

# The Gospel Witness

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

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

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## Religious Posing

It seems to be natural for degenerate human nature to prefer the artificial to the real, the false to the true. That human preference manifests itself in many ways, and in many directions, but particularly in the religious realm.

The name of religious veneers, religious varnishes, is legion. Natural men prefer a religion of externals. This desire is sometimes manifested in a love of rituals, of ordinances, of various religious observances, which have to do with the lips, with the posture, with the dress, perhaps with the profession; but have no relation to character and life.

But such religious formalists are not the only religiously artificial people to be found. There are many who profess evangelical principles who are just as effective posers as any ritualists in the world. We understand it is part of a Christian Scientist's religion to smile. (We do not of course, include Christian Science among evangelical religions.) But a religion that consists largely in the denial of evil of every sort would naturally require of its votaries a constant smile.

But the anti-Christian cult of Christian Science does not monopolize the smiling exterior. Practically every Christian virtue is counterfeited. There is, for instance, a genuine humility, a meekness and quietness which are of the spirit, and which are said to be, in the sight of God, of great price. But there is a voluntary humility, an assumed external humility of the Uriah Heep order, which is obnoxious to men when identified, and abominable in the sight of God.

There is a peace which passeth all understanding, which is as deep as the deepest thing in human experience, and as strong as a garrison of armed angels. Such peace will keep the heart and mind amid the fiercest conflict and the wildest storm. But there is another kind of peace which is only skin deep, a sanotimonious serenity, a placidity, which depends for its composure upon the avoidance of everything that is contrary to one's own desires, and therefore irksome and unpleasant, "which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the body".

All these religious varnishes "crawl", or wrinkle, in the heat of the day, and such veneers shrink or swell to the breaking point with every change of temperature.

The devil, in our day, not to be behind the times, produces a kind of thermos Christianity which presents a cool and polished exterior to the world even when boiling like Vesuvius itself within. Better a mere civility that is of the heart than a religious serenity that is but a cover for a malignant treachery.

We do well to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and to exercise every care that such smiles as we are enabled to wear should really be the health of the countenance, the outshining of the Divine Presence sanctuaried in the heart.

"He that doeth truth cometh to the light." Christians are children of the light; and where the Spirit of Truth really abides within, His presence will be manifested by a distaste for all shams, and artificialities, and every sort of religious display; and, on the other hand, by a passion for truth, simplicity, and absolute sincerity.

"The aloes grow upon the sand,  
The aloes thirst with parching heat,  
Year after year they wait and stand,  
Lonely and calm, and front the beat  
Of desert winds, and still a sweet  
And subtle voice thrills all their veins:  
'Great patience wins; it still remains,  
After a century of pains,  
For you to bloom and be complete.

"I grow upon a thorny waste,  
Hot noontide lies on all the way,  
And with its scorching breath makes haste,  
Each freshening dawn to burn and slay;  
Yet patiently I bide and stay,  
Knowing the secret of my fate.  
The hour of bloom, dear Lord, I wait,  
Come when it will, or soon or late,  
-A hundred years is but a day."

## PUBLIC PRAYER

A LECTURE BY C. H. SPURGEON.

(Continued from last week)

Another canon is—*do not use cant phrases*. My brethren, have done with those vile things altogether; they have had their day, and let them die. These pieces of spiritual fustian cannot be too much reprobated. Some of them are pure inventions; others are passages taken from the Apocrypha; others are texts fathered upon Scripture, but which have been fearfully mangled since they came from the Author of the Bible. In the *Baptist Magazine* for 1861 I made the following remarks upon the common vulgarities of prayer-meetings. "Cant phrases are a great evil. Who can justify such expressions as the following? '*We would not rush into thy presence as the unthinking (!) horse into the battle.*' As if horses ever did think, and as if it were not better to exhibit the spirit and energy of the horse than the sluggishness and stupidity of the ass! As the verse from which we imagine this fine sentence to be derived has more to do with sinning than with praying, we are glad that the phrase is on its last legs. '*Go from heart to heart, as oil from vessel to vessel.*' is probably a quotation from the nursery romance of 'Ali Baba, and the Forty Thieves', but as destitute of sense, Scripture, and poetry, as ever sentence could be conceived to be. We are not aware that oil runs from one vessel to another in any very mysterious or wonderful manner; it is true it is rather slow in coming out, and is therefore an apt symbol of some people's earnestness; but surely it would be better to have the grace direct from heaven than to have it out of another vessel—a Popish idea which the metaphor seems to insinuate, if indeed it has any meaning at all. '*Thy poor unworthy dust,*' an epithet generally applied to themselves by the proudest men in the congregation, and not seldom by the most moneyed and groveling, in which case the last two words are not so very inappropriate. We have heard of a good man who, in pleading for his children and grandchildren, was so completely beclouded in the blinding influence of this expression, that he exclaimed, 'O Lord, save thy dust, and thy dust's dust, and thy dust's dust's dust.' When Abraham said, 'I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes,' the utterance was forcible and expressive; but in its misquoted, perverted, and abused form, the sooner it is consigned to its own element the better. A miserable conglomeration of perversions of Scripture, uncouth similes, and ridiculous metaphors, constitute a sort of spiritual slang, the offspring of unholy ignorance, unmanly imitation, or graceless hypocrisy; they are at once a dishonour to those who constantly repeat them, and an intolerable nuisance to those whose ears are jaded with them."

Dr. Charles Brown, of Edinburgh, in an admirable address at a meeting of the New College Missionary Association, gives instances of current misquotations indigenous to Scotland, which sometimes, however, find their way across the Tweed. By his permission, I shall quote at length. "There is what might be called an unhappy, sometimes, quite grotesque, mingling of Scripture texts. Who is not familiar with the following words addressed to God in prayer, 'Thou art the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and the praises thereof!' which is but a jumble of two glorious texts, each glorious taken by itself

—both marred, and one altogether lost indeed, when thus combined and mingled. The one is Isaiah lvii. 15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, *that inhabiteth eternity*, whose name is Holy.' The other is, Psalm xxii. 3, 'Thou art holy, O thou that *inhabitest the praises of Israel.*' The inhabiting of the praises of *eternity*, to say the least, is meagre; there were no praises in the *past* eternity to inhabit. But what a glory is there in God's condescending to inhabit, take up his very abode, in the praises of Israel, of the ransomed church. Then there is an example nothing less than grotesque under this head, and yet one in such frequent use that I suspect it is very generally regarded as having the sanction of Scripture. Here it is, 'We would put our hand on our mouth, and our mouth in the dust, and cry out, Unclean, unclean; God be merciful to us sinners.' This is no fewer than *four* texts joined, each beautiful by itself. First, Job xl. 4, 'Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.' Second, Lamentations iii. 29, 'He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.' Third, Leviticus xiii. 45, 'where the leper is directed to put a covering upon his upper lip, and to cry, Unclean, unclean. And fourth, the publican's prayer. But how incongruous a man's first putting his hand on his mouth, then putting his mouth in the dust, and, last of all, crying out, etc.! The only other example I give is an expression nearly universal among us, and, I suspect, almost universally thought to be in Scripture, 'In thy favour is life, and thy lovingkindness is better than life.' The fact is, that this also is just an unhappy combination of two passages, in which the term *life* is used in altogether different, and even incompatible senses, namely, Psalm lxiii. 3, 'Thy lovingkindness is better than life,' where, evidently, *life* means the present temporal life.

"A second class may be described as unhappy alterations of Scripture language. Need I say that the 130th Psalm, 'Out of the depths,' etc., is one of the most precious in the whole book of the Psalms? Why must we have the words of David and of the Holy Ghost thus given in public prayer, and so constantly that our pious people come all to adopt it into their social and family prayers, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, and plenteous redemption *that thou mayest be sought after,*' or 'unto'? How precious the simple words as they stand in the Psalm (verse 4), 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared' (verses 7, 8); 'With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities!' Again, in this blessed Psalm, the words of the third verse, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' too seldom are left us in their naked simplicity, but must undergo the following change, 'If thou wert *strict* to mark iniquity,' etc. I remember in my old college days, we used to have it in a much more offensive shape, 'If thou wert strict to mark and *rigorous to punish!*' Another favourite change is the following, 'Thou art in heaven, and we upon earth; therefore let our words be few *and well ordered.*' Solomon's simple and sublime utterance (full of instruction, surely, on the whole theme I am dealing with) is, 'God is in heaven, and thou upon

earth; therefore let thy words *be few.*' Eccles. v. 2. For another example under this class see how Habakkuk's sublime words are tortured, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on sin *without abhorrence.*' The words of the Holy Ghost are (Heb. i. 13), 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.' Need I say that the power of the figure, 'canst not look on iniquity' is nearly lost when you add that God *can* look on it, only not without abhorrence?

"A third class is made up of meaningless pleonasm, vulgar, common-place redundancies of expression, in quoting from the Scriptures. One of these has become so universal, that I venture to say you seldom miss it, when the passage referred to comes up at all. 'Be in the midst of us' (or, as some prefer to express it, somewhat unfortunately, as I think, 'in our midst'), 'to bless us, *and to do us good.*' What additional idea is there in the last expression, 'and to do us good'? The passage referred to is Exodus xx. 24, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto you, and I will bless you.' Such is the simplicity of Scripture. Our addition is, 'Bless us, and do us good.' In Daniel iv. 35, we read the noble words, 'None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' The favourite change is, 'None can stay thy hand *from working.*' '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!' This is changed, 'Neither hath it entered into the heart of man *to conceive* the things.' Constantly we hear God addressed as 'the hearer *and answerer* of prayer,' a mere vulgar and useless pleonasm, for the Scripture idea of God's hearing prayer is just his answering it—'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come,' 'Hear my prayer O Lord,' 'I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.' Whence, again, that common-place of public prayer, 'Thy consolations are neither few nor small'? The reference, I suppose, is to those words of Job, 'Are the consolations of God small with thee?' So one scarce ever hears that prayer of the seventy-fourth Psalm, 'Have respect to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty,' without the addition, '*horrid* cruelty!' nor the call to prayer in Isaiah, 'Keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth,' without the addition, 'the *whole* earth!' nor that appeal of the Psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee,' without the addition, 'none in *all* the earth.' These last may seem small matters, indeed. And so they are, nor were worth finding fault with, did they occur but occasionally. But viewed as stereotyped common-places, weak enough in themselves, and occurring so often as to give an impression of their having Scripture authority, I humbly think they ought to be discountenanced and discarded—banished wholly from our Presbyterian worship. It will, perhaps, surprise you to learn that the only Scripture authority for that favourite, and somewhat peculiar expression, about the 'wicked rolling sin as a sweet morsel under their tongue,' is the following words in the book of Job (xx. 12), 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he *hide* it under his tongue.'"

But enough of this. I am only sorry to have felt bound in conscience to be so long upon so unhappy a subject. I cannot, however, leave the point without urging upon you literal accuracy in all quotations from the word of God.

It ought to be a point of honour among ministers always to quote Scripture correctly. It is difficult to be always correct, and because it is difficult, it should be all the more the object of our care. In the halls of Oxford or Cambridge it would be considered almost treason or felony for a fellow to misquote Tacitus, or Virgil, or Homer; but for a preacher to misquote Paul, or Moses, or David, is a far more serious matter, and quite as worthy of the severest censure. Mark, I said a "fellow," not a freshman, and from a pastor we expect, at least, equal accuracy in his own department as from the holder of a fellowship. You who so unwaveringly believe in the verbal-inspiration theory (to my intense satisfaction), ought never to quote at all until you can give the precise words, because, according to your own showing, by the alteration of a single word you may miss altogether God's sense of the passage. If you cannot make extracts from Scripture correctly, why quote it at all in your petitions? Make use of an expression fresh from your own mind, and it will be quite as acceptable to God as a scriptural phrase defaced or clipped. Vehemently strive against garblings and perversions of Scripture, and renounce for ever all cant phrases, for they are the disfigurement of free prayer.

I have noticed a habit among some—I hope you have not fallen into it—of praying with their eyes open. It is unnatural, unbecoming, and disgusting. Occasionally the opened eye uplifted to heaven may be suitable and impressive, but to be gazing about while professing to address the unseen God is detestable. In the earliest ages of the church the fathers denounced this unseemly practice. Action in prayer should be very little used, if at all. It is scarcely comely to lift and move the arm, as if in preaching; the outstretched arms however, or the clasped hands, are natural and suggestive when under strong holy excitement. The voice should accord with the matter, and should never be boisterous, or self-asserting: humble and reverent let those tones be in which man talketh with his God. Doth not even nature itself teach you this? If grace does not I despair.

With special regard to your prayers in the Sabbath services, a few sentences may be useful. In order to prevent custom and routine from being enthroned among us, it will be well to *vary the order of service as much as possible.* Whatever the free Spirit moves us to do, that let us do at once. I was not till lately aware of the extent to which the control of deacons has been allowed to intrude itself upon ministers in certain benighted churches. I have always been accustomed to conduct religious services in the way I have thought most suitable and edifying, and I never have heard so much as a word of objection, although I trust I can say I live on the dearest intimacy with my officers; but a brother minister told me this morning, that on one occasion, he prayed in the morning service at the commencement instead of giving out a hymn, and when he retired into the vestry, after service, the deacons informed him that they would have no innovations. We hitherto understood that Baptist churches are not under bondage to traditions and fixed rules as to modes of worship, and yet these poor creatures, these would-be lords, who cry out loudly enough against a liturgy, would bind their minister with rubrics made by custom. It is time that such nonsense were for ever silenced. We claim to conduct service as the Holy Spirit moves us, and as we judge best. We will not be bound to sing here and pray there, but will vary the order of

service to prevent monotony. Mr. Hinton, I have heard, once preached the sermon at the commencement of the service, so that those who came late might at any rate have an opportunity to pray. And why not? Irregularities would do good, monotony works weariness. It will frequently be a most profitable thing to let the people sit quite still in profound silence for two or five minutes. Solemn silence makes noble worship.

True prayer is not the noisy sound  
That clamorous lips repeat,  
But the deep silence of a soul  
That clasps Jehovah's feet.

Vary the order of your prayers, then, for the sake of maintaining attention, and preventing people going through the whole thing as a clock runs on till the weights are down.

*Vary the length of your public prayers.* Do you not think it would be much better if sometimes instead of giving three minutes to the first prayer and fifteen minutes to the second, you gave nine minutes to each? Would it not be better sometimes to be longer in the first, and not so long in the second prayer? Would not two prayers of tolerable length be better than one extremely long and one extremely short? Would it not be as well to have a hymn after reading the chapter, or a verse or two before the prayer? Why not sing four times, occasionally? Why not be content with two hymns, or only one, occasionally? Why sing after the sermon? Why, on the other hand, do some never sing at the close of the service? Is a prayer after the sermon always, or even often, advisable? Is it not sometimes most impressive? Would not the Holy Spirit's guidance secure us a variety at present unknown? Let us have anything so that our people do not come to regard any form of service as being appointed, and so relapse into the superstition from which they have escaped.

*Vary the current of your prayers in intercession.* There are many topics which require your attention; the church in its weakness, its backslidings, its sorrows, and its comforts; the outside world, the neighborhood, unconverted hearers, the young people, the nation. Do not pray for all these every time, or otherwise your prayers will be long and probably uninteresting. Whatever topic shall come uppermost to your heart, let that be uppermost in your supplications. There is a way of taking a line of prayer, if the Holy Spirit shall guide you therein, which will make the service all of a piece, and harmonize with the hymns and discourse. It is very useful to maintain unity in the service where you can; not slavishly, but wisely, so that the effect is one. Certain brethren do not even manage to keep unity in the sermon, but wander from Britain to Japan, and bring in all imaginable subjects; but you who have attained to the preservation of unity in the sermon might go a little farther, and exhibit a degree of unity in the service, being careful in both the hymn, and the prayer, and the chapter, to keep the same subject prominent. Hardly commendable is the practice, common with some preachers, of rehearsing the sermon in the last prayer. It may be instructive to the audience, but that is an object altogether foreign to prayer. It is stilted, scholastic, and unsuitable; do not imitate the practice.

As you would avoid a viper, *keep from all attempts to work up spurious fervour in public devotion.* Do not labour to seem earnest. Pray as your heart dictates, under the leading of the Spirit of God, and if you are dull and heavy tell the Lord so. It will be no ill thing to confess

your deadness, and bewail it, and cry for quickening; it will be real and acceptable prayer; but simulated ardour is a shameful form of lying. Never imitate those who are earnest. You know a good man who groans, and another whose voice grows shrill when he is carried away with zeal, but do not therefore moan or squeak in order to appear as zealous as they are. Just be natural the whole way through, and ask of God to be guided in it all.

Lastly—this is a word I utter in confidence to yourselves—*prepare your prayer.* You say with astonishment, "Whatever can you mean by that?" Well, I mean what some do not mean. The question was once discussed in a society of ministers, "Was it right for the minister to prepare his prayer beforehand?" It was earnestly asserted by some that it was wrong; and very properly so. It was with equal earnestness maintained by others that it was right; and they were not to be gainsayed. I believe both parties to have been right. The first brethren understood by preparing the prayer, the studying of expressions, and the putting together of a train of thought, which they all said was altogether opposed to spiritual worship, in which we ought to leave ourselves in the hand of God's Spirit to be taught of him both as to matter and words. In these remarks we altogether agree; for if a man writes his prayers and studies his petitions, let him use a liturgy at once. But the brethren in opposition meant by preparation quite another thing, not the preparation of the head, but of the heart, which consists in the solemn consideration beforehand of the importance of prayer, meditation upon the needs of men's souls, and a remembrance of the promises which we are to plead; and thus coming before the Lord with a petition written upon the fleshy tables of the heart. This is surely better than coming to God at random, rushing before the throne at haphazard, without a definite errand or desire. "I never am tired of praying," said one man, "because I always have a definite errand when I pray." Brethren, are your prayers of this sort? Do you strive to be in a fit frame to lead the supplications of your people? Do you order your cause in coming before the Lord? I feel, my brethren, that we ought to prepare ourselves by private prayer for public praying. By living near to God we ought to maintain prayerfulness of spirit, and then we shall not fail in our vocal pleadings. If anything beyond this is to be tolerated, it would be the commitment to memory of the Psalms and parts of Scripture containing promises, supplications, praises, and confessions, such as may be helpful in the act of prayer. It is said of Chrysostom, that he had learned his Bible by heart, so as to be able to repeat it at his pleasure: no wonder that he was called golden-mouthed. Now, in our converse with God, no speech can be more appropriate than the words of the Holy Ghost—"Do as thou hast said," will always prevail with the Most High. We counsel, therefore, the committing to memory of the inspired devotional exercises of the word of truth, and then your continued reading of the Scriptures will keep you always furnished with fresh supplications, which will be as ointment poured forth, filling the whole house of God with its fragrance, when you present petitions in public before the Lord. Seeds of prayer thus sown in the memory will yield a constant golden harvest, as the Spirit shall warm your soul with hallowed fire in the hour of congregational prayer. As David used the sword of Goliath for after victories, so may we at times employ a petition already

(Continued on Page 9)

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## A POT OF OIL—AND GOD.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 9th, 1931.

(Stenographically Reported).

"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

"And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what has thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

"Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

"And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

"So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

"And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

"Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."—II Kings 4: 1-7.

### Prayer before the sermon.

We lift our hearts to Thee, Thou Holy One, in the name of Him Who is our Saviour, and Whom Thou didst set forth to be the propitiation for our sins. We thank Thee that Thou didst make to meet upon Him the iniquities of us all. We thank Thee that nothing has been omitted from the catalogue of our obligations. We rejoice to know that He, Who is our Mediator, took not on Him the nature of angels, but took on Him the seed of Abraham; and that therefore we have an High Priest Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We thank Thee that Thou didst send forth Thy Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We have no measuring line by which to estimate the dimensions of Thy matchless grace. We worship in the presence of this disclosure of Thyself in the person of Jesus Christ: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. We thank Thee for this declaration, for this unveiling, for this self-revelation; for we have seen Thee, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, suffering for us. We bless Thee because Thou hast found a way whereby Thy banished should not be expelled from Thee.

We come this morning, many of us, as those who have seen Christ, and in Him we have beheld the Saviour. And we know, that, notwithstanding our utter unworthiness, all our sins have been put away; we are washed and cleansed by the precious blood. Thou hast imputed to us the perfect righteousness of our Representative, our Substitute. Our Daysman now appears in Thy presence for us; and Thou dost look upon us this morning, we rejoice to know, in the face of Thine Anointed. In Him Thou dost see us to be complete; for Thou hast made us to be complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power.

We thank Thee that Thou hast thus lifted us out of our poverty, and made us heirs of the unsearchable riches of Christ; that Thou hast saved us from our utter moral bankruptcy; and that Thou hast placed at our disposal all the resources of Deity, and hast blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as Thou didst chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

We confess, O Lord, our faithlessness; we mourn that we have taken such meagre advantage of the infinite resources of grace; that while children of the King, we have often lived as though we were ourselves paupers.

We thank Thee for the word which we have read from Thy Book this morning. How verily true it is that Solomon

in all his glory was not arrayed like the smallest flowers which grow under Thy sovereign care! Help us, we pray Thee, this morning that we may not only look to Thee for the forgiveness of sin, and rejoice in our adoption into the divine family, but that we may walk as children of light; that we may live as princes of the blood; that we may behave as those who have seen the King in His glory, and behold the land that is very far off.

How difficult it is for us to rise above the circumstances of life! How often our redeemed spirits seem to be imprisoned within the narrow confines of our own material conditions!

"Look, how we grovel here below!  
Fond of these earthly toys;  
Our souls can neither fly nor go  
To reach immortal joys!"

O Thou liberating Spirit, come to us this morning, and set us all free in Christ Jesus! Give us of Thy grace, enabling us to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

We plead in behalf of those who are troubled and tried, of those who in Thy presence this morning are cast down, and their souls disquieted within them. We pray for some who, perhaps, are peculiarly pressed by temporal cares, by their domestic situations—the need of the children, those things of which we have been reading: what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed.

Give us, we pray Thee, that spiritual enlightenment, and that enabling grace which will enable us, first to see, and then definitely to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, leaving to Thy Fatherly care these lesser matters of our temporal interests.

We beseech Thee to make us true children of faith. May our religion be real; may our trust in God be of a most practical order! Help us day by day,—under the observation of those who know not God, but who need Him so much,—to bear faithful testimony to Thy saving grace, that others may desire that superhuman, that divine, help of which our lives shall be the manifestation, the incontrovertible proof. Lord, bless us; help us to live as those who have passed through the grave into the joy and fulness of a life that is in Christ Jesus, so that it may appear to all that we are dead and our lives are hid with Christ in God.

We pray for any who may be without this circle of privilege; for any who may never have known the joy of direct access to God through Jesus Christ, for any who may have been formally, and but nominally, religious, who have not actually come into the divine presence, who have not been

touched by the life-giving, energizing, Spirit of God. Make all in this assembly to know that God is the Helper of all who are in need, that He is indeed a very present help in time of trouble.

We bring the needs of this congregation before Thee. How we would pray did we but know what each requires! But we thank Thee that we come to One—as Thy Word has taught us again this morning—to One Who knows what needs we have before we tell Him. And we thank Thee that that fatherly wisdom, that infinite goodness, that love and mercy, which are like the wideness of the sea, can prepare, and will prepare, answers to our poor petitions which will surprise us with their marvellous, their matchless, wealth.

Oh, enrich us all, and send us from this place this morning with a song of joy and gladness in our hearts. Is it not written, They shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away? Lead us into an anticipation of that heavenly life, and bless us with the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow thereto. For Jesus Christ's sake we ask it, Amen.

## I.

Let us look at this text without any introduction at all, and come right at once to the door of the treasury, TO SEE RELIGION AT WORK, TRUE RELIGION IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS PROPER FUNCTION.

What is your religion for? I speak to such as are Christians. What is your Christianity for? Of what value is it? What service does it render you? What is the proper function of religion? What ought the preacher to be doing? Indulging in some metaphysical exposition about something which nobody understands, and giving an appearance of learning, perhaps? For what do the children come to the table but to satisfy their hunger? And what is the religion of Christ for if it is not to help us?

Here is the picture of a woman with a creditor, and with no money in the bank, and no resources, so far as she knows,—at the end of herself; to use the hackneyed phrase, "at her wits' end". And when she does not know what else to do, she goes to see the preacher.

That is what you do! When you are bubbling over with joy you do not come to see me—unless it be to arrange for a wedding! But the people who are in all kinds of trouble resort to the preacher. And it is right that they should do so; for I have greatly mistaken the whole purpose of the revelation of God in Christ if it does not mean that God wanted to come so close to us that He could help us in everything, and that our Christian faith ought to link us on to the resources of Deity, so that it will put all heaven's treasury at our command.

Now look at the story. *It is quite right that we should pray about the great matters of the soul.* The problem of our origin and our destiny,—whence we came, and whither we go; and the conditions which are to govern the transition from one point to another—surely every thoughtful person must, at times, turn his mind to a consideration of these things. But there are some people who seem to assume that the religion of Christ is wholly a matter of the clouds. There are some people who are ultra-spiritual, so spiritual that they forget to put their foot on mother-earth at all—or profess so to be.

Now the fact of the matter is, we have bodies; we are in the world, and we are shut up—unwelcome as the truth is, and reluctant as we are sometimes to recognize and acknowledge it—we are all of us shut up to the necessity of dealing with these material considerations. Does the religion of Christ promise any relief to a widow with a creditor? It is all very well to go to see a poor mother, and tell her what she ought to do,—that she

ought to send her children to Sunday School; and that we desire they should all be converted, that she and her husband should be converted too. She says, "That is very nice. I do not quite know what you mean, but I suppose it would be a good thing. And if it is a good thing I should like to have it. But I am sorry that the children will not be there next Sunday, for they have no clothes in which to go; and while I am interested in these matters—I am not wholly indifferent—the fact of the matter is, the landlord is coming to-morrow, and I have no money with which to pay the rent. Have you anything to say to me about that?"

What are we going to do when amid these straitened circumstances? Is the religion of Christ designed to meet our temporal, as well as our spiritual, needs in any measure? Does it concern itself with the little as well as with the great things of life? Has it any relation to the things which are seen as well as to the things which are not seen, and which are eternal? I am sure it has. I am positive that the Lord would have us pray about these things. I am not telling you how, for the moment, He answers our prayer—that is another question. But I do say that it is perfectly legitimate that we should bring the smallest details, even the things that seem to us to be but trifles, to the Lord; in other words, that we should go to the Prophet and talk to Him about the insistent creditor, who promises to put in the bailiff and sell everything.

Our gracious Lord, in the days of His flesh, never taught His disciples, either by precept or example, to neglect any part of life. In the great words we read this morning He said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." He knows we are flesh and blood; "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Are you not glad of that? Some people do not remember that; they think you are made of granite, or of steel, and that nothing can break or bend you, that there is no limit at all to human endurance. Not thus does God regard us: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." And, to quote again, the reason for His pity is that He knows our limitations, "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

Do not be above praying about the bread-and-butter question. Do not be above praying about the bank account—when it is written in red. We are to pray always; we are to carry all our burdens to the Lord, and to cast all our care upon Him; and we shall find that He careth for us.

## II.

Let us see how God answers this petition. IT IS EVER THE WAY OF GRACE TO ANSWER PRAYER, TO SUPPLY OUR NEED, BY MULTIPLYING OUR OWN ABILITIES.

*Let me lay down a principle in order to correct a common error.* Some of us would like to have miracles performed, miracles that are objective to ourselves: we want God to do something *for us*. In other words, when we come, like this woman, with our tale of woe, we expect Him to answer, "All right, I will attend to that; I will pay the bill for you. It will be all right." That has been your dream,—that God would somehow or another supply you temporally and spiritually, whatever be the scope of your prayer, that He would supply you with that which you require apart from yourself. That is the fallacy of Socialism in all its fifty-seven varieties. What it argues is that human nature may be bettered, and that the con-

ditions of human life may be ameliorated by an improvement of circumstances—by something outside of ourselves. That is what people are asking for: "Go and pay the debt I owe to the creditors. Show me how I can get rid of certain obligations."

Now what I want to make clear to you is this: it is always the divine way to do something *for us* by doing something *in us*. God never works *for* His children without working *in* His children and *through* them.

When the woman came to the prophet and told her story, he said, "Well, just what do you want me to do for you? What hast thou in the house? What contribution can you make toward this? How much can you pay on the dollar?" She said, "Why, nothing at all! I have nothing." And she thought a minute: "O yes, I have. Away up there in the cupboard there is a little pot, and there is a little oil in it. That is everything I have in the house."

When we come to God pleading bankruptcy we must expect Him to ask us questions; we must expect Him to demand a statement, not alone of our liabilities, but of our assets. "What have you got? What is there in you? What is there at your command? What element of life remains unconsecrated to My service? Where is the leakage? What is the cause of your poverty? What have you in the house?"

There are people who are not above complaining of their spiritual state. They go mourning all their days, and they are never happy but when they are miserable: they are continually pouring out their complaints. There is one passage of scripture, among many, that needs no exposition, and no proof. "It is this, 'We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened'! We do plenty of it. Why? Well, we would like to have spiritual enrichment; and we dream sometimes of some ecstatic experience, some rapture of soul; that the Lord is going to come and carry us off into the seventh heaven—or at least into the third—and we are going to have a marvelous time sometime—sometime—sometime! Many people there are whose Bibles remain closed, whose talents remain buried, whose powers are undisciplined, unexercised, dormant, useless, all but atrophied from disuse, while they dream of experiencing a sudden stupendous miracle that will instantaneously convert the wilderness into a flowering garden. I have known many who have cherished such expectations, and who have sought their realization in an orgy of emotional excitement, but the ultimate issue has ever been a still drearier barrenness.

That is not God's way. His question is always, "What hast thou in the house? What talent has been laid away? What capacity have you that has not been placed at the divine disposal? What is there in you that I can lay hold of and make use of? What have you got in the house? Now answer." "What is it that I shall do for thee?" saith the Prophet, the great Prophet. Did He not say to the blind man, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" That is His question.

And I will tell you what we shall every one answer when it comes to that. We shall answer like this woman: "We have nothing at all." We may be proud enough when we measure ourselves with others; but when we come to think of what God wants to do for us and in us, and whether there is anything at all that I can place at His disposal, I have to say, "No; it is just because of my utter spiritual poverty that I have prayed. I have nothing!"

But are you sure? Are you sure? Nothing? Nothing at all? "I cannot sing." Well perhaps that is something to be thankful for, I do not know. Of a good many things you say, "I cannot do it"; but *there is something you can do*. If we are really the Lord's, there is a pot of oil somewhere. It may be a very small pot; it may be very poor oil; it may be only half oil, I do not know. But oh, remember it was the man of one talent who hid it in the earth. And it is often those who think they have nothing at all, by a false modesty, a sort of "voluntary humility", who refuse to place at the divine disposal what they have. Perhaps you cannot do very much; but whatever you have He demands it.

Let me remind you of one or two illustrations of that principle. Moses was sent to Pharaoh; he was commissioned to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians—a great task, for Egypt was the greatest of all world powers at that time. The Israelites were but a despised people, a nation of slaves. Moses, though learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, was very meek and very modest, and he told the Lord that he was not qualified for so great a task; that the Lord had selected the wrong instrument—he thought there was nothing in him at all! He was not eloquent and could not speak. How many people there are who assume they can do nothing—so they say!

But you remember what the Lord said? He said, "What is that in thine hand?" It was a rod. And He said, "Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent." And God said, "Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." And the Lord said, "That will do for me; that will suit my purpose; I will use that." "Oh, but there are Pharaoh's horses and chariots, and all the might of Egypt!" "Never mind. I will use that rod. It will do for Me." And you know what wonders God wrought with Moses' rod—how He divided the waters, and how they came again to their place when the morning appeared. And you know how it smote the rock and waters gushed out. And you remember at last it became the sign and symbol of Moses' appointment when the rod budded.

Now "what is that in thine hand?" It cannot be much, but whatever it is let God have it.

And you remember the still more familiar instance, perhaps, of the disciples who were concerned for the people's visible needs, and said, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat."

How would you women like to have five thousand people—five thousand hungry men beside women and children—come to dinner, unannounced, if you had nothing but ordinary supplies in the pantry?

When Jesus said that, they said, "Why, two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little!" The Lord, in effect, said, "I am not talking about giving a little. When I entertain I never give a little; I always give enough, enough and to spare. What have you got?" There was a man—I do not know whether he was a member of a finance committee or not, he ought to have been—and he said, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

"What hast thou in the house?" That is all. What have you that God can lay hold of and make use of—any talent, however poor in capacity? It may be only the ability to shake hands. Some people have not got that, you know. You shake hands with them, and you do not know whether you have got hold of one of the two fishes, or what you have! There are others who cannot say much, cannot do very much; but somehow or another they can put their heart into a hand-clasp and send somebody away saying, "I thought this world was a cold, old, place; but it is not so very bad after all. There is someone who cares."

I do not know what your particular capacity, your talent, may be. I am simply pleading for the consecration of the little things, of the least things, to the Lord for His service, that He may use them for His glory. A good voice? A good memory? A kindly smile? A gracious, winning personality, perhaps? Let God have it, whatever it may be.

I stopped my car yesterday, and I saw a little boy—he could not have been more than four years old, perhaps less than that—playing with the case of his father's or somebody else's, glasses. He put it down on the sidewalk—I do not know what he had in it, I could not see. And he looked up at me and said, "Hello!" And he went on with his play. I looked at him and smiled. Then he looked up again and said, "Hello!" And I smiled. The third time he said, "Can't you say 'Hello'?" "Yes", I said, "Hello!" And he said "Hello" back again. Well, can't you say "Hello!"?

What have you got in the house? There is something, somewhere, for God, surely.

Brother Hyde told me last night that he had met a certain man whom he had known years ago and asked him where he went to church, and he told him. But he said, "I do not do anything in the church; I go there, but I do not do anything." Alas! There are too many people like that.

What have you got in the house? The Lord wants to make use of what we have.

### III.

And then this final word: IT IS THE WAY OF GRACE TO PROVIDE A CAPACITY FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE INFINITE. That is what the religion of Christ is. No; it is not putting a rule up by the door and measuring yourself by it; it is not merely writing a creed—and I should be the last to belittle the importance of that—not setting up any kind of objective standard; it is not a laborious effort toward the realization of an ideal. It is more than that. What is the religion of Christ? It is the reception by these finite spirits of ours of the Infinite: It is God, the Infinite, stooping to lay hold of the pot of oil. What we have is valueless apart from God. But we are to receive God. That is why Jesus came: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God".

Look at that simple story. A pot of oil! "Very well", said the prophet, "go back home. Send your sons out to your neighbours and borrow as many vessels as you can."

Some people are expert at the borrowing business. You cannot plead inability to borrow things, can you? But the prophet said, "Go and borrow all the vessels you can; borrow not a few. Do not stint yourself."

Provide yourself, so far as it is possible, with the largest capacity for the reception of the blessing that God is going to give you. Open your heart. We have not much—only a meagre capacity—but God will fill that, and enlarge it—and enlarge it—and continue to enlarge it.

Do you know why some people are spiritually poor? It is because they do not go and borrow vessels from their neighbours. You say, "I am so poor; I have only a little pot of oil; I cannot do a thing. If I were to go and speak to Mrs. Jones next door I should faint in the attempt—I really should. I have no strength for anything at all." If you would only go and speak to Mrs. Jones you would find you would be filled, and she would be filled too! Go and borrow a vessel; enlarge your capacity in someone else's life, multiply yourself by contact with others. Go and borrow vessels; borrow not a few.

Did you ever lead anyone to Christ? Did you? You have been a Christian for a good number of years. Can you say as I speak to you this morning, "Yes; I know somebody whom the Lord in His mercy permitted me to lead to the feet of Christ. I went at it tremblingly; but He used me." You were happy; you were filled with joy when you were saved yourself, were you not? Yes; and you experienced it all over again when someone else was saved, did you not? Your vessel was filled, and the next one was full to running over. And then did you go and borrow another—and another—and another—and another?

Have you any spiritual children? Have you seen them growing up into Christ in all things; and do they provide you with material for praise and thanksgiving? Do you say with Paul, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you"?

A pastor in these days has quite enough to make him gloomy, if he wanted to be gloomy. He has trouble enough, distress enough. And I have to confess that I do not live on the mountain top all the time. I get into a spiritual aeroplane and get up there sometimes, but I do not live there all the time. And sometimes when I am down in the valley, and cannot find a thing to be happy about, I try to think of the people whom I know whom I have seen converted—some of my spiritual children, many of them preaching the gospel, some of my borrowed vessels! And do you know I find that I get the overflow; and by the time I get through I conclude there is no reason for anyone to be sad.

Go and borrow other vessels. Pour yourself—whatever you have—as God leads you, into somebody else's life, and it will save you from gloom.

I heard of a man who was travelling somewhere in the Arctic, and he found himself freezing. He knew that unless he bestirred himself death would ensue. He got off the sled and fastened the dogs' harness to his body, and then gave them the word to go. The dogs went over the snow pulling his body, bumping him from place to place until he was bruised from head to foot. But he found warmth throbbing through his body, and he was saved.

Some people would be the better for a little bumping, would they not? Some people need relation to some other vessel so that they can pour their life into somebody else's. I have known some professing Christian people that were so occupied with themselves that they



could not find any joy at all. If you want to make yourself miserable, look at yourself—that is enough to make anyone miserable! If you want reason for complaining and grumbling, just take stock of what you are yourself. That is enough to take the smile from anyone's face. Oh yes, some of you may have got out the wrong side of the bed this morning, I do not know. Go and borrow some vessel; find opportunity, as God helps you, to invest your little capital, whatever it is, in somebody else's life.

And what next? When you have done that, shut yourself up with God. "Go home", the prophet said, "and shut the door."

Oh I must say this, and I say it with all earnestness and sincerity: do not boast about your praying; do not talk about it; do not boast about it. If there is anything that is obnoxious in the sight of God it is spiritual pride of any kind. The most scathing words He ever uttered were for the men who stood on the street corners praying, to be seen of men. Get into your closet, and shut the door! Do not talk to people about it, talk to God. And if you have got a little oil, they will soon see the oil running out. When God blesses you you will not need to advertise your praying.

When Samson went down to Timnath and a lion roared at him in the way, he took it and rent it as he would have rent a kid. And when he was coming back he found in the carcass of the lion a hive of bees. The scene of his former conflict became a treasury of sweetness. Having no vessel—and if you have not any vessel use your hands—he took of the honey in his hands, comb and all, and he brought it to his father and his mother. And what did he say? Did he say, "You have got a great son, I can tell you. You ought to have seen me slay that lion! Nobody was there, but you ought to have seen me do it. I did it magnificently!" This is what the Scripture says: "He told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion"; he never told his father and mother where he got it, but he came with his hands full of honey. Bring the honey, bring the oil. But you will never do it until you have learned to shut the door and be alone with God and pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly.

"So she went from him, and shut the door", and she poured—and poured—and poured, until at last she said to her son, "Go and get me another vessel; there is still more oil." He looked about and said, "Mother, that is the last one; we have not any more."

Talk about inspiration! Could you write a word like this! You could not do it if you were to live to be as old as Methuselah—Listen: "The oil stayed."

If you are not having any larger blessing, if you are not getting more and more from God, it is because you stopped borrowing vessels. "The oil stayed." It was not poured out on the ground; it was poured into another vessel.

And then this woman came and told the prophet, and said, "I have borrowed all the vessels the neighbours had, and every one of them is full. What next?" And he said, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." She did not ask for that. All she asked was enough to pay her creditors. She never dreamed of getting something over and above that; never dreamed of twelve baskets full—enough and to

spare. But that is God's way.

Let me tell you, when you have borrowed vessels enough to receive the overflow of your life, you will not only satisfy your creditors, but you will live of the rest. Life will be rich and exuberant, overflowing, abundantly fruitful just as you are interested in other people, and as you cease to live unto yourself.

May the Lord help us to find in this simple story instruction which will deliver us from the narrowness, the limitations, of a life that is self-seeking, and lead us out into that larger and richer life which can be lived only as we follow Him Who is our Master and Lord.

Let us pray: O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou dost stoop to our littleness; and we desire just now to put ourselves afresh at Thy disposal. Fill us with Thyself until our hearts shall overflow, and we shall not only be blessed, but be a blessing to others, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

#### PUBLIC PRAYER.

(Continued from Page 4)

answered, and find ourselves able to say with the son of Jesse, "There is none like unto it," as God shall yet again fulfil it in our experience.

Let your prayers be earnest, full of fire, vehemence, prevalence. I pray the Holy Ghost to instruct every student of this College so to offer public prayer, that God shall always be served of his best. Let your petitions be plain and heart-felt; and when your people may sometimes feel that the sermon was below the mark, may they also feel that the prayer compensated for all.

Much more might be said, perhaps should be said, but time and strength both fail us, and so we draw to a close.

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**Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf**

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Lesson 35

August 30, 1931.

**THIRD QUARTER.****THE JUDICIAL LAW.**

Lesson Text: Exodus, Chapters 21-24.

Golden Text: "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." Exodus 24:17.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**

Monday: Psalm 1.

Tuesday: Rom. 3:1-20.

Wednesday: Rom. 3:21-31.

Thursday: Isa. 42:1-9.

Friday: Rom. 10:1-13.

Saturday: Phil. 2:1-11.

**I. IN RELATION TO SERVANTS (Ch. 21:1-11).**

In the lesson for this week we study the judicial laws governing the various relationships of the Israelites. In these there is manifested the great interest of God in His people, nothing is too small for His loving consideration, and His will is that justice should be done each individual. Our Lord has revealed that the very hairs of our head are numbered (Matt. 10:30), and if God pays attention to such an insignificant matter we need not wonder that He is concerned about our daily actions and relationships. In the promulgation of these laws direction is given first in relation to the duration of service on the part of servants. Six years the male servant was to serve and in the seventh year he was to "go out free for nothing", taking with him his wife if she came in with him (vs. 1-3). If the wife had been given him by his master, then she and her children, if there were any, were to remain behind (vs. 4). If, however, for love of his master, his wife, and his children, he decided to remain, the master would bring him unto the judges, and bore his ear at the door post, and he would serve him for ever (vs. 5, 6). This reminds us of our Lord who became a servant (Phil. 2:7), and surrendered His life for His bride (Eph. 5:25), manifesting thus His love for her. He is the faithful servant (Rev. 1:5), faithful unto death (Heb. 2:9). It also typifies the faithful redeemed servant, who voluntarily becomes a bondservant of the Lord (I Cor. 7:22), giving Him service that is devoted, free, and eternal. The reward of such service is certain (I Cor. 3:14). A female servant's rights were guarded and direction is given concerning certain contingencies which might arise (7-11).

**II. IN RELATION TO SMITING (vs. 12-36).**

Certain offences necessitating death, and other penalties, are found in these verses. First that of murder, "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death" (v. 12). Capital punishment for this crime is therefore

in accordance with God's law, and nothing in the New Testament has altered this judicial application. There is much sentimentalism these days which has no firm basis, and is distinctly detrimental to the observance of law and order. Let a man commit a crime, however atrocious, and someone sympathizes with him and seeks to shield him from the consequences. Help should be given to such, but not at the excuse of justice, for removing the deterrent of consequences gives encouragement to crime. God's way is the best way. If there was no deliberate intention to commit murder the individual could flee to a city of refuge and abide there until his case could be tried (v. 3; Num. 35:11; Josh. 20:2). On the other hand, one who committed murder deliberately was to be taken even from God's altar and put to death (v. 14), so heinous was and is the crime of murder in God's sight. Man cannot give life and he should not take it away, unless in the express way stated by God. Note the value of human life, and the right of each one to the life he possesses.

Death is also prescribed for smiters of parents (v. 15), for menstealers (v. 16), (note the slave dealers), and for cursers of parents (v. 17). Disobedience to parents is a characteristic of the last times (2 Tim. 3:2), and the attitude of God requires emphasis. Compensation was to be given unto one hurt in a struggle (vs. 18, 19), and punishment was to be meted out for offences against servants (vs. 20, 21, 26, 27), and women (vs. 22, 23), the governing principle of the same being an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (vs. 24, 25). This principle governed judicial law, not private action. God in Christ deals with us in grace and not on the basis of law. We have broken the law and come under its curse, but in our Lord we are forgiven and set free. We fear not therefore for the penalties of the law. The latter part of the chapter deals with the ox that gores (vs. 28-32), and with the death of an ox through man's carelessness (vs. 33, 34), and by the action of another ox (vs. 35, 36). Absolute justice is noted in these provisions.

**III. IN RELATION TO VARIOUS LAWS (Ch. 22-23).**

Laws of various kinds are found in these chapters, and the consequences prescribed concerning the same. First, in relation to theft (22:1-15), stealing an ox or a sheep (v. 1), catching a thief redhanded (vs. 2-4), stealing a neighbour's grain through permitting animals to eat it (v. 5), setting fire to a neighbour's grain (v. 6), and personal responsibility for the custody of a neighbour's property (vs. 7-15). Following this series, commands are given concerning fornication (vs. 16, 17), witches (v. 18), beastliness (v. 19), idolatry (v. 20), strangers (v. 21), widows and orphans (vs. 22-24), money lending (vs. 25-27), cursing (v. 28), and firstfruits (vs. 29, 30). And the reason of all is stated, "Ye shall be holy men unto me" (v. 31). God's purpose in relation to His creatures is that they may walk before Him in love and holiness (Eph. 1:4). This

it is impossible to do without His help, but He has graciously made provision for all our needs in Christ (Heb. 4:15, 16).

The summary of the laws continues, recording first that concerning the raising or receiving of a false report (v. 1). Lies are an abomination unto God (Prov. 12:22), and gossips are generally guilty in this respect. Caution requires to be used concerning the reception of evil tales relating to others, as in many cases these are untrue and individuals are injured thereby. We must be careful to believe and to speak only the truth. This law is followed by others relating to the exercise of just judgment (vs. 2-8), the proper attitude toward strangers (v. 9). The rest of the chapter deals with God's promise to help His people on their journey, and in their efforts to possess the promised land (vs. 20-33). An angel is to go before them to keep them in the way, and to bring them into the place prepared by God (v. 20). They were enjoined to obey him (v. 21), and rendering such obedience, God would be an enemy unto their enemies (v. 22), the latter being cut off (v. 23), their bread would be blessed, sickness would be taken away from their midst (v. 25), barrenness would be unknown in their land, (v. 26), and their enemies would be driven out before them (vs. 27-30). The bounds of their land are stated (v. 31), and they are cautioned against idolatry (vs. 24, 32, 33). Two things require emphasis, first, God desires obedience on the part of His creatures, and second, such obedience brings blessing.

**IV. RATIFYING THE COVENANT (Ch. 24:1-18).**

The ceremonies attendant on the ratifying of the covenant are described in this chapter. First there is the command to Moses to ascend the mount with Aaron and his two sons (v. 1), and the seventy elders of Israel (vs. 1, 2), then the ratification of the covenant is recorded. The people are told all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments, and they promise obedience thereto (v. 3). An altar is then built, and twelve pillars erected representing the twelve tribes of Israel (v. 4), sacrifices are offered and the blood is sprinkled on the altar and on the people, the book of the covenant being read in their hearing (vs. 5-8). The ratification of the covenant was therefore by blood, speaking of its significant and solemn character, and typifying the blood of the new covenant (Heb. 13:20; I Cor. 11:25). There can be no agreement with God unless on the basis of shed blood. The death of Christ is the central event of Scripture; in the Old Testament, type and statement point forward to it, and in the New Testament the teaching points backward to it. The vision of God seen by Moses and his company is described, and the glory which appeared upon Mount Sinai (vs. 9-18). Note the nature of the vision (v. 10), its glory and significance, other visions recorded in Scripture (Is. 6:1-13; Rev. 1:9-20; 4:1-11), the appearance of God's glory (v. 17), and the time of Moses' sojourn in the mount (v. 18).

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## IMPRESSIONS.

A change of scenery from time to time is one of the best tonics from the physical, mental and spiritual side of life. It is, therefore, not surprising that in unfamiliar surroundings impressions of value are made. Sometimes it is the thing which has become common-place and of little interest that impresses the visitor, and mention of it by him awakens a deeper appreciation in the heart of the one who is accustomed to it. On the other hand, something which has too long been tolerated might be quickly remedied if it were brought to the attention by a kindly remark from the one whose vision was quickened through unfamiliarity.

A visitor's impression of a church service is not to be despised for usually he is alert and responsive. One visitor's remembrance of a lovely little church is somewhat marred by the fact that the swinging doors were unprotected by felt and the bang and clang which proclaimed the entrance of those who were assembling for worship cannot be forgotten, although the service and the fellowship were greatly enjoyed.

Another church beautifully situated and having an atmosphere which proclaimed a welcome to all has given one the impression of instability through the spindly pulpit chairs that verily fascinate one and encourage the imagination to run riot in anticipating what would happen if a heavy man should sit thereon.

And what is one's impression after visiting that extravagant and much talked of place known as Fosdick's Church, New York City? There are no clanging doors there; there are no weak-looking chairs. Everything is in order and there is nothing to offend the eye, indeed everything can be admired from the standpoint of beauty and harmony. The lights are soft and effective, the seats are comfortable and well placed, but what an emptiness there is. It can be felt; there is the chill of death and to one who knows the Living Christ, the place is like a great tomb. The imagery may be beautiful and proclaim the artists' skill, but it proclaims nothing of the message needed by sinful man, or of "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son that cleanseth us from all sin".

What a contrast to enter a church where the gospel has been preached throughout a period of more than fifty years and within whose walls from week to week many find salvation. What was a visitor's impression of the evening service of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, on Sunday evening, August 9th? On entering the church at seven o'clock, it was learned that to find a seat one must either go to the gallery or the very front of the church. A rough estimate would be that there were more than a thousand people gathered on an August evening to worship the Lord and hear the message of His servant, Dr. T. T. Shields, Pastor

of the Church. There was no impression of deadness, the visitor was at home, fellowshiping with those who believed. The sultry evening and the fact that one was rather uncomfortably crowded did not seem to matter. Then, as with one voice, the prayer of the assembled people seemed to rise—

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;  
Bread of Heaven

Feed me till I want no more."  
The Holy Spirit's presence was manifest and it was not surprising to witness men and women responding to the invitation, thereby expressing their desire to accept the provision made for them in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## ALBERTA.

Last week a short report was given covering the Convention meeting of the Regular Baptist Missionary Society of Alberta and we are now quoting other excerpts which show the progress of the work.

### Over 200 Souls Won.

"The exact figures are not before us at the time of writing, but in gleaning over the reports we are safe in stating that over 200 souls have confessed Christ through the ministry of the churches and missions in fellowship with us. Of these converts we are able to report

### Over 80 Baptisms.

The three churches in this fellowship have had the joy of baptizing over 80 candidates, which is not a bad start for a new work. The total membership of the churches in this Society a year ago was just around 150, whereas today it is over 290, an increase of over 140 in the year. Do you know of any Provincial Convention that has had a larger percentage of increase in the past year?"

### Crossfield.

"As yet we have not been able to locate a pastor permanently at Crossfield, but we hope to do so in the near future. Last Sunday 13 candidates came in to Westbourne for baptism, and next Sunday we expect 14 more for baptism. Making 27 in all from Crossfield to be baptized. Since our short series of meetings there in May, we have been giving a Monday evening service each week and great has been our joy in seeing the moving of the Spirit in the midst. Crossfield is a small town, but it lies in the center of a great rural field, and affords a good center to evangelize from. Other places near by are urging us to come in and give them services. Unless more funds are available it will be necessary for the Society to withdraw from one of the fields being pioneered to enable us to keep up this needy field, which must be worked at once.

"Calls come to us almost every week from small towns and rural fields, inviting us to come into their midst and give them services. So far we have only gone

to points where there was some likelihood of following up with a permanent work. Alberta is a Province wide open for the gospel, and the response one sees when the Gospel is preached leads us to believe that the harvest for souls is fully ripe."

Rev. Morley R. Hall, so well known in Ontario, is chairman of the fellowship known as the Regular Baptist Missionary Society of Alberta. Several of the graduates of the Toronto Baptist Seminary and young men who have received their training there feel the call to the West and the interest which the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec has in Alberta is an ever growing one.

It may be said, to dissipate any question that may arise in the minds of readers, that the Executive Board of the Union fully support Mr. Hall and his great missionary program for Alberta. Mr. Hall enjoys their confidence and he is with them and with the policy of the Union wholeheartedly.

## CALVIN CHURCH, TORONTO.

The history of Calvin Baptist Church, Toronto, 281 Jones Avenue, can be traced with interest. Some four years ago, Mr. Frank Roblin, the present Pastor, had laid upon his heart the need of the community and in faith rented a hall in which the Gospel could be preached. With a helper, Mr. Roblin canvassed the district and personally invited people to the Mission. At the end of a year a church was organized with twelve charter members. Since that date many of the original members have moved away, but the work goes on and is being blessed of the Lord. From time to time baptismal services have been held in the Waverley Road Baptist Church and this summer record attendances are being maintained. Our last report is to the effect that on Sunday, August 2nd, when many churches saw their attendance reduced to a minimum, there were present at the morning Bible School one hundred.

The prayer meetings are well attended although it is necessary for them to be held in the homes as there are no facilities for week night meetings provided through the hall in which the Sunday services are held.

Calvin Church will soon need a larger place and a more permanent home. May this be brought to pass shortly. Recently two confessed Christ and these are awaiting baptism. Several others have made profession of faith while backsliders are being restored and the work of instructing the saints and pointing sinners to the Cross is being blessed.

## TIMMINS.

Mr. E. C. Wood who has been serving Truth Regular Baptist Church, Mount Dennis, for the past year, has begun his ministry at First Baptist Church, Timmins, and expects to serve there until the Pastor, Mr. H. C. Slade, is able to

return to his field of labor at the end of September. Of Mr. Wood, Mr. Slade writes:

"I am writing you at this time to let you know that we are extremely pleased because of the way God has led in the sending of Mr. Wood to the Timmins Church. When I first wrote to you about sending a man, I wondered if it would be possible for us to get Mr. Wood, but as I knew that he was engaged in the Mount Dennis work, I did not dare to ask for him, but God has given him to us after all. "Mr. Wood arrived on Saturday evening. Sunday was a day of real blessing. Mr. Wood brought a message from Isaiah 43: 1 and 2, in the morning, and in the evening I had the privilege of preaching. The church was well filled and although we saw no visible results, we verily believe that many were spoken to by the Spirit of God.

"The people have already fallen in love with Brother Wood and they are grateful to the Mount Dennis friends for their willingness to sacrifice at this time on our behalf."

Pastor Slade wishes to thank all those who are praying for his recovery in health and expresses his deepest appreciation of their interest.

#### FORT WILLIAM.

It will be a joy to many to hear that Mrs. Watts, wife of the Pastor of the Fundamentalist Baptist Tabernacle, Fort William, is much improved in health. Mrs. Watts has been ill for many months and it will indeed be a day of rejoicing when she can again take her place in the church.

In spite of the heavy home duties falling on Rev. G. F. Watts because of Mrs. Watts' illness, he has managed to do considerable visitation and the Lord has given him the joy of pointing needy ones to Christ. One fine young married couple were converted. The wife has been praying for three years, even though unsaved, to be delivered from Russellism. She is now a bright Christian and has followed the Lord's command with regard to baptism. Her husband also would have been baptized had he not had to leave for work in the far north before the baptistery could be gotten ready. Two other young women, mothers, have been led to Christ. One of them will follow the Lord in baptism at a later date. The other is not quite clear about it yet, but Mr. Watts trusts that she will shortly see that it is a matter of obedience and privilege. The husband of the woman mentioned previously will be baptized at the earliest opportunity when he returns for a visit.

We are sure that a reminder is not needed that the work at Fort William may be definitely remembered in prayer, as will Mr. and Mrs. Watt and their family as they labor there.

#### HESPELER.

Rev. A. C. Whitcombe of Orangeville supplied the Hespeler Baptist Church last Lord's Day. The Orangeville Church was served by its young men, volunteers for definite Christian service in whatever field the Lord opens to them,

#### CANNINGTON and SUNDERLAND.

The following letter has been received from Pastor Robert Brackstone:

"Praise the excellent Saviour for His manifest power.

"Last week at Sunderland about twenty-five raised their hands signifying loyalty and dedication to their Lord.

"A young man was baptized in the evening at Cannington and the meaning of the ordinance and the joy of obedience was impressed upon many. Last Lord's day at Cannington a young woman responded to the invitation expressing her desire for eternal life in Christ Jesus.

"Many strangers are attending the services and showing a deep interest in the glorious Gospel."

#### GUELPH.

Pastor Howard H. Chipchase is happy in the work at Guelph. The Lord has given his people much encouragement during the past few weeks and strangers are coming to the services. There is, however, a very definite need for prayer and the fellowship of the other churches of the Union is asked.

#### COURTRIGHT.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Courtright Baptist Church has severed its relationship as an auxiliary of the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada and has reorganized as a Society of the Church. Action was taken after hearing the reports from the Convention held in June.

#### MISSIONARY NEWS.

Many are finding the items of interest reported in the "Missionary Bulletin" of real value and are using them, together with the articles appearing in the "Union Baptist Witness", as material for their Missionary programs and Prayer Meeting reports. Bible School classes are remembering the causes and special needs in prayer, as well as groups of Young People and Missionary Societies. The July-August issue of the Bulletin is exhausted but what a joy it is to see the interest growing and have requests come in for copies for distribution.

Friends are urged to make as much use as possible of the Bulletin and send in reports. News of conversions and blessing in the churches will glorify the Lord and to Him we will ascribe all the glory.

#### MT. PLEASANT, TORONTO.

In the absence of the Pastor, Rev. Alex Thomson, the services at Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, Toronto, were taken on Sunday, August 9th, by Rev. W. E. Atkinson, Secretary of the Union. Mr. Atkinson is always welcomed at Mount Pleasant, and although last Sunday many were away on vacation, there were good congregations at both morning and evening services and the presence of the Lord was manifest. The friends at Mount Pleasant are most appreciative of Mr. Atkinson's ministry and express themselves as delighted with last Lord's day services. The messages of the day were powerful and inspiring and the occasional reference made to experiences in Africa and the difficulties of the work there were enlightening and opened up a new understanding of missionary's trials. Many expressed them-

selves as feeling that the day was one rich in blessing and that Mr. Atkinson's coming meant much to the Church.

#### OPEN-AIR WORK.

The Open-Air meetings conducted by members of the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, Toronto, are more encouraging this summer than ever before. Those coming from the Jarvis Street Church each week greatly assist the workers. People are attracted and listen intently while the Gospel is being given forth in no uncertain way by those who preach in the power of the Spirit. Pray that there may be real evidence of the Lord's blessing in the salvation of souls.

#### MICHIGAN NOTES.

##### Grand Rapids.

Wealthy Street Church held a one-day Bible Conference recently, at which Pastor Harvey F. Morrison, of Hazel Park was the principal speaker. Lake Drive Church, at East Grand Rapids, held a three days' conference recently. Dr. T. Austin Sparks, of London, England, conducted this conference. Pastor Wm. Headley, of Calvary Church, is vacationing at Gull Lake.

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Berean Church, Grand Rapids, has been holding tent meetings at a point one mile north of the church during the month of July. A mission Bible school has been conducted there for several years. Because of the nature of tent meetings that had been conducted there by Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists, a prejudice has been created against this form of evangelism. The business men there even attempted to have the permit to hold the meetings revoked. Since they have seen the nature of the services their opposition has ceased, and some of them are attending the services. Different churches in Grand Rapids have assisted in the campaign. Pastor C. E. Wood has recently baptized five into the fellowship of the church, received one on letter, and three on experience.

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In October, 1894, the Holland Baptist Church was organized in Grand Rapids. They called Bro. D. Laansma as pastor, and they liked him so well that they have kept him all the thirty-seven years of their history. He is still going strong. The work, as in the case of practically all foreign-speaking churches, is rapidly becoming all English. The Sunday morning services are conducted alternately in Holland and English. The afternoon service is always Holland, and the evening service English. In addition to conducting all the services at his own church, Bro. Laansma conducts a mission at Grand Haven, Michigan, one at South Holland, Illinois, and one at Roseland, Illinois. He visits these missions once every four weeks, and gives four days to this trip. Pastor Laansma has baptized three in Grand Rapids and seven in Chicago this year. He is a thorough-going Calvinistic Baptist, and is an earnest contender for the faith once delivered to the saints. The church is actively missionary, and its missionary activities are many and varied. The Bible school, superintended by John D. Laansma, son of the pastor, and the B.Y.P.U. are both thriving.