the plain. Private prayer is the drill ground for our more public exercises, neither can we long neglect it without being out of order when before the people.

Our prayers must never grovel, they must soar and mount. We need a heavenly frame of mind. Our addresses to the throne of grace must be solemn and humble, not flippant and loud, or formal and careless. The colloquial form of speech is out of place before the Lord; we must bow reverently and with deepest awe. We may speak boldly with God, but still he is in heaven and we are upon earth, and we are to avoid presumption. In supplication we are peculiarly before the throne of the Infinite, and as the courtier in the king's palace puts on another mien and another manner than that which he exhibits to his fellow courtiers, so should it be with us. We have noticed in the churches of Holland, that as soon as the minister begins to preach every man puts his hat on, but the instant he turns to pray everybody takes his hat off: this was the custom in the older Puritanic congregations of England, and it lingered long among the Baptists; they wore their caps during those parts of the service which they conceived were not direct worship, but put them off as soon as there was a direct approach to God, either in song or in prayer. I think the practice unseemly, and the reason for it erroneous. I have urged that the distinction between prayer and hearing is not great, and I feel sure no one would propose to return to the old custom or the opinion of which it was the index; but still there is a difference and inasmuch as in prayer we are more directly talking with God rather than seeking the edification of our fellow men, we must put our shoes from off our feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground.

Let the Lord alone be the object of your prayers. Beware of having an eye to the auditors; beware of becom-

ing rhetorical to please the listeners. Prayer must not be transformed into "an oblique sermon." It is little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display. Fine prayers are generally very wicked prayers. In the presence of the Lord of hosts it ill becomes a sinner to parade the feathers and finery of tawdry speech with the view of winning applause from his fellow mortals. Hypocrites who dare to do this have their reward, but it is one to be dreaded. A heavy sentence of condemnation was passed upon a minister when it was flatteringly said that his prayer was the most eloquent ever offered to a Boston congregation. We may aim at exciting the yearnings and aspirations of those who hear us in prayer; but every word and thought must be Godward, and only so far touching upon the people as may be needful to bring them and their wants before the Lord. Remember the people in your prayers, but do not mould your supplications to win their esteem: look up, look up with both eyes.

Avoid all vulgarities in prayer. I must acknowledge to having heard some, but it would be unprofitable to recount them; the more especially as they become less frequent every day. We seldom now meet with the vulgarities of prayer which were once so common in Methodist prayer-meetings, much commoner probably by report than in reality. Uneducated people must, when in earnest, pray in their own way, and their language will frequently shock the fastidious if not the devout; but for this allowance must be made, and if the spirit is evidently sincere, we may forgive uncomely expressions. I once, at a prayer-meeting, heard a poor man pray thus: "Lord, watch over these young people during the feast time, for thou knowest. Lord, how their enemies watch for them as a cat watches for mice." Some ridiculed the expression, but it appeared to me to be natural and expressive, considering the person using it. A little gentle instruction and a hint or two will usually prevent a repetition of anything objectionable in such cases, but we, who occupy the pulpit, must be careful to be quite clear ourselves. The biographer of that remarkable American Methodist preacher, Jacob Gruber, mentions as an instance of his ready wit, that after having heard a young Calvinistic minister violently attack his creed, he was asked to conclude with prayer, and among other petitions prayed that the Lord would bless the young man who had been preaching, and grant him much grace, "that his heart might become as soft as his head." To say nothing of the bad taste of such public animadversion upon a fellow minister, every right-minded man will see that the throne of the Most High is not the place for uttering such vulgar witticisms. Most probably the young orator deserved a castigation for his offence against charity, but the older one sinned ten times more in his want of reverence. Choice words are for the King of kings, not such as ribald tongues have defiled.

Another fault equally to be avoided in prayer is an unhallowed and sickening superabundance of endearing words. When "Dear Lord," and "Blessed Lord," and "Sweet Lord," come over and over again as vain repetitions, they are among the worst of blots. I must confess I should feel no revulsion in my mind to the words, "Dear Jesus," if they fell from the lips of a Rutherford, or a Hawker, or a Herbert; but when I hear fond and familiar expressions hackneyed by persons not at all remarkable for spirituality, I am inclined to wish that they

could, in some way or other, come to a better understanding of the true relation existing between man and God. The word "dear" has come from daily use to be so common, and so small, and in some cases so silly and affected a monosyllable, that interlarding one's prayers with it is not to edification.

The strongest objection exists to the constant repetition of the word "Lord," which occurs in the early prayers of young converts, and even among students. The words, "O Lord O Lord! O Lord!" grieve us when we hear them so perpetually repeated. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," is a great commandment, and although the law may be broken unwittingly, yet its breach is still a sin and a very solemn one. God's name is not to be a stop-gap to make up for our want of words. Take care to use most reverently the name of the infinite Jehovah. The Jews in their sacred writings either leave a space for the word "Jehovah," or else write the word, "Adonai," because they conceive that holy name to be too sacred for common use: we need not be so superstitious, but it were well to be scrupulously reverent. A profusion of "ohs!" and other interjections may be well dispensed with; young speakers are often at fault here.

Avoid that kind of prayer which may be called— though the subject is one on which language has not given us many terms—a sort of *peremptory demanding of God*. It is delightful to hear a man wrestle with God, and say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," but that must be said softly, and not in a hectoring spirit, as though we could command and exact blessings from the Lord of all. Remember, it is still a man wrestling, even though permitted to wrestle with the eternal I AM. Jacob halted on his thigh after that night's holy conflict, to let him see that God is terrible, and that his prevailing power did not lie in himself. We are taught to say, "Our Father," but still it is, "Our Father *who art in heaven*." Familiarity there may be, but holy familiarity; boldness, but the boldness which springs from grace and is the work of the Spirit; not the boldness of the rebel who carries a brazen front in the presence of his offended king, but the boldness of the child who fears because he loves, and loves because he fears. Never fall into a vain-glorious style of impertinent address to God; he is not to be assailed as an antagonist, but entreated with as our Lord and God. Humble and lowly let us be in spirit, and so let us pray.

Pray when you profess to pray, and don't talk about it. Business men say, "A place for everything and everything in its place"; preach in the sermon and pray in the prayer. Why do not men go at once to prayer—why stand beating about the bush; instead of saying what they ought to do and want to do, why not set to work in God's name, and do it? In downright earnestness, address yourself to intercession, and set your face towards the Lord. Plead for the supply of the great and constant needs of the church, and do not fail to urge, with devout fervour, the special requirements of the present time and audience. Let the sick, the poor, the dying, the heathen, the Jew, and all forgotten classes of people, be mentioned as they press upon your heart. Pray for your people as saints and sinners—not as if they were all saints. Mention the young and the aged; the impressed and the careless; the devout and the backsliding. ever turn to the right hand or to the left, but plough on in the furrow of real prayer. Let your confessions of sin

and your thanksgivings be truthful and to the point; and let your petitions be presented as if you believed in God and had no doubt as to the efficacy of prayer: I say this, because so many pray in such a formal manner as to lead observers to conclude that they thought it a very decent thing to pray, but, after all, a very poor and doubtful business as to any practical result. Pray as one who has tried and proved his God, and therefore comes with undoubting confidence to renew his pleadings: and do remember to pray to God right through the prayer, and never fall to talking or preaching—much less, as some do, to scolding and grumbling.

As a rule, if called upon to preach, conduct the prayer yourself; and if you should be highly esteemed in the ministry, as I trust you may be, make a point, with great courtesy, but equal firmness to resist the practice of choosing men to pray with the idea of honouring them by giving them something to do. Our public devotions ought never to be degraded into opportunities for compliment. I have heard prayer and singing now and then called "the preliminary services," as if they were but a preface to the sermon; this is rare I hope among us—if it were common it would be to our deep disgrace. I endeavour invariably to take all the service myself for my own sake, and I think also for the people's. I do not believe that "anybody will do for the praying." No, sirs, it is my solemn conviction that the prayer is one of the most weighty, useful, and honourable parts of the service, and that it ought to be even more considered than the sermon. There must be no putting up anybodies and nobodies to pray, and then the selection of the abler man to preach. It may happen through weakness, or upon a special occasion, that it may be a relief to the minister to have some one to offer prayer for him; but if the Lord has made you love your work you will not often or readily fulfil this part of it by proxy. If you delegate the service at all, let it be to one in whose spirituality and present preparedness you have the fullest confidence; but to pitch on a giftless brother unawares, and put him forward to get through the devotions, is shameful.

"Shall we serve *heaven* with less respect
Than we do minister to our gross selves?"

Appoint the ablest man to pray, and let the sermon be slurred sooner than the approach to heaven. Let the Infinite Jehovah be served with our best; let prayer addressed to the Divine Majesty be carefully weighed, and presented with all the powers of an awakened heart and a spiritual understanding. He who has been by communion with God prepared to minister to the people, is usually of all men present the most fit to engage in prayer; to lay out a programme which puts up another brother in his place, is to mar the harmony of the service, to rob the preacher of an exercise which would brace him for his sermon, and in many instances to suggest comparisons between one part of the service and the other which ought never to be tolerated. If unprepared brethren are to be sent into the pulpit to do my praying for me when I am engaged to preach, I do not see why I might not be allowed to pray, and then retire to let these brethren do the sermonizing. I am not able to see any reason for depriving me of the holiest, sweetest, and most profitable exercise which my Lord has allotted me; if I may have my choice, I will sooner yield up the sermon than the prayer. Thus much I have said in order to impress upon you that you must highly esteem

public prayer, and seek of the Lord for the gifts and graces necessary to its right discharge.

Those who despise all extempore prayer will probably catch at these remarks and use them against it, but I can assure them that the faults adverted to are not common among us, and are indeed almost extinct; while the scandal caused by them never was, at the worst, so great as that caused by the way in which the liturgical service is often performed. Far too often is the church service hurried through in a manner as indevout as if it were a ballad-singer's ditty. The words are parroted without the slightest appreciation of their meaning; not sometimes, but very frequently, in the places set apart for Episcopal worship, you may see the eyes of the people, and the eyes of the choristers, and the eyes of the parson himself, wandering about in all directions, while evidently from the very tone of the reading there is no feeling of sympathy with what is being read. I have been at funerals when the burial service of the church of England has been galloped through so indecorously that it has taken all the grace I had to prevent my throwing a hassock at the creature's head. I have felt so indignant that I have not known what to do, to hear, in the presence of mourners whose hearts were bleeding, a man rattling through the service as if he were paid by the piece, and had more work to follow, and therefore desired to get it through as quickly as possible. What effect he could think he was producing, or what good result could come from words jerked forth and hurled out with vengeance and vehemence, I cannot imagine. It is really shocking to think of how that very wonderful burial service is murdered, and made into an abomination by the mode in which it is frequently read. I merely mention this because, if they criticise our prayers too severely, we can bring a formidable countercharge to silence them. Better far, however, for us to amend our own blunders than find fault with others.

In order to make our public prayer what it should be, the first necessary is, that *it must be a matter of the heart*. A man must be really in earnest in supplication. It must be true prayer, and if it be such, it will, like love, cover a multitude of sins. You can pardon a man's familiarities and his vulgarities too, when you clearly see that his inmost heart is speaking to his Maker, and that it is only the man's defects of education which create his faults, and not any moral or spiritual vices of his heart. The pleader in public must be in earnest; for a sleepy prayer—what can be a worse preparation for a sermon? A sleepy prayer—what can make people more dislike going up to the house of God at all? Cast your whole soul into the exercise. If ever your whole manhood was engaged in anything, let it be in drawing near unto God in public. So pray, that by a divine attraction, you draw the whole congregation with you up to the throne of God. So pray, that by the power of the Holy Spirit resting on you, you express the desires and thoughts of every one present, and stand as the one voice for the hundreds of beating hearts which are glowing with fervour before the throne of God.

Next to this, our prayers must be *appropriate*. I do not say go into every minute detail of the circumstances of the congregation. As I have said before, there is no need to make the public prayer a gazette of the week's events, or a register of the births, deaths, and marriages of your people, but the general movements that have taken place in the congregation should be noted by the minister's careful heart. He should bring the joys and sorrows of his people alike before the throne of grace, and ask that the divine

benediction may rest upon his flock in all their movements, their exercises, engagements, and holy enterprises, and that the forgiveness of God may be extended to their shortcomings and innumerable sins.

Then, by way of negative canon, I should say, *do not let your prayer be long*. I think it was John Macdonald who used to say, "If you are in the spirit of prayer, do not be long, because other people will not be able to keep pace with you in such unusual spirituality; and if you are not in the spirit of prayer, do not be long, because you will then be sure to weary the listeners." Livingstone says of Robert Bruce, of Edinburgh, the famous contemporary of Andrew Melville, "No man in his time spoke with such evidence and power of the Spirit. No man had so many seals of conversion; yea, many of his hearers thought no man, since the apostles, spake with such power He was very short in prayer when others were present, but every sentence was like a strong bolt shot up to heaven. I have heard him say that he wearied when others were long in prayer; but, being alone, he spent much time in wrestling and prayer." A man may, on special occasions, if he be unusually moved and carried out of himself, pray for twenty minutes in the long morning prayer, but this should not often happen. My friend, Dr. Charles Brown, of Edinburgh, lays it down, as a result of his deliberate judgment that ten minutes is the limit to which public prayer ought to be prolonged. Our Puritanic forefathers used to pray for three-quarters of an hour, or more, but then you must recollect that they did not know that they would ever have the opportunity of praying again before an assembly, and therefore, took their fill of it; and besides, people were not inclined in those days to quarrel with the length of prayers or of sermons so much as they do nowadays. You cannot pray too long in private. We do not limit you to ten minutes there, or ten hours, or ten weeks if you like. The more you are on your knees alone the better. We are now speaking of those public prayers which come before or after the sermon, and for these ten minutes is a better limit than fifteen. Only one in a thousand would complain of you for being too short, while scores will murmur at your being wearisome in length. "He prayed me into a good frame of mind," George Whitfield once said of a certain preacher, "and if he had stopped there, it would have been very well; but he prayed me out of it again by keeping on." The abundant long-suffering of God has been exemplified in his sparing some preachers, who have been great sinners in this direction; they have done much injury to the piety of God's people by their long-winded orations, and yet God, in his mercy, has permitted them still to officiate in the sanctuary. Alas! for those who have to listen to pastors who pray in public for five-and-twenty minutes, and then ask God to forgive their "shortcomings"! Do not be too long, for several reasons. First, because you weary yourselves and the people; and secondly, because being too long in prayer, puts your people out of heart for hearing the sermon. All those dry, dull, prolix talkifications in prayer, do but blunt the attention, and the ear gets, as it were, choked up. Nobody would think of blocking up Ear-gate with mud or stones when he meant to storm the gate. No, let the portal be cleared that the battering-ram of the gospel may tell upon it when the time comes to use it. Long prayers either consist of repetitions, or else of unnecessary explanations which God does not require; or else they de-

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 2nd, 1931.

(Stenographically Reported)

"How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."—Psalm 36:7.

Prayer before the Sermon.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to make us conscious of Thy presence this evening. We have had to exclaim again and again with Jacob, God was in this place, and I knew it not. We are assured by the promises of Thy word that God is in this place. May we all know it! May the Spirit of God speak to every heart!

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to give of Thy grace to Thine own dear children. How much we need divine help! Always we are beset with foes, and surrounded by difficulties. This vile world is not a friend to grace to help us on to God. We need the perpetual ministry of the Divine Spirit, guiding our foot-steps, enlightening our understandings, enfranchising and energizing our wills. We pray that this evening Thy word may be very precious to Thine own dear children.

We are to come to the Table of the Lord. We pray that our hearts may be prepared for that holy service. We beseech Thee to make the Great Sacrifice very real to every one of us. Enable us to rejoice in sins forgiven, in our election with God, and in our place in the divine family. Take away every doubt, every misgiving; help us that we may rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, that we may find in the assurance of the exceeding great and precious promises the comfort our weary souls require.

There is not one of us who has not been wearied with the climbing of the hill; not one of us who has not felt at some time or other that the burdens of life were very heavy,—sometimes too heavy; there is not one of us but has experienced the fear of those who face a superior foe, and we have need of the presence and power of God every moment of the day. May we leave this place this evening assured of this, that every one who has named the name of Christ has been brought into closer fellowship with Him through the ministry of this service.

If there be any who have lost the joy of their salvation, who have even cast away their confidence, who have written or said bitter things against themselves, mayhap who have even complained of God, murmuring against the providential ordering of the events of life,—we pray that any such may be brought back again this evening into the light of Thy countenance, into the fulness of the Father's house.

It may be there are some hungering souls here who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and yet are able scarcely to define their own feelings, some who are perhaps not aware that the Spirit of God has spoken to them, yet they are conscious of an inward restlessness, of an insatiable thirst, of an hunger for which they have been able to find no satisfaction at any earthly board. Bring such into the clear light of Thy gospel, that they may eat the Heavenly Bread, and may drink of the water that flows from the Smitten Rock.

There may be some who apparently have no interest at all, who have never sought to receive anything personally from the hand of God, to whom God is only a name. They have no fear of God before their eyes, no consciousness of His nearness day by day. Introduce Thyself to such, we pray Thee. May there be many who shall turn in their hearts to Jesus Christ, the sinner's Saviour.

Help us now in our meditation upon Thy truth. Once again we acknowledge that it is a sealed Book to all but to those whose eyes are spiritually opened. Only the divine Author, the Spirit of God Himself, can teach us its inner meaning, or can hand to us the golden key which will unlock for our admiration and possession the unsearchable riches

that lie within its treasures. Oh enrich us this evening! Make us glad with Thy full salvation, to the glory of Thy great name. Amen.

It is not well to dwell too long within shuttered windows, nor to occupy the mind too closely with the morally tragic aspect of human life. There are views of human nature which are not encouraging; there are evidences of human depravity sufficient to inspire one with despair of his kind.

The opening verses of this Psalm present a subject of study which is anything but inspiring. The Psalmist looks about him, and examines the men and women with whom he has to do. He looks at human nature in some of its uglier, if not ugliest, aspects. That is never a very comforting occupation. You will never find much soul-satisfaction in the study of men,—and you will find still less encouragement if you turn your thought upon yourselves, and analyze your own inner nature.

The Psalmist observes that there are some who have no fear of God before their eyes at all, and that many such flatter themselves until their iniquity is found to be hateful. He listens to what men have to say, and then he observes: "The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good." He sketches the outline of the character of one who is not surprised into wrong-doing, but who "deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil."

It is always easy to find a subject like that for discussion. A certain person came to me some good while ago—two of them, indeed. But one of them said of the other that number one had but an ill-furnished mind. He said, "This person has nothing to talk about but people. Whenever we meet, certain persons are brought under review—and of course they are not lovely. Thus I have to listen to this analysis of other people's characters, and in the end they are torn to shreds. I find it is not edifying at all, and I have suggested that the conversation be turned in another direction, and that some other subject be discussed."

You have met people like that, have you not? They never read a book—or, if they do, they do not remember it. They have nothing to talk about but the people with whom they consort, or the people who cross their pathway. They have no kind word to speak about anybody.

I do not say that we may not find some good in people sometimes, but I do suggest that the discussion of human nature of any sort is never particularly edifying. If we are ourselves to be spiritually healthy we

must occupy our minds with something better than that.

So the Psalmist discovered, and he turned suddenly away from human nature as though he had resolved to banish it from his mind. He said, "I will talk about something else. Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." When he begins to think about God, about the goodness of God, His mercy, His faithfulness, His judgments, he breaks out in the exclamation of my text: "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! How far does the lovingkindness of God excel the noblest qualities that I may find in any human character! And therefore, because of what Thou art, because of Thine infinite trustworthiness, the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

I.

I begin, then, with the suggestion that THERE IS NO HOLIER OCCUPATION THAN TO ENGAGE THE MIND WITH THOUGHTS OF GOD. We live in a day when people talk much about "practical" things. They want a "practical" sermon. They want direction for the everyday life. "Let us hear about our neighbours, and our relationship thereto; and less about God." Someone once said that to me in this church some years ago: "You talk too much about God, and not enough about men." Well, I fear my speech would be anything but pleasant if I had to talk about men—to talk even about you, lovely as some of you are! I should get tired of thinking about you all the time—and still more weary of trying to talk about you all the time!

But there is always profit in turning our thought toward God. After all, such a meditation as this—as I think we shall presently prove—is the most practical thing in the world. Men never learn properly to adjust themselves—or, to be adjusted—to all the circumstances of life, until they are properly related to God. The primary, the fundamental, the indispensable, requirement is that we should know God, know Who He is, and what He is, in order that we may be related to the centre of things; for "he is before all things, and by him all things consist", or hold together. He is the Mainspring of the universe. From Him all laws, all forces, all energies, that are helpful, radiate; and only as we are right with Him can we be right with the created order, and especially with such as were made in His image and likeness.

I commend, therefore, this example of the Psalmist to your consideration as a very simple and practical suggestion, that when you meet one with the other, when you exchange ideas, when you try to open your mind to another mind, and that mind is open to yours, in that inter-communion of soul be careful what you think about, and what you talk about. Give heed to the subject of your meditation, and let God have His proper place. How the springs of life would be sweetened, how we should be saved from a hundred perils, if, instead of thinking of men and of things, or even of ourselves, we could turn our thought toward God, and learn with the Psalmist to say, "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

When you are cast down, when sorrows are multiplied, in the cloudy and dark day when there seems

nothing to gladden the hearts of men, turn your thought toward God; emulate the example of this inspired writer, and see what you can find in Him to encourage you, and to inspire you to go on in the ways of righteousness.

What is it the Psalmist thinks of here? The lovingkindness of the Lord. "Lovingkindness" is an Old Testament word for the New Testament word of which we were singing just now, the *grace* that is a charming sound. Kindness, etymologically, means kinness, the quality of heart, the character and conduct of someone who is a kinsman. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." A brother is a kinsman from whom you expect much. But there is One Whose kinship is even closer than that of a brother. He is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh".

You see how the Psalmist summarizes things. Turning with sadness of heart, and perhaps almost with contempt, from his view of human nature, he thinks first of all of the mercy of God. And then he tries to find a standard by which to measure it. He says: "Thy mercy—where is it? Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness—where shall I find a rule to determine its dimensions? Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness—where shall I find a standard for that?" He cast about everywhere and said, "I know. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments—I know—thy judgments are a great deep. Mercy, faithfulness, righteousness, judgments—all in harmonious exercise preservest man and beast." Then he gathers it all up in this one quality, this one attribute, "lovingkindness". He says, "How excellent, how far excelling all human qualities is thy lovingkindness, O Lord."

That is the subject of the Psalmist's meditation, how far the lovingkindness of God excels the tenderest solicitude, the warmest love, the most gracious qualities, of any man or woman you can find anywhere.

The thing that is *excellent* is the thing that excels, that transcends, that outreaches, that goes beyond, something else. The lovingkindness of the Lord is but another name for Jesus Christ, for "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." All the gracious qualities of Deity found their embodiment, their incarnation, their revelation, and harmonious exercise in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how excellent is He! And how far does His ministry transcend all other ministries anywhere and everywhere!

His lovingkindness is unlike that of anybody else, *because of its immorality*. It never fails. He loves us with a love that will not let us go. He loves us with a love that never ends. "Having loved his own, he loved them even unto the end."

What a beautiful story that is in Holy Writ about the mutual love of David and Jonathan! How beautifully unselfish was the love of Jonathan for his friend! How he delighted to surrender everything to the object of his affection! How he parted company with his father, and put off the crown, and gladly surrendered the throne, and abandoned hope of ever being king, in order that another might reign in his stead! I do not know anything in literature to surpass the beauty of that story of the mutual love of David and Jonathan. And yet you remember it came to an end. David had

to write of the lovingkindness of Jonathan, of his incomparable affection, in the past tense when he said, "Very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." But it ended, and David was left alone.

So is it often in this world, that the heart that throbs with affection toward another at last ceases to beat at all, and the soul is left impoverished by the cessation of that stream of lovingkindness by which it had long been refreshed.

But there is One Whose lovingkindness is so excellent, that so far excels all others, that it will never, never, cease. This evening some of us will come to the Table of the Lord. We shall take the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Him, in remembrance of One Who died? Yes; but in remembrance of One Who lives again, and whose love never ends.

I know that is a simple observation. I know it is the veriest commonplace to assure you that Jesus Christ lives. But what an unspeakable blessing it is to have a Lover Who can never die, and to be sure that we are loved with an everlasting love, to be sure that His love is an immortal love, that cannot be quenched even by the waters of death! How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O thou Saviour of my soul!

Then it is excellent in this respect, too, that *it is changeless*. What fickle creatures humans are! How soon people tire of each other! How soon they grow weary of each other's company! I think that is an argument for everybody's having a vacation! And it is an argument, too, why some people should not go away together. I used to have a dear old lady in this church. Some of you remember Mrs. Miller, one of the real saints. She said to me one day when I was going away for a holiday—in the days when I took holidays: "Well, Pastor, I hope you will have a good time. I am glad to see you go!" I said, "Thank you." Then she said, "Yes; I always used to tell Dr. Thomas that I was glad to see him go, and that nobody in Jarvis Street was more glad to see him back again. If you lived in my house you would have to get out of my sight sometimes."

And she was not far wrong. People grow weary of each other. Affection cools, and sometimes dies outright.

I wonder why the love of the Lord Jesus never grows cold? Yet He says, "Lo, I am with you all the days. I will be with you on Sunday, and on Monday. I will be with you in your home; I will be with you at your work; I will be with you at prayer, and when you play. I will be with you in laughter and in tears. I will be with you all the time, right to the end of the age. You cannot get rid of Me, and I will love you all the time too."

That is the wonder, how anybody could keep on loving us. Is not that a stupendous miracle, that the Lord could not only love us in the beginning, but could keep on loving us, and that His love never changes?

"He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate;
His loving-kindness, O how great."

How excellent is His lovingkindness! It never changes.

I think the affection that exists between pastor and people, when it is what it ought to be, is a very beautiful thing. And yet, you know, that does not always last. I remember reading years ago W. J. Dawson's book, "A Prophet of Babylon". In that book Dr. Dawson said that no pastor—I think it is an exaggeration. I do not subscribe to it, but it is suggestive—no pastor should ever expect to make abiding friends among his church members. He will save himself much sorrow of heart if he remembers it is always an official relationship; that as long as he is successful, and as long as there is no storm on the sea, people will talk about our "beloved pastor"; but that just as soon as difficulties arise and there are hard places in the road, and there are fierce battles to be fought, then there are some people whose affections suddenly cool, and from being the most devoted friends, they can become enemies over night.

That is true in many relationships—and how sad it is! But what a blessing it is that there is Someone Who never gets tired of us, and Who never changes. The changelessness of His love makes it more excellent than the love of all others. Well may we sing,—

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

His love is "excellent" in respect to *the incomparable resources that lie behind it*. Did you ever go into a big departmental store at Christmas time, and watch father and mother planning to play Santa Claus? The man has not much money, but he has some children who are all the world to him. He is going to buy something for Christmas. You watch him. I have studied him. Sometimes I have seen him walk right up to the place where the most expensive toys are displayed. One would think he was a millionaire. He looks covetously at the wonderful toys. He would get that for Harry, and something else for Mary—as though all he had to do was to look over them and decide on the very best of them. "What is the price of that?"—and he moves down a little further! That would do very well, but it is too much—and he moves down again; until by and by you find him pretty near the end of the stall. And there are some things even then he does not take because he knows there is a five-and-ten cent store next door!

What he at last buys is not the measure of his love. That man would buy the whole store for that little boy of his, if he could, but he cannot. His love is great enough, but his resources are very limited.

Did you ever walk down Yonge Street of an evening? I drive that way occasionally on my way to the printer's. The stores are closed, but you see some young man and woman looking into a jeweller's window (laughter). Did you ever see them? There they are! How eagerly they scan the things there! It may be that the man has no artistic taste at all. It may be he has no love of the beautiful. He does not want a ring for his hand, or anything else, but when he looks in there he just wishes he had plenty of money—because he would like to buy out the whole store to give to somebody! by and by he will go back alone, when *she* is not there; and he will do just like that father did: the trays will be brought out. "Too

much!" "Too much!" Of course, he will not dare tell her how much at last he pays. But if she knows him, she knows it is the very best that he could give—and there may be enough love to go with it as though it cost millions. His love is great enough, but his resources are limited.

But what a Lover we have! What a Bridegroom He will be! There is no end to His love, and no limit to its resources. How tenderly He said it: "I am going to say Good-bye to you. I am going away for a little while. But do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, and now when I depart, believe in Me; believe in Me just the same, for I will whisper a little secret to you: in my Father's house are many mansions, and I will go and prepare a place for you."

That is what He is doing for this poor sinner. What a long time He has been at it! I wonder what sort of palace is awaiting us over yonder? I know He is eager for the day when He will come and receive us unto Himself, and when at last He presents His bride to the Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, when she has put on her beautiful garments, adorned with the matchless jewels of His grace, and when she outshines the angels and shall be a little lower than the angels no more, but ready to share the throne with Him. What gifts He will bestow! How enriched she will be!

There was that in the word our Master spoke: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more"—Will you measure it? How much more! "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep. How excellent, surpassing all my dreams, my utmost imaginings, is Thy lovingkindness, O God!"

I must leave that,—and it is only a suggestion. The lovingkindness of the Lord exceeds and excels the highest qualities of the human heart.

II.

When thus we know God, when thus we think of God, and come to understand God, we shall find A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WILL INSPIRE US TO TRUST HIM: "Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadows of thy wings."

Do not let anybody persuade you that faith is an unreasonable thing. Faith is reason at its highest! Everybody who believes God, and trusts Him, has a profound reason for doing so. The reason is in God Himself, because of what He is. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

"Under the shadow of thy wings." I want you to look at that just a moment or two: "The shadow of thy wings." Plainly, he has the temple in view. We were speaking this morning of the address which God gives for Himself: "Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." We have the same figure here: "The shadow of thy wings." The overshadowing of the wings of the cherubim above the ark of the covenant: that is where men trust, in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you need it? Have you outgrown that? Do you need the cleansing Fountain still? Let me sound that note to any uncovered soul. If you only knew how God loves you, if you could see the love of God that was manifested in His Son as He was crucified for you, buried in your room and stead, and as He rose again, if you could understand that you would run to Him, you would put your

trust, not in your own righteousness but under the shadow of His wing where the blood is sprinkled, where God has said, "There will I meet with you." Will you trust Him? Let His excellent lovingkindness woo you, and bring you to His wounded feet, to cast your burden at His feet and bear a song away.

"The shadow of thy wings." What a picture of Almightyness! We associate strength with noise, and might with a great display. But here Almightyness is represented as the overshadowing wing.

I read to you to-night: "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under his wings shall thou trust." The power of God can be very gentle and very, very, tender. You remember how the man of war, David, said, "He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms . . . and thy gentleness hath made me great." So does God come to us. He touches us with a touch that is as light as a feather—"Under his wings shalt thou trust."

There is comfort there, dear friends. Did you ever see, on a chilly night in the early spring, a hen issue her mother call? How those little chicks that look as though they would chill to death, run to her and she covers them with herself, putting her wings about them! That is the figure that Jesus Christ employed when He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" He wanted to comfort them, to mother them. God is our Father, but He is our mother too. The mothering spirit is in God: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

Did you ever see a tired child come crying to his mother at the end of a day of play? He could not tell you, no matter what you offered him, what is the matter with him. She knows there is no use asking a question: she gathers him up in her arms, and begins to sing to him. By and by, comforted, he goes to sleep with the tears still upon his cheek. That is how God deals with His children: "Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

That means protection too. Protection! I love to think of that scene in Gethsemane's garden when they came with torches to take our Lord with staves. Jesus Christ said, "Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." He stood between His disciples and the enemy,—

"The tempest's awful voice was heard,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy open bosom was my ward,
It braved the storm for me:
Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred,
Now cloudless peace for me."

That is what Jesus did.
There is an historical incident that will illustrate my

thought. During the Spanish-American War, Germany was very sympathetic toward Spain. When Admiral Dewey was about to take steps to capture the Spanish fleet at Manilla, the German Admiral sought to persuade the British Admiral to stand aside and permit him to prevent Admiral Dewey from taking the action which his government had commanded. The British Admiral refused to hear the German's suggestion. The German Admiral returned to his fleet, and then the British Admiral cleared all decks for action and steamed between the German fleet and the American fleet. He said to Germany, "You fire a shot, and you reckon with John Bull as well as with Uncle Sam." And Germany did not fire a shot. We know now why she did not!

"Under his wings shalt thou trust." He covers us with His feathers, and there is no hawk in the sky that can take a chick from the heavenly brood when God interposes on our behalf. That is why you are here to-night. If He had not covered you with His feathers, you would have been destroyed long ago. The devil has the power of death. I believe the teaching of Scripture is that your life would not be worth a moment's thought if God did not cover you with His feathers, and stand between you and all harm,—

"Plagues and death around me fly;
Till He bids, I cannot die:
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

And *it is very dark under His wings*. When the half dozen chicks get under the wings of the mother-hen their eyes are no good: they see no more. There are just two eyes, and the mother sees for all of them. Some of us may be in the dark. You have complained sometimes that you are unable to see. Why should you see? When I get on a sleeping-car at night, I do not object to the porter's turning out all the lights—I prefer that he should do so, because I want to sleep. I cannot see a thing; I am in utter darkness. But I arrive at my journey's end because somebody else is looking out for me.

Very often when we are in the densest darkness and we say, "If only I could see," we are the safest; yet we are full of complaints because we cannot order our own lives. But the darkness is caused by the shadow of His wings,—

"He lends you, oft, His softening cloud,
When sunshine makes a heaven below,
Lest in the brightness you be proud,
Forgetful when the sunbeams flow.

"The cloud that meets you in the day
Is but the shadow of His wing,
Concealing from your sight the way
That faith alone may homeward bring.

"The fire that meets you in the night
Is the full brightness of His face,
Revealing through your tears a light
That leads you to His dwelling-place.

"How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

Let us pray: We thank Thee, O Lord, for Thine abounding grace to us, and for this truth which has been the subject of our meditation. We pray that the Holy

Spirit may help us to receive the implications of this great text. Help us that we may rest and rejoice in the loving-kindness of the Lord; for His name's sake, Amen.

JARVIS STREET BROADCASTING.

We received reports from so many quarters during July that there was so much static, apparently accompanying the hot weather, that it was impossible to listen to the radio with any profit. For this reason it has been decided to discontinue the broadcasting service until the end of the summer, when cooler weather will make reception possible. We are sorry to miss the opportunity to minister to shut-ins and others on the occasional Sunday when perhaps the weather would make good reception possible.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET.

After being out-of-town for two or three days at two week-ends, the Pastor occupied the pulpit in Jarvis Street morning and evening. The morning was wet, but there was a good congregation. The evening was threatening, but a large summer congregation attended. One was baptized. The Monthly Communion Service followed attended by a few short of five hundred.

PUBLIC PRAYER.

(Continued from Page 4)

generate into downright preachings, so that there is no difference between the praying and the preaching, except that in the one the minister has his eyes shut, and in the other he keeps them open. It is not necessary in prayer to rehearse the Westminster Assembly's Catechism. It is not necessary in prayer to relate the experience of all the people who are present, or even your own. It is not necessary in prayer to string a selection of texts of Scripture together, and quote David, and Daniel, and Job, and Paul, and Peter, and every other body, under the title of "thy servant of old." It is necessary in prayer to draw near unto God, but it is not required of you to prolong your speech till everyone is longing to hear the word "Amen."

One little hint I cannot withhold—never appear to be closing, and then start off again for another five minutes. When friends make up their minds that you are about to conclude, they cannot with a jerk proceed again in a devout spirit. I have known men tantalize us with the hope that they were drawing to a close, and then take a fresh lease two or three times; this is most unwise and unpleasant.

(Continued next week).

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Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 6.

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 34. August 23, 1931.

Third Quarter.

THE LAW OF MOSES.

Lesson Text: Exodus, Chapter 20.

Golden Text: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." (vs. 20.)

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday: Psalm 97:1-12.

Tuesday: Deut. 5:22-33.

Wednesday: Eph. 6:1-9.

Thursday: Matt. 15:1-9.

Friday: Matt. 22:34-46.

Saturday: Deut. 11:13-25.

I. RECEIVING THE LAW, (vs. 1-17).

In this section the ten commandments are recorded, the first four of these setting forth man's relation to God, the other six his relation to men. The author of these commandments, as of the law, was God, He "spake all these words" (vs. 1). Their nature and purpose ought therefore to receive careful and strict attention. The law does not depict man's groping after God, but God's revelation unto man. Additional teaching is given in the New Testament, but the principles of the law are still operative and apply not only to the act, but to the thought, (Matt. 5:28). God's law is of the utmost importance to man, lying as it does at the basis of all that is good in human law. When the world has tried to govern contrary to His law, disaster has occurred, and the futility of the experiment has been evident. God knows best that which is good for man and the wisest among men give heed to His teaching.

In giving the law, the Author of it designates Himself as "the Lord thy God", and draws attention to His work on Israel's behalf in bringing them "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (vs. 2). It was the omnipotent, eternal, self-existent, unchangeable One who was speaking, the only God of heaven and earth, and in a very special sense the God and Redeemer of Israel. As such it was His right and privilege to give commands, and it was the duty of Israel to obey. And the same may be said in relation to the world's attitude in the present day. The first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (vs. 3), or "beside" or "except me", sets before us the true object of worship and emphasizes the fact that there is but one who can claim such adoration. The heathen nations surrounding Israel had many gods, but such was not to be the case with the Lord's people. Polytheism is contrary to the will of God and is of the devil (I Cor. 10:20). Man must have some god, some person or thing which he exalts to the first place in his life. The heathen openly bows down to his idol; the civilized man, apart from Christ, sometimes openly, at other times secretly, bestows his adoration upon that which occupies the place of God in his life; it may be one of several per-

sons or things, as, pleasure, business, money, position, secret or public sin, a relation or himself (Phil. 3:18, 19). An idol is that which is put in the place of God. The Lord must have the first place in the life.

The second commandment gives instruction concerning the manner of worship; no representation of anything was to be used in connection therewith, and a warning is given based on the character of God. He is a "jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and obey my commandments" (vs. 4-6). It is not the representations in themselves which are condemned, as only a little time later instruction is given concerning the making of the cherubim (Ch. 25:18), but the use of these in worship. God is a Spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, (John 4:24). The ritualists who use such representations in the present day, as in the case of the Roman Catholics and others, require to pay heed to this prohibition. They are seeking to worship God in a way displeasing unto Him. We are enjoined to approach without any human or material intermediary, (Heb. 4:16). The nearer to God we live, the more simple we desire our worship to be. Note the early church (Acts 1:12-14; 4:31, 32). The evil consequences of an erroneous form of worship are seen in the children who most naturally follow in the footsteps of the fathers. See the image-worshipping, and priest-ridden countries of the world. And blessing comes to thousands when God is worshipped in accordance with His will. See Scripture, reformation period of history, Protestant countries, revivals, and present-day instances.

The third commandment teaches the proper attitude to God. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." (vs. 7). His name must be revered, otherwise we shall be accounted guilty and suffer the consequences. Such reverence in respect to the proper use of God's name requires due emphasis these days when so much irreverence is being shown in word and action; in swearing, frivolity and hypocrisy.

In the fourth commandment instruction is given concerning the time to be specifically set apart for the worship of God. The division is that of six days for labour and one day for rest, the latter being the sabbath of the Lord, the day in which man was to turn from his daily labours and pay heed, without distraction, to the spiritual realities. This day was to be kept holy; no work being done in it, and is directly related to the rest day of God after the creation (vs. 8-11). It was to be kept from sunset to sunset (Lev. 23:32), no fire was to be kindled on it (Ex. 35:3), strangers within the gates were to keep it (Ex. 20:10), and sabbath breakers were to be stoned (Ex. 31:15). The Jewish sabbath is not now observed by the church, the first day of the week being set apart for worship. In connection with this the following may be noted: the law was in operation until the time of Christ (Gal. 3:19-25). Christ manifested His authority over

the law (Matt. 5:22, 28, 32), sabbaths were for a sign (Deut. 5:15; Ezek. 20:12), Christians are under a new covenant (Heb. 8:6-13), they are not under the old law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). The law was added because of transgressions (Gal. 3:18, 19); the law was our pedagogue (Gal. 3:24). We are not to judge one another on account of days (Rom. 14:1-6; Col. 2:17, 18), but to obey the commandments of Christ (I John 3: 22, 23), a word to those who desire to be under the old law (Gal. 4: 21-31), the first day of the week was observed by the early church in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection (Acts 20:7). Note the necessity of one day's rest in seven, and the reasonableness of one seventh of time being given to Divine worship; also the manner in which the day is desecrated by business and pleasure. Commandments five to ten state man's duty to man, the first of these stating the proper attitude of children to parents (vs. 12), being the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6:2). The sixth commandment affects men in general and condemns murder (vs. 13), capital punishment being excluded therefrom (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12). New Testament application (Matt. 5:21, 22). The seventh commandment affects the family (vs. 14), the basis of society (Matt. 5:27, 28). The eighth relates to the property of others, which must be held inviolate (vs. 15). The ninth concerns the reputation of others, which must not be traduced (vs. 16). And the tenth affects the inward attitude toward others (vs. 17). The duty enjoined in these commandments is taught also in the New Testament.

II. THE EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE, (vs. 18-26).

The phenomena accompanying the giving of the law were so terrible that the people were afraid, and "they removed, and stood afar off" (vs. 18), and requested Moses to speak unto them, "but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (vs. 19). To meet God purely on the basis of law is a terrible thing for the sinner, for he must then bear the punishment of his transgressions. Thank God for salvation from the terrors of the law. The reason for these phenomena is stated by Moses. He counsels the Israelites not to fear, "For God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (vs. 20). This revelation of God's power was meant to test the people in relation to the Lord, and to instil within them godly fear. In these days when so much is made of God's love, it is well that we should remember the significance and implications of the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai in their relation to both past and future. Moses, unafraid, draws near unto God and listens still further unto His voice (vs. 21), while He gives commandment concerning His worship. He was to be worshipped directly, with no intermediaries (vs. 22, 23). An altar of stone was made, no tool was to be laid upon the stone, and no steps were to lead up to it (vs. 25, 26). The stone must be in its natural state. Man's work must be kept out with his ideas, and everything must be done in accordance with God's will. Christians should also be most careful in this respect.

The Union Baptist Witness

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CONVENTIONS.

There are, as everyone knows, "Conventions and Conventions," and at this time we have the reports of the two Conventions held simultaneously with the Special Convention meeting in Toronto on the 16th, 17th and 18th of June, the Convention of the Regular Baptists of British Columbia and the Convention of the Regular Baptist Missionary Society of Alberta. These are both splendid reports, and the Union rejoices that it has a share in supporting the work. Last year \$980 was forwarded to the Treasurer of the B.C. Convention and \$221 to the Treasurer of the Alberta Society.

In earlier issues, something has been said concerning the Special Convention of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, held in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, but much more could be said, and with the friends in Western Canada, we lift our voices in praise to Him who hath given us the victory. While it is true that certain conditions made the Special Convention necessary, the decision of the churches was such that side-issues which had threatened the purpose of the Union have been dealt with, and it goes forward with unity of purpose in its missionary program. The closing hours of the Convention are surely written on the hearts of all delegates and visiting friends. The Lord visited His people, and tired delegates and those who had been in attendance throughout the Convention sessions felt the cares of the day lifted; they were "encouraged in the Lord." The missionaries-elect to Liberia were introduced, and an address by the President of the Union, Rev. Clifford J. Loney, of the Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ontario, and a message by Dr. T. T. Shields crowned the day. It was indeed a splendid Convention, the best saved for the last, and the inspiration of those closing hours was such that men thanked God once again for able and consecrated leaders who were ready to suffer, and had suffered, in the conflict against evil—"The servant is not greater than his lord." The Special Convention has left us with a larger vision and a greater desire to EVANGELIZE, "beginning at Jerusalem" and even to the "utmost parts of the world".

B.C. Convention.

While it is not possible for us to give more than a paragraph or two from the report of the Annual Convention of the Regular Baptists of British Columbia, we wish that all could read it in its entirety as given in the paper of the Convention, "The B.C. Baptist". The opening remarks of the report are as follows:

"In giving report of all our previous Conventions and quarterly Rallies, it has been customary for us to say 'the best yet'. And it may seem somewhat com-

monplace to repeat that saying at this time. We feel, however, that it would be impossible for us to give a true report of our Fourth Annual Convention without saying this very thing. For without a doubt, in the truest sense, it was the best Convention in our history as Regular Baptists, or that we ever attended. From beginning to end the Sessions were marked by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and a spiritual unity among God's people that made it most delightful and helpful. Over and over again during the Convention Sessions, and since its close, we have heard expressions of appreciation of the spiritual nature of the annual gathering and the help and blessing revived from being present.

"Among the things that contributed to this spiritual success was the prayer that preceded the Convention, and at the same time the prayer that attended the conduct of its sessions. The office of the Holy Spirit was duly recognized. God's Word was honored; and an utter dependence upon God was realized by all who were responsible for part in the Convention's program. As this same Spirit pervades the work of our Churches throughout the Province between Convention times, there will be real success that will glorify God."

Alberta Society.

The monthly news letter of the Regular Baptist Missionary Society of Alberta gives a splendid report of what has been accomplished during the past year. Such a work can be recommended without reserve by the Union's Executive. Rev. Morley R. Hall, chairman of the Alberta Society, was for some time a member of the Executive Board of the Union. Pastor Hall is one with the principles and aims of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec and fellowships with the churches banded together in the Eastern provinces in their program. The Alberta friends contribute regularly to the Foreign Mission work in Liberia, and it may be possible for them to have their own representative on the field in the not too far distant future.

Part of the report of the Convention meetings is given:

"For those who were unable to attend this unique gathering of Regular Baptists of Alberta, we owe you a word of report at least. As you will remember, it was to be held in Benalta, and to Benalta we went in goodly numbers to attend our first Annual Convention of the newly formed organization of Regular Baptists of our Province, which was held June 16th, 17th and 18th.

"Delegates and visitors came in full count from the churches in fellowship, and also from the outlying districts a goodly number were present to enjoy the spiritual fellowship of these people called 'Regular' Baptists. The Baptist

Church being too small to accommodate the gathering, the Community Hall, which seats over 200, was procured and well filled throughout the sessions. Each session was well attended, and the fellowship was rich and sweet.

"It was our privilege to introduce three new pastors that have come to us since our first Rally in June, 1930, when we met in the Westbourne Baptist Church in Calgary to organize such a fellowship. It is a joy to welcome and introduce into our fellowship such men as the Lord has raised up and sent forth in this movement."

The report then gives space to two of the young men so well known among our churches, Pastor Gordon W. Searle and Pastor Chas. S. McGrath. These young men are dear to the hearts of their brethren in Ontario and Quebec, and are followed by our prayers.

"Pastor Gordon W. Searle, of the Norwood Regular Baptist Church in Edmonton, was the first to be introduced. Brother Searle came to us from the Toronto Baptist Seminary about ten days after our first Rally, and the blessing of the Lord has been abundant in his field of labor in Edmonton. Shortly after his work began in Edmonton, the Norwood cause was organized with about 24 charter members, and this work has increased to a membership of over 50 members. Our Norwood brethren are still without a church building, but steps are being taken to raise sufficient funds for the erection of one as soon as possible. This would be a splendid spot to invest some of the Lord's tithe.

"Pastor Chas. S. McGrath arrived in from the East in time for the Convention. This brother comes to us from the Toronto Baptist Seminary, and at present is stationed at Macleod, which is also a very strategic point in connection with work. Already our brother has had the joy of seeing some 7 or 8 adults openly confess Christ. One of the chief difficulties here is a suitable building for meetings, and unless same can be obtained soon, the work will suffer badly."

Next week, we trust that there will be room for further briefs from this excellent report.

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BLESSING AMONG THE CHURCHES. Shenstone Memorial.

There is a Daily Vacation Bible School in connection with Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church, Brantford, which attracts many of the children of the neighborhood; in fact the attendance grows daily, and this is indeed a means of spreading the Gospel and winning the children for Christ that other churches might well copy.

Another venture of the Shenstone Church, as it endeavors to "launch out into the deep" in the Lord's work and for His glory, is a series of tent meetings. Assisted by Evangelist Garratt, Pastor McNulty has commenced an ag-

gressive campaign for souls. A large tent is located at the corner of St. George and Grand Streets, Brantford, and here meetings are held as well as at the church. On Sunday, July 19th, two responded to the Pastor's invitation at the close of the evening service, and this is but an earnest of His blessing, the church verily believes.

On Saturday evenings, an Open Air Meeting is held in the heart of the city, Market Square, and for all these efforts to bring the Gospel message within the hearing of men and women, boys and girls, the prayers of Gospel Witness readers are asked.

Stanley Ave., Hamilton.

This week, we again hear from the Stanley Ave. Baptist Church, Hamilton. Stanley Avenue Church, with its various Bible Schools and its widespread activity, has, of course, wonderful prayer meetings at all times, but the one held last week was a little unusual. There were one hundred and forty present. Yes, one hundred and forty, in vacation time, in the midst of a heat wave such as Ontario has not known for many years. Do modernistic churches attract like that? We do not know of any that do. At this prayer meeting, Rev. Clifford J. Loney had the privilege of baptizing seven believers. The mother of the Indian girls saved at the Mountain Mission followed her Lord after her confession of Faith made at a recent Sunday service; then there was a mother of twelve children who obeyed the Lord's command; while four members of one family, two brothers and two sisters, and one little girl of the negro race were also buried in the waters of baptism.

At the close of this prayer meeting, two came forward seeking salvation, and one other, a young man, indicated his desire to have a closer walk with God.

St. Amedee Field.

Pastor Lorne Hisey has been kept busy on his three-church field, and we have not heard from him as often as usual this summer, but even so, we have known that the Lord was blessing his ministry, and now we share a recent letter with those who make such summer work possible.

"I suppose you will think that I have forsaken the Union, but not so. The Union is one of the joys of my heart, and I count it a privilege under God to be a Regular Baptist Pastor.

"The work here is going on very well. So far there has been nothing spectacular, but the presence of the Lord in our midst has been very noticeable. At St. Amedee, the congregations are good and the mid-week service is being well attended. At Papineauville things are about the same as last year, but at the Gore, we have a marked increase. The Sunday evening congregations have frequently been in the neighborhood of fifty, and the little school-house is almost packed. The interest is intense."

Special meetings on this field are planned for the near future. Pray that the Lord will save many.

The French Work.

Letters from Rev. Jules Dautheny, of the Beneficent French Baptist Church, Montreal, are always interesting. Mr.

Dautheny feels handicapped when writing in English, but readers will judge for themselves regarding his ability in this matter, for the following is a letter couched in his own style:

"Our French work here is going on, and Brother St. James and I spread the Gospel in good many hearts. It is not easy to enlighten the big crowd at once, but for my part, I do my utmost to preach Christ and Him crucified.

"Every Sunday evening some new people come at our service, and after it is over ask me questions concerning the salvation of their souls. Now is the opportune time to sow the good seed. The French Canadians by the hundreds have lost their faith in the Roman Church, and I am afraid they will become infidel before very long. It is why I plead with our Christian people to never neglect the work among the French in Quebec. They need the Gospel as much as the pagans of India and Africa.

"We are about eleven thousand French Protestants in Montreal; among them is a Judge of the Superior Court, good many lawyers, physicians and business men. The majority of them belong to the _____ Church, but my work here is quite young, and I am not ashamed of the results. Of course the economic depression has taken all our finance; I have only two men who have steady work. The majority of the men in our church are without work for many months. In spite of that, we work hand in hand, and our Lord will pour upon us His blessing."

Central, London.

In spite of intensive heat and the holiday coming on Monday, taking its usual toll of the regular attendants, it was a good day at Central Baptist Church. There were many visitors at both services, and Rev. W. E. Atkinson, who ministered there, extended the right hand of fellowship to three new members at the morning service, and in the evening had the privilege of baptizing four believers.

Annette St., Toronto.

In the Pastor's absence on vacation, the following supplies have been arranged for the month of August. Sunday, August 2nd, Rev. W. Gordon Brown; August 9th, Rev. Arthur Lee; August 16th, Rev. W. Gordon Brown; August 23rd, Rev. A. C. Whitcombe, and August 30th, Rev. R. D. Guthrie.

The services on August 2nd, conducted by the pastor's elder son, Rev. W. Gordon Brown, were times of spiritual refreshing and as hands were clasped in greeting at the close of the services it was good to hear the words of brothers and sisters in the Lord as they all with one accord, in one way or another, remarked that it was good to have been here.

The Bible School at Annette Street is held from ten to eleven o'clock preceding the morning service, and an invitation is extended to visitors in Toronto to "drop in".

Timmins.

Pastor E. C. Wood spent Sunday, August 2nd, with Mr. Slade at Timmins

and for the next month or two will supply First Baptist Church during Mr. Slade's absence. The Timmins Church, its pastor and Mr. Wood are commended to the churches for special prayer.

Mount Dennis.

In loaning its Pastor to the Timmins Church for the period required for Mr. Slade to rest, the Mount Dennis folk have been gracious indeed. It is expected that the church there will be served each Sunday morning by a T.B.S. student and the evening services will be taken by a member of the Annette St. Church's Gospel Car Band. Last Lord's Day, Rev. Arthur Lee took the services, and under his able direction the Open Air services are being carried on. Mr. Lee is serving the Stouffville Baptist Church the latter part of August while the Pastor is on vacation.

The Bulletin.

The interest shown in the "Missionary Bulletin" seems to increase with each issue. It is not possible to acknowledge every letter sending names of those who would be interested in receiving it, but the names are carefully put on our Mailing List and we are grateful for them.

And here may we say that every donation to the Union, or to the maintenance of The Bulletin, is carefully acknowledged and an official receipt sent. If at any time, a contribution has been sent which has not had acknowledgment within a week, please let the Office know. Such information will be gratefully received and will help us check up on the mails. We have reason to believe that many letters carefully addressed are not reaching their destination and an investigation is in process.

MICHIGAN NOTES.

By C. R. Peterson.

Charlotte.

The Gospel Tabernacle has recently called Bro. John Zuiderhoek to become its pastor. Bro. Zuiderhoek was the first pastor of the Tabernacle, when it separated from the First Church some years ago on account of the prevalence of modernism in that church. It is seldom that a church calls as its pastor one who has previously served in that capacity, but this seems to be a case of the old wine being better. We wish for our brother a fruitful ministry.

Flint.

Pastor Loren M. Gough recently preached a sermon on, "Seventh Day Adventism Under the X-Ray of Scripture," at his church, the Edwin Avenue Church. The announcement of the subject brought out a large group of followers of Mrs. White. We cannot say whether they came for light or argument—probably the latter. Bro. Gough is doing a good work here.

Austin Avenue Church recently closed a three weeks' evangelistic campaign, in which Evangelist Clyde Baldwin did the preaching. Pastor Jas. A. Lamb baptized ten recently, partly the result of the campaign, and partly the result of his own pastoral work.