

The Gospel Witness

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

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"I Partly Believe It."

However familiar one may have become with a particular portion of Scripture there is always some new lesson to be learned therefrom. The Word of God, like His works, is manifold. It is like the tree of life which yieldeth its fruit every month. One will never find, when turning to the Word of God, that it is like the fig tree which had nothing but leaves. It continually yieldeth its fruit.

Most of our readers have had experience of this principle. We have committed a certain passage to memory, and have made ourselves as familiar with the letter of it as with our own name. And yet, under the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, turning even to such a passage, one is often astonished to discover something which had before escaped observation.

On the morning of July third Rev. W. Gordon Brown, who was assisting the Editor in the service, read, at our request, a part of the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians in preparation for the Communion Service which was to follow. The lesson, as is our custom Sunday mornings, was read responsively. As we came to the eighteenth and nineteenth verses, the truth contained therein, although we had read it hundreds of times, declared itself to our spiritual consciousness as with the sound of a trumpet. We wondered that those verses had never struck us with such force before. Here they are:

"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

We were reminded once again that there is no new thing under the sun. It is assumed, in some quarters, that when conditions are as they should be—and may be—in the church, that the life of the church will flow as "gently" as "sweet Afton"; and if there should be even a ripple upon the surface, it is never attributed to the effect of a wind that bloweth where it listeth, nor yet to the work of one who throws a rock into a pond. Invariably it is assumed that it is the fault of the captain of the ship. It is amazing that anyone having any familiarity with the New Testament, or with the Old either, should even suppose that the life of a servant of God, as an individual, or of

any company of such servants collectively considered, should long be without storm and stress in a world as antagonistic to the things of God as this world manifestly is.

If we liken the church to a ship, and read the first report of its voyage given in the Acts of the Aposles, we shall readily see that it sailed nearly always through the storm. And if we study the epistles which so accurately reflect the inner life of the churches we shall find there was almost as much trouble within the church as there was without. It is therefore not surprising if similar experiences befall believers of our day.

There are, of course, churches and denominations which seem to drift with the tide, and which are seldom reported as places of conflict. The Laodicean spirit which complacently boasts that it is rich and increased in goods, and has need of nothing, is scarcely likely to be troubled.

In a certain theological seminary in the United States, belonging to a denomination which we refrain from naming, a student asked one of his professors why there were never any splits in their denomination. To this the experienced and discerning professor replied, "Splits? Why, you cannot split punk!"

There is usually a profounder peace in a cemetery than can be found anywhere else. Everything was quiet and peaceful in the valley of dry bones until Ezekiel began to preach; but his preaching was soon followed by a "noise" and a "shaking".

We neither advocate nor defend a spirit of contentiousness; but there must be loyalty to principle at all costs. Only this morning we observed a paragraph in a newspaper remarking on the uselessness of religious strife. We agree that no one should strive for the sake of striving. The guiding principle of every Christian's life should be, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." But there are times and circumstances when peace can be maintained only at the cost of principle.

During the Great War the Allied nations and the United States of America became one in believing there were some things in life worth fighting for, and that some values of life could be retained only at the price of blood.

No one objects to contention in the political realm, when opponents contend with each other—all of them, it may be assumed, from pure motives, and with a desire to promote the best interests of the commonwealth. In the same way, religious contention, or contention over religious matters, is justifiable only when men stand for that which they most firmly believe.

The Apostle Paul had received a report from Corinth. Apparently it was not very definite. But a report, or perhaps only a rumour, had reached him that there were divisions in the Corinthian church, and he said that he partly believed it.

There is a recognized principle in mathematics known as *probability* which is, as defined in the dictionary, "the ratio of the chances favouring an event to the total number of chances for and against it." The illustration cited of that principle in the Standard dictionary is as follows: "Were five black and ten white beans thrown into a box, the probability that a white bean would be touched first by a blindfolded person would be ten-fifteenth or two-thirds, while the probability against this event and in favour of the touching of a black bean first would be five-fifteenth or one-third."

This is most suggestive. A similar principle operates in the spiritual realm; and, by the application of that principle, the apostle said he "partly believed" the report which had reached him about divisions in the Corinthian church. He believed it because divisions of some sort, at some time, were not only probable but inevitable. Hence he says, "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

But "heresies", in this case, does not mean erroneous opinions. The divisions were not in respect to doctrinal matters. By "sects" or "heresies" he means party factions. And Paul said that such things "must be" in order that those who are approved, those who could stand the test, those who were essentially, in their very nature, genuine, might be "made manifest".

Thinking this over, we were again impressed with the naturalness of it all. Any house that is to be of an enduring character must be built on the principle of selection. When the excavation is made, everything not necessary to the building is removed. When the stones are put into the foundation they are carefully selected for their fitness, and some are rejected. When the man mixes the mortar he first of all carefully screens his sand and slacks his lime, and throws away that which will not mix. When the carpenter begins his work he selects the soundest lumber, and cuts out a knot here and there. When the building is finished, if it is a good building, it is composed of selected material; and roundabout the building there are all kinds of splinters, and slivers, and rejected material, that were not fit to go into the building.

That principle obtains in the formation of any political party. Many enroll in the beginning: relatively few continue to the end. If one could number the passengers boarding a great train setting out on a transcontinental journey by the principle of probability, if he were sufficiently skilled in its use, without an examination of the tickets one might, almost at the beginning, determine how many of the passengers would stay on the train to the end.

Coming back from California on one occasion we found ourselves one of many passengers on a pullman car, nearly every berth being occupied. By the time we reached Chicago there were only two, an Italian and this Editor.

A little while before we reached Chicago our Italian fellow-passenger said, "Privata car, eh?"

Every man who sets out upon a great task involving loyalty to principle and great sacrifice is likely to arrive at his destination in a "privata car". Certainly he will not have much company.

Let pastors and other Christian leaders take heart. When He Who is our Saviour and Lord reached the end of His earthly journey at the place called Calvary He was alone, for "all his disciples forsook him and fled". The Apostle Paul was one of the loneliest of men. Once he said, "Only Luke is with me." On another occasion he wrote, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Again he said, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

When the Baptist Bible Union was launched its membership increased by many hundreds per week, until it rolled up into the thousands; and of those who joined hundreds were ministers. A month or so after their enrolment many wrote in to headquarters to know whether the Baptist Bible Union could arrange for them to conduct evangelistic services, or could secure them a pastorate, or effect a change of pastorate. They wanted to get from under the "machine" of the Convention to which they belonged. But when the Baptist Bible Union failed to secure them employment, or to assist them in bettering their positions, informing them that it was not organized for that purpose, but to bear witness to the truth of the gospel, many of them from time to time wrote bitter letters, saying, "Take my name off your roll." And those who wanted to escape from the machine of their respective Conventions cursed the Bible Union because it refused to become a machine.

Let us thank God, and take courage. In the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, those who are "approved", those who can stand the test, those who have taken the positions they have taken solely with a view to maintaining a testimony to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, are being "made manifest". Others have dropped out, and still others may from time to time drop out. Thus we are coming to understand John's saying, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

Therefore, cheerio! On with the building, everybody! Hand us that brick—no; not to throw at anybody, but to build into the wall.

A FINAL RULING.

For All Churches and All Persons.

From *The British Weekly*

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."—Philippians iii, 15, 16.

A text separated from its context is a pretext, and may be a delicate method of untruth.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." We need only to read back a little or forward a little to assure ourselves that, though the Apostle uses the word "perfect" in reference to himself and certain

(Continued on page 8)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE FINALITY OF THE GOSPEL.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 10th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported)

Broadcast over CFRB 690 k.c.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown.

Because Thou, O Lord, hast drawn us to Thyself therefore have we come to Thee. Thou hast first loved us; so do we love Thee. We thank Thee to-night, O God, for all the voices that have called us to Thee: the hallowedness of home and the family altar, friends who have found satisfaction in Thee, the faithful ministry of Thy Word, the Book itself with its message of grace and life, and through these things—and above and beyond them—Thy Spirit Himself: for these holy influences, O Lord, receive our thanks.

Since Thou hast lifted us on angel wings and borne us to Thyself, we pray Thee to bind us to Thyself. Put about us the strong cords of Thy love so that we may never wander from Thee, but may find our wills in Thine. Be Thou our dwelling place in all generations, Thou eternal God. We would be Thy willing servants. We would recognize no higher duty, and know no greater joy, than the doing of Thy will. The world and its delights pass away, but he who doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Thus would we abide in Thee, and abide for ever.

But we would be more than servants: we would be what the Master called the eleven, friends of His. Help us so to love Him, so to serve Him, so to live in fellowship with Him, that like Abraham of old, we may be called the friends of God in this present life, and, if Thou shouldst tarry, be received into everlasting blessedness there to enjoy Thee for ever.

We pray for those who are not in this circle of fellowship, for the other sheep which are not of this fold. Them also Thou must bring. Seek them out, Thou great Searcher after souls. Seek them in this place, and in remote places where the gospel message from this pulpit shall reach this evening. Seek them in the wilderness of their own wilfulness, caught in the thicket of their own sin; and bring them into Thy fellowship that there may be one fold and one Shepherd.

Make this to us all a night of salvation: shelter us all under the precious blood. This we pray for Thy name's sake, Amen.

It is quite generally contended in our day that the gospel as proclaimed by the Apostle Paul, and as preached and believed by countless multitudes since his day, is not suited to the requirements of our modern life, that the gospel must be changed, modified in some way, and improved upon. We are told by some that we need another interpretation of Christ than that which is given to us in the writings of the Apostle Paul.

It is no new thing for men to depart from the gospel. There have always been found those who troubled the saints of God. It was so in Paul's day. Even those who enjoyed the high privilege of his personal ministry were not wholly immune to attacks from without—nor were they exempt from the temptations which come from within. Paul wrote to these Galatian Christians because there were some who were "troubling" them, by perverting the gospel of Christ, and seeking to turn them aside to "another gospel," which, he said, was "not another".

The garden of the Lord is very much like any other garden in this respect that everything that grows in it has its natural enemies. There is a parasite for every plant, a blight for every bloom; and the gardener must

always be on the alert to protect his plants and his flowers from the enemies which would destroy alike their beauty and their fruitfulness. Even the plants which our heavenly Father hath planted in the garden of the Lord are subject to attacks from those who would trouble the saints of God. Ever does the devil sow tares among the wheat. Therefore is it necessary continually to remind God's people of first principles, and over and over again to proclaim the things which must surely be believed.

I.

I begin my exposition this evening with the remark that here this inspired apostle AFFIRMS THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S GOSPEL. It is not a temporary revelation. It is not, like the law, to serve for a time and then pass away. It is a word that is to abide, that is final: it is God's last word to men.

You will observe *there are some who pervert the gospel*. They do not wholly deny it. Those who troubled the Galatian Christians did not deny the gospel: they proposed to add something to it. They taught that even those who had believed in Christ, and had received salvation from Him, must also keep the law of Moses. Paul here speaks of that as a perversion of the gospel.

There are comparatively few who are so bold as wholly to deny the authority of the Christian revelation. There are not many who would go so far as utterly to repudiate Christ, and all that is associated with Him. Not thus does the devil destroy the testimony of the gospel. He is content rather to pervert it, to dilute it, to modify it, to mix his poison with it, so that only those who have special spiritual discernment are able to distinguish between the precious and the vile. But here is one—and surely it is refreshing in these days to be able to company with such a man—here is a man who is certain that the last word has been spoken, that the gospel is the last word. So sure is he of its finality that he admonishes those to whom he writes to give no heed to anyone who should preach another gospel than this.

There are people who are afraid to be dogmatic. They are afraid to affirm that two and two make four. They are afraid to affirm their belief in the authority of the Bible, in the efficacy of the blood of Christ, in the finality of the Christian revelation. If you ask them a question they will say, "Of course, that will largely depend upon the content of the terms you employ." If you ask them if they believe in evolution, they will answer, "That, of course, depends upon what you understand by 'evolution'." When asked whether they believe in the inspiration of the Bible, they reply, "That, of course, will depend upon what you mean by inspiration." You can never get "yes"

or "no" from them on any subject. They are so diplomatic that they seem never to know their own minds.

What a relief to find one who believes a word has been said that cannot be amended, that cannot be annulled; and who admonishes us that if anyone comes to us with a message that is contrary thereto to refuse to give him ear!

He goes farther than that and says, "Though . . . an angel preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, give no credence to his message." He names *not men only, but the highest order of being next to Deity Himself*. He says that even if an angel could, by any means, contradict the gospel of Christ, we should refuse to receive his message.

How we are troubled sometimes by great names! How often have I heard men of distinction in various realms of thought quoted as being in opposition to the gospel,—men of vast learning allegedly, men who speak with authority on many subjects, but who have undertaken to set us right in respect to that which is revealed in this Book! What does our text mean but to admonish us that we are to listen to no professor, to no doctor of philosophy, or of divinity, to no man of science, to no human creature—nor to any spiritual intelligence, even an angel himself, if his testimony is not in agreement with this Word.

Do not be afraid of being called narrow and fanatical. Hold fast to the truth which is in Christ in spite of all gainsayers.

I think it is not without significance that the apostle speaks of an angel *as coming from heaven*. You may read in the paper that The Reverend Doctor So-and-So, from somewhere of importance, is going to preach in a certain pulpit. In the announcement you are told that he is a graduate of this university, and the other university, and that he has written many learned books—they do not tell you how many people read them. But he is a very clever man, and therefore when you go to hear such an erudite gentleman you are expected to accept without question whatever he may say.

Paul anticipates all that kind of nonsense, for he virtually says that though an angel should come from heaven—and I think they know a few things up yonder—though an angel from heaven should say anything contrary to this gospel, we are to refuse to believe it; for Paul's word, spoken by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is God's last word.

And lest there should be any mistake about it Paul says *he has no right to amend the gospel himself*. How many men spend their later years writing books to oppose their first utterances! How many there are who are preaching the tenets of Modernism to-day who were out-and-out evangelicals twenty years ago! Of a book the man wrote twenty-five years ago you say, "That is sound to the core." But read his book just off the press and you will discover that he denies nearly everything he wrote in the first. The Apostle admonishes the Galatians, saying that should he for any reason at all bring them any other message than that which he had already delivered to them in the name of the Lord, they must refuse to believe what even he might say; for he insists that neither man nor angel may alter the divine ultimatum already delivered; that no possible combination of circumstances, nor new light from any quarter, can invalidate the gospel which he has preached.

What a tremendous claim is here made! Surely language could not more clearly express an assertion of

divine inspiration and authority, and therefore of absolute finality.

Do you not think that men who preach the gospel thus delivered to the saints should be dogmatic? Ought they not to be as ambassadors, delivering the message of the King? And, in doing so, declare that they have no right to change a jot or tittle of that which is written?

But to make the matter surer still, this inspired apostle pronounces a curse upon any man or angel, and even upon himself, should he dare to alter the gospel committed to the saints. Is that not strong language? "Let him be accursed." He repeats it: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Observe, not only if any man, but if any man or angel, no matter who he is who should dare to change the revelation of God in Christ, "let him be accursed."

That would be considered a very unbrotherly thing to say now. Were we to speak after that fashion in modern assemblies we should be almost voted out of the fellowship of men who are called intellectually progressive. Well, so be it. We accept the verdict and our fate; for we are determined to abide by the gospel of the grace of God. For mark you, if the gospel deals with matters of such grave importance as the eternal destiny of the soul, then surely we ought to insist that the word delivered from heaven shall be allowed to stand, and that any man who will change that testimony must incur the condemnation of Heaven.

I was about three hundred miles east, the other side of Ottawa, last week, and as we were motoring home we lost our way. It was a foolish thing to do, I know, but we did. We asked the traffic officer to direct us—and he misdirected us. But when we found we were on the wrong road we turned right-about-face and went in the other direction. You must not assume that because a man wears a clerical garb he can tell you the way to heaven. Many men thus arrayed have no qualification whatever to direct you. You and they must come to that which is written, to this divinely-authoritative guide-book, and abide by the testimony of God's Word.

II.

Further, THE APOSTLE PAUL ASSIGNS CERTAIN REASONS FOR THE AFFIRMATION OF THE FINALITY OF THE GOSPEL. Let no one suppose that faith puts a premium upon ignorance. It does not. Faith is the issue of a spiritual intelligence. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" They must hear and understand; for only as men hear and understand can they believe. God gave us intelligence. He made us above the brute creation. He Himself said, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." God never intended that men should be driven with bit and bridle, that they should act without intelligence, that they should be mere puppets, blindly obeying another's will. The gospel does not impose even a divine command upon the will of men without assigning a reason for its being obeyed. The true believer is a truly intelligent man. Faith is born, not of ignorance, but of full knowledge. We believe because we know whom we have believed. I believe a man when by some means I have come to know him, when I have proved his trustworthiness. So does the believer receive the gospel, because it is eminently—yes, pre-eminently—reasonable.

A man does not stultify his intellect, or subject any function of the mind to any sort of humiliation, or expose it to the danger of becoming atrophied by submitting it to belief in the Word of God, to an acceptance of divine revelation.

We are not asked to accept a book that has been dug up from the earth, or dropped from heaven by a parachute. It is clearly understood that the Bible is a human book in so far as its writing is concerned. It is said of the Old Testament that it was written by men of flesh and blood: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And that is equally true of the New Testament: it was not written by angels; it was not written in heaven; it was written upon earth. We are not asked to accept something wrapped up in a package, and presented to us as coming from nobody knows where.

Paul did not ask the Galatian Christians to bow to the gospel on any such terms as that. Nor are you asked to believe the gospel simply because it is called the gospel, while setting aside our reasoning powers.

Let us see why Paul insists that the gospel is final. Hear what he says: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached to me is not after man." That is to say, *the unique character of the message, the fact that there is nothing like it anywhere, that it sets before men standards to which natural men are strangers, that it introduces principles that do not belong to the realm of human thought, stamps it as being of divine origin!* Saith Paul, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man." It is not after man in principle; it is not an indigene; it is not a product of the earth. It is a religious exotic; it comes from some other world than ours. Examine it, consider its incomparable qualities, that it is unique; and ask yourself the question, "Whence cometh it?"

We may apply that principle to the gospel, and to this inspired Book. Why is it that the Bible, at this day, is the best seller in all the world? Why is it that no man or company of men has ever been able to produce another such immortal book, and that may be translated into hundreds of different languages without loss of interest or power? Why does the Bible still retain its power, its unique authority over the lives of men?

I confess, I believe this gospel because I know that it is not after man. When the critics can produce something like it; when they can agree among themselves for even twelve months together; when they can pool all their intellectual resources and produce a composite comparable in unity and indestructibility to the Pentateuch which they say was produced by many minds, when they produce a book of such manifest immortality, which can generate such a moral and spiritual dynamic, their opinion will be entitled to some respect. But until that time we must say of this Book, and the gospel it contains, that it is not after man: there is nothing like it.

Observe too: "I neither received it of man." This apostle *received the gospel through no human intermediary.* He declares—and you must either accept what he says for what it is worth, as a statement of truth, or reject it utterly; there is no half-way course—he declares that he received the gospel "by the revelation of Jesus Christ". He tells us that he received this, not from man; and he explains in this chapter that there were great apostles who were in the faith before him, Peter, James, John, and others, but that he kept out of their way: "I conferred not with flesh and blood. . . . Neither went I up to Jerusalem to

them which were apostles before me." Paul declares that he received his message from Heaven itself, and not from any man. That is how the gospel came, the New Testament as well as the Old. The writers of the Old Testament are said to have spoken as "they were moved by the Holy Ghost", and this New Testament writer claims for his gospel a full divine inspiration. He says he did not receive it from man.

"Neither was I taught it." I think he means by that, not merely that he did not have a human teacher, but that it did not grow out of the experiences of life. Sometimes we say, "Experience is the best teacher." There are people who could not learn anything at school, who have learned much since they left school. Paul says he was not taught it. It is as though he said, "This gospel which I proclaim is not the product of any other man's thinking, —nor of my own. It has not been born out of my own experience; nor have I learned it from the circumstances of life, nor from the testimony of history."

How did it come? "By the revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul declares that Jesus of Nazareth is not dead but alive, for a dead man could communicate nothing. Jesus Christ had died long before, but He was raised again; and He communicated with Paul, and communicated Himself to Paul. Hence the apostle declares that all that he has written he received as a special revelation from the risen and enthroned Saviour, communicated to him from heaven. Knowing that Jesus Christ is God, that "by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist", he knew that God could never change His mind, hence he was assured that his gospel was the final gospel: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Surely no stronger claim to absolute, divine, authority could possibly be made than that which the Apostle Paul makes in behalf of that which he himself had written. He declares himself to have been in some way an amanuensis—not in any way suggesting that divine Intelligence had superimposed His thought upon him, but that in perfect harmony with the exercise of his own mental powers the Holy Ghost had so filled and flooded him, and had so illumined his understanding, that he was enabled, as God's mouthpiece, to receive and record a revelation of the heart of God to a sinful world. Let us abide by this gospel!

III.

A word or two more—for the most important part of a sermon, as I have so often said to you, is its application. There are many sermons which may have truth enough in them to save the soul, but they are hung up before their hearers as pictures in an art-gallery, as though the preacher said, "There they are. Look at them. Take it or leave it, as you like." Nathan preached most acceptably to David in the form of a parable. David was ready to make application of it to somebody else—but the prophetic preacher pointed to him and said, "Thou art the man." The sermon was very good, but it was the application that brought David to repentance. So must we ever be careful, not only to express the truth of God, not only clearly to apprehend the content of the word of

Part of Jarvis St. Sunday School at the Ann



The above cut reproduces a photograph of a part of the crowd attending Jarvis Street annual picnic. It is always were at the picnic did not get into the picture. Very few of the large staff of Teachers and Officers staff assembled and "looked pretty" at the camera man's request, but the photographer later did. One half the entire Transportation building from end to end was required to seat the company.

God; but we are to "receive the truth in the love of it", and make application of it to ourselves.

I say that Paul here implicitly assigns A FURTHER REASON still for the finality of the gospel, and it is that it proves itself to be indispensable to the human soul. In effect he says, "You know what I was, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. You know that I persecuted the church of God. You know that on natural grounds my mind had no affinity for the gospel, for I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. I was biased against the gospel. I was set against its precepts and principles. There was no agreement within with the truth thus revealed from without. Yet it entered my life; it effected a radical change; it changed my nature; it revolutionized my whole intellectual outlook; it affected all the relationships of life; it gave life a new direction, a new purpose, a new aim, so that I became an entirely different man, and the churches said, "That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me."

In effect Paul says, "I am myself an example of the radical change which the gospel will make—must make—in the life of any man who receives it. It turns him right-about-face, upside-down, inside-out, and makes him a new creature; makes all of life new to him. Who but God," he argued, "could do that?"

Consider that for a moment. We are not to understand that the gospel is delivered to us as something that requires no exercise of mind on our part. It is not given to us as a bottle of medicine with directions on the outside telling us how to take it. It is not presented to us as something wrapped up in a parcel on which is written, "Take it and ask no questions." Let it be for ever settled in your minds, God does not require us to submit to

an anonymous message. When He sent Moses to Pharaoh He signed His name to the ultimatum. He always stamps His word with a signature which neither men nor demons can counterfeit.

What is the gospel? Paul here defines the gospel as "the grace of Christ". That is a wonderfully significant phrase. The gospel communicates the grace of Christ, and that grace of Christ is indispensable to your spiritual life. By the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the gospel believers are "made partakers of the divine nature". We must have "the grace of Christ" in the gospel in order to live. I know critics say that our minds are "static", that we do not think, that we do not reason, —that we are rather stupid, in fact, and of course utterly uneducated—because we do not accept the vagaries of their so-called scholarship. Not at all! True scholarship is never at variance with fact. I venture to say that some of us have read as much as our critics, and have thought and reasoned much more. If we reject their conclusions it is not because we are ignorant of their premises, but because we know them so well as to be convinced of their fallacy.

I was once a little nervous in the face of the attacks of these vain-glorious boasters of their own invincibility; but the more I know of their unbelieving philosophy the more convinced I am of its superficiality and essential untruth, and that the gospel brings every power of the human intellect into exercise; and the citadel of the heart, which includes all the powers of intellect, and affections, and will, is surrendered only when an enlightened intelligence recognizes the Besieger as the rightful Sovereign of the soul. The gospel requires a man, in order to its acceptance, to become a whole man; for it is the gospel that makes the man who receives it to become a whole man. The Lord Jesus Christ announced His programme

Annual Picnic, Exhibition Park, Toronto, July 6th.



difficult to get so large a company together for a photograph, and hundreds of others, particularly adults, who appear in the photograph for they were to be photographed separately. This was done, at least the one who discovered that he had no plate in his camera. But even the company shown above is a large family. We wish all our readers could have seen our happy Sunday school family.

when He said to the man at Bethesda's pool, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The gospel does not stultify a man's mind: it calls into exercise every power of his God-breathed being, and makes him to grow up into Christ in all things.

We may find *some analogies to the principles here enunciated and implied in the physical world about us.* Of course, I know we have progressed in material matters beyond our fathers; and people who think but superficially persuade themselves that we live in a different world. I may be speaking to someone a thousand miles removed from where I stand this evening, and, perhaps, if the man has not thought deeply on these subjects, he may say, "Mr. Preacher, you are yourself at this very moment a contradiction of the things you preach. Of course, the world is different. Paul could not have preached to people a thousand miles away, as some are hearing you to-night." On that point we need not argue. We admit your contention: the world is different, as I think I can show you.

Consider some of *the simplest elements of life, water, for example.* The beasts of the field drink it, and live thereby, though they have no power chemically to analyse its content. I suppose the majority of people who use water every day they live—and I expect we ought to use more of it—could not tell you of what it is composed. They could not analyse it; they never saw the inside of a chemical laboratory—but that does not prevent the weary traveller from stooping down to a brook and refreshing himself thereby.

Men, from the beginning, have used water for the maintenance of life. They have used it for purposes of cleansing. They have used it to carry their burdens. "There go the ships" borne upon the bosom of this fundamental element, without which nothing could live any-

where. Yes; we have water—what then? If you lived to be ten times the age of Methuselah I have little doubt you could find some new use for water every day.

I do not know how much the ancients knew about the science of hydraulics. Perhaps more than we suppose. But what did they know about the indirect uses of water power? Doubtless if anyone had said, even seventy-five years ago, that the day would come when water would be used for lighting purposes, some wise scientist would have said, "Nonsense! Water will not burn. You cannot make a lamp that will use water instead of oil." But this church is lighted by water. The electricity is generated by water. The water was in the world ages and ages before men knew how to use it. They drank it, swam in it, moved upon the face of it; but they did not know for a long, long time that water could be used to produce light.

We have heard the music of the brooks in the woods, but our organ is driven indirectly by water. There is no water in the basement, but there is yonder at Niagara. Its mighty thunders whisper in the sweet strains of this organ under Mr. Penney's fingers. Who would have believed that you could send water on a wire hundreds of miles? Our forefathers would have said, "You are beside yourself. You must put water in a pipe." It is the same water, but its power is communicated by wire. Water was once used only to extinguish fire: now it is used as well to kindle it!

I have not heard of any physician in Toronto telling his patient, that if he wants to live he must see that water is eliminated from his diet; that he must not drink it; nor use it in any way. Nor have I heard of any man's trying to find a substitute for that which came pure from the hand of God as an element indispensable to life.

So of the gospel. Its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and all that it promises to bring to us of the riches of divine grace in the ages to come, the greatest mind has never even imagined; but, fundamentally, it is final. It is to the soul the Water of Life without which nobody can live. And I say it without apology, he is the fool of all fools who proposes to substitute for the life of the soul something else than that which God Himself has prescribed.

Take another example, *the air we breathe*. We all use it. You would not be here if you did not! You breathe, and you correspond with the vital energies about you, and receive into yourself, into that marvellous chemical laboratory, your own physical frame, vitalizing elements from without. The lungs take hold of them, they pass into the blood stream, and assist in the operation of the whole physical economy, and thus enable you to live. You do not know the science of it—nor does the ablest physician understand it perfectly. But we do know as a matter of common sense and universal human experience that we cannot live without air.

But was the air given to us just to breathe? It was given for that, but who ever supposed that it was designed to be a medium for carrying messages across the sea; and, sometimes, perhaps, to countless thousands or millions who hear one human voice at one time through the medium of the air? But the air that carries my message now to remote places is in its chemical constitution the same air that Adam breathed, when God by His almighty fiat commanded all things into being.

But we have learned to make other uses of the air. Have you ever seen the erection of a building in New York, on that rock called Manhattan Island? They use quantities of dynamite in preparation. But how do they bore the rocks for their dynamite or powder? By air! But you do not need to go to New York! They use it to tear up streets in Toronto—they do tear up streets here sometimes, and sometimes they do it at night, and their sound is not exactly a mother's lullaby! There was a day when that sort of work was done by brawny workmen with pick and crowbar, but not now. What do they use? Just air. Air? Yes; exactly the same kind as you use in your lungs. They compress it, and make the very air we breathe do things that would have staggered Goliath.

I read last night about some man's leaving Toronto back in nineteen hundred and fifteen, and going to Vancouver, leaving his property without an occupant. The garage door had never been opened since, and a maple tree more than twenty feet high had grown in front of it. At last the man died, and his household effects and garage had to be sold. The tree was chopped down to get the garage door open—and they found inside a nineteen-twelve model Cadillac car in fairly good condition. And three of the four tires still contained sufficient air, after seventeen years, to support the weight of that car which would weigh one or two tons, perhaps more. While people slept by night and worked by day the compressed air in those tires, the same kind of air you have in your lungs, supported the weight of the car during those seventeen years. The rubber, which came from a tree in Africa or somewhere, had been formed into tires, the air put in—and it held. To how many uses have we learned to put the air, the vital energy which sustains our physical beings!

Have you a garden? Have you a farm? You do not use the tools which Abraham used. You do not plow as men did a hundred years ago. You use different implements. But in spite of all that, the earth brings forth its fruits to-day for man and beast by the operation of precisely the same principles of assimilation and growth which obtained in the garden of Eden. The chemistry of the earth, the necessity for dew and rain and sunshine in order to growth and fruitfulness are fundamentally the same.

What is the gospel? "The grace of Christ." What is that? It is all that God is. Wrapped up in this revelation are the principles which, in the moral and spiritual world, are essential to life. Enunciated in this gospel are principles through the acceptance of which there are communicated to us those divine energies which make it possible for a man to live in the presence of God, and to do His holy will. Wrapped up in this gospel are the principles upon which, and by the operation of which alone, the moral equilibrium of the universe is maintained. "Christ died for our sins"—and Paul said the Lord told him that—"according to the scriptures; . . . he was buried, and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"; and He ascended into heaven and released a Power, a divine Energy, from the heavenlies that can be so communicated to human life as to transform the vilest sinner into a saint; and make the man at last what God said he would make him, a man in His own image and likeness.

Nothing but the gospel can do that. Away with these substitutes! Sin, human nature, the rulers of this world's darkness, the deadly enmity of the devil, the quickening and sustaining power of divine grace as fundamentally the same. Hold fast by the gospel. Do not accept anything that is said to be "just as good". There is nothing "just as good". "I am not ashamed"—I give it as my testimony—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power (the dynamite, and the dynamo) of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Let us pray: We beseech Thee, O Lord, let Thy blessing attend the testimony of Thy word. Save us from the folly of departing therefrom. May we be cleansed in the precious blood! May we drink of the Water of Life! May we breathe the very Air of heaven—even the breath of the Spirit! May souls dead in trespasses and sins be quickened, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

A FINAL RULING.

(Continued from page 2)

others, he is not using it with the meaning which we should imply were we to speak of a human life as perfect before God. In our use we should mean that the life in question was free of sin or moral weakness, that it was always equal to its own ideals, and that those ideals reached to the very throne of God. We should mean if we called anyone perfect, and we should understand anyone who claimed to be perfect as meaning, that sin could find no lodgment in his heart, that his spirit was never at fault before God, that down to the very depths of his soul he could lift up his face to God without spot. That being so, we who are mysteries to one another can never speak of anyone as perfect. None of us knows the inner facts of another life where one is what he is. Even if perfection were possible to a human being, he himself

would have to claim it, for only he himself could know the truth. What *we* mean when we speak of perfection was claimed by One only. Only one soul ever looked upon itself without rebuke or fear or shame. Only One could challenge the world to deny His claim to have lived a perfect life.

"Which of you convinceth Me of sin," said Jesus Christ. Only One could withdraw Himself from His friends, and from such circumstances as break for most of us the agony of the look of God, only One could pour out His heart with all its burden into the ear of God, yet never sigh regretfully or pray for pardon or hesitate from fear. One only was perfect; only One who realized all it meant dared nevertheless to make the claim; and to Him it was not denied.

I.

The Apostle is not making any such claim for himself or for others when he uses the expression "Let us, then, as many as are perfect." He has just confessed of himself, "I have not reached the goal, neither am already perfect," and he proceeds: "Nevertheless, whereunto we have already reached let us walk by the same rule," indicating plainly that to his own mind there was still a journey to take, still a height and depth of life to be attained. Yet the Apostle chose the word "perfect" to characterize his own spiritual condition and that of his friends in Philippi. He chose it, not meaning it to be explained away, but to be understood. We are perfect, he said; this, not boastfully, but humbly, feeling that it was a heavy responsibility rather than a privileged condition.

How, then, may we grasp the Apostle's thought in this passage? How are we to understand a condition of life which may be called perfect, though at the same time that life has not come to rest, has not reached its own ideal and standard? How are we to understand "perfection" as the Apostle understood it; a spiritual condition which, far from putting us at ease, calls us to strictness of life; which, far from making us high-minded, brings with it the shadow of a deeper responsibility?

To get to the Apostle's meaning, and to feel the force of it, we must remember the connection in which the words were written. He is contrasting the religious life of his followers with the life of the Judaizers who were opposing him and them. (Here let no one imagine we are about to deal with a dead issue! The Judaizers have never ceased to threaten Christianity.) The Judaizers were those who, while recognizing that Jesus Christ had thrown open the Kingdom of God to all believers, insisted nevertheless that all converts to the Christian faith should be circumcised, that, as the Gospel had come through Judaism, so every convert must pay tribute to Judaism on his way to Christ. This teaching St. Paul resolutely opposed. To him faith in Christ was deeper than every law or ordinance; to him faith was a spiritual affection, flooding the heart with impulse and desire, disposing the life to obey the whole law, although at the same time making a man unconscious of the very laws he was obeying! "We are the true circumcision," he said, "who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh."

As compared with such as opposed him, those who accepted his teaching were "perfect." The others were children, needing symbols to help their faith and rules to guide their conduct; whereas he and those who, like him,

had committed themselves body and soul to the spiritual Christ were *men* of God. The others were, as regards faith in Christ, imperfect, needing something to complete or to ensure the blessings of Christ, whereas he and his followers were "perfect," committing all to Christ and finding in Him the promise and the pledge of all.

II.

The contrast is precisely the same as we should be drawing were we to compare the service of God by rites and ceremonies with that service of God which is of the spirit and the heart. The latter worshippers are "perfect," the former imperfect.

The word which the Apostle uses here, and which we translate perfect, is a richer word than ours and has a more distinct meaning. *Teleios* is the original, and the word bears with it the notion of finality. It might mean: those who are concerned with ultimate things, those whose faith does not depend upon anything which may pass away, but is founded upon certain final truths about God and the soul of man! The true believer, the *teleios*, the perfect one, is he who values the spirit of a thing, who, if he adopts a form, does so because it embodies in his case a living spirit, not because the performance of the most august form will of itself please God or better the prospects of his own soul. The true Christian and the perfect one is he who believes that God is a spirit and can be worshipped only in spirit and in truth. Such a believer has his feet upon a rock. Forms may change, customs may pass away, but he remains unmoved amidst change and decay, who knows that the one necessity is to have a heart lying open to the look of God and eager for the heavenly life. He may do this and that, or he may not; but he is answerable to God in either case. He will only adopt forms which express his spirit and reveal his heart. He will never make the sad mistake of putting a form over against a reality. He will never exalt the letter over the spirit or delude himself that the Holy God can be worshipped, no matter how laborious and painful our services be, if our heart remains cold and secretly joyless. Such an one is "perfect." He has a final position, for the truth he is living by cannot be assailed. He knows that he is a spirit, and that God is the Eternal Spirit. He knows that he is reconciled to God and God to him, if the deep of his heart keeps calling to the deep of God, if his spirit seeks and finds the Holy Spirit of God, Infinite yet Personal to himself. That is the ultimate, the "perfect" faith, and the life which flows from such a faith is final, complete and perfect.

III.

This is indeed surely the truth which we have always believed. This certainly is the very truth we must hold fast if we are to take a consistent course in reference to those questions about forms and ceremonies which it would seem are destined to keep rising. The one thing needful is to remember that *form* in every case is only a means, not an end. It has no virtue or worth in itself, but only as it helps the heart to enter into fellowship with God and with His Son. Form in itself, however beautiful, however hallowed, is not worship, but only a means to worship. They are not yet perfect in Christ who exalt the letter over the spirit, who cannot see the same spirit of faith under other rites and manners, or under none at all. They are not perfect in Christ who say in the name of Christ, "You are not of Christ because you have not

our manners in worship." They are not perfect in Christ who will not see in every life inspired by Christ a true member of His Body. They are only babes and children in Christ—St. Paul himself being witness—who insist upon their own beliefs and manners and practices as the necessary marks of Christ's acceptance and of God's favour. They are the *men* in Christ, they are such as are "perfect," who insist only upon the spiritual sign and regard all as of Christ who through repentance and humble faith have come to God by Him.

For Christ is the end (*telos*) of the law—both for God and for man, and they are the *teleioi*, the perfect ones, who can endure to live in this sphere. Christ was always the meaning which God intended in every rite or ceremony and in every moral demand. It was always the spirit of God's revelation to show that He was holy and that man must obey and serve Him. Therefore now that God has declared Himself in His Son, all other revelation must take a secondary place; and when the human heart has entered into bondage to Christ a man has put himself under a law higher than the law of ordinances, for in the love of Christ we meet and we discharge every call of conscience, every moral demand. So the Apostle insisted. He who has given his heart in allegiance to Christ as his spiritual Lord has fulfilled the purpose for which circumcision was laid upon the people of God. He is already separate in spirit from the world's lust and sin. He has circumcised his heart, he has crucified his flesh with its affections and lusts. He is beyond circumcision; he has not destroyed the law, he has fulfilled it. He has taken circumcision into his inmost, secret heart. He has broken the letter in order to live by the spirit of it. He has caught the meaning of God, and has made the law the spirit of his life.

It is by keeping in mind such a simple insight that we can maintain sympathy with all sections of the Church of Christ. If we remember that every form was intended originally to clothe and to embody a spirit, we whose claim it is to worship God with little help or hindrance from the things of sense may enter into fellowship with Christian worshippers who have not our traditions or our training. It is only when we look deeper than the forms which divide Church from Church, it is only when we see how the name of Christ and His glory are declared in and through them all, it is only then that we feel the Greatness of the Fellowship which is the Church of the Living God.

IV.

We shall all do well to lay to heart the deep and loving counsel in which St. Paul's reflections find their practical issue. "Let us as many as be perfect be thus minded." That is to say: "Let as many as be *perfect* leave the things which are behind and reach forward to the things which are before; let us press on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ." In the light of what we have said, this counsel means just this: God is Spirit, and the only evidence that we are worshipping God and honouring Christ at all must be spiritual evidence. Our only answer to those who speak evil of us must be our holy and aspiring lives.

In those days (alas! there is no doubt about this) the converts who had been converted to Christ through the teaching of St. Paul were reproached as free-livers and even as licentious. And this because they made little of the ceremonial law. There was nothing in their worship which to traditionalists seemed religious at all. "But,"

says the Apostle in effect, "the outside world, and those who ought to like us and do not, cannot but recognize goodness when they see it. Let us seek, therefore, to be utterly devoted to our Lord, let us set before ourselves His holiness, His divine life as our aim, and as the goal of our striving and our prayer! Who knows but that suddenly their eyes may be opened who so far have never looked upon us with friendliness!"

This thought must be laid to heart by each of us. It is a counsel which we who belong decisively to the Reformed Churches must not forget.

Our Church life has little outward form, it has few observances, it has few fasts or festivals. There is little so far to impress our worship or our very existence upon the minds of men. Yet a Church exists above all things else to remind the world of God; a Church exists, almost above everything, to judge the world by Christ Jesus.

If we make no impression, if we do not embarrass contemporary evil, if we do not manifest the power of Christ, we have failed! In other countries, in other Christian communions, the Church impresses its surroundings in other ways. There are weeks of fasting and days of festival. There are saints' days. There are Seasons; and all such forms impress the world where they are unaffected and in harmony with the beautiful way of conceiving life. Willingly or unwillingly, the enemies of the Church are made to recognize that there is another life with other calls and interests in constant conflict with our worldly life.

Yet we need not envy such Churches their power though we need not deny them their right. We should not be content if our Church made only *the same kind of impression* upon the world. We have been born into other methods and usages, "and whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk!" If anyone says that our forms of Church life make only a small demand upon the individual member or the congregation, we should be able to reply that our Church life makes the greatest demand. We make a demand which no one can satisfy except by the unbroken obedience of his life to Jesus Christ—except by his utter devotion to God. We have no half-way shelters between faith and despair.

If we are to impress men with the meaning of Christ, with the reality of the claim of God, how are we to do it? Certainly by devotion to what forms we have, forms essential to the Christ-life and instituted by Christ Himself. We must—just because the occasions are so few—eagerly make public testimony of our faith in Christ. We must make much of the service of the Sanctuary. We must reverently receive the Sacraments of the Church, making light of nothing, making the most and the best of every opportunity to fill our lives with God's inspiration.

But more and at last it will only be by our character that we can honour Christ in the eyes of men.

Such is the heavy responsibility which rests upon members of a Church like ours, which must be spiritual and pure if she is to have power with men. We have no weapons of the flesh, and we refuse to call in the arm of the State to enforce our authority over men. Our only power lies in the region of unseen but incontrovertible forces. Our only argument and evidence is the life we lead! Our fathers and we also may have left many forms behind. We may have broken many laws. And we are justified, but only if now we carry the spirit of all worship—which is holiness and purity of heart—into all the manifold and difficult relations of our everyday life.

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 7

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 31

July 31st, 1932

THIRD QUARTER

THE PROPHECY OF BALAAM.

Lesson Text: Numbers, chapters 24, and 25; Deut., chapters 29, and 30.

Golden Text: "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee."—Deut. 30:3.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Psalm 122:1-9.

Tuesday—Zech. 6:1-15.

Wednesday—Psalm 110:1-7.

Thursday—Isaiah 34:1-10.

Friday—Mic. 6:1-9.

Saturday—Deut. 13:12-18.

I. BALAAM'S PARABLE. (24:1-9).

The continued blessing of Israel by God convinced Balaam of the futility of using enchantments against them, and he turned his face toward the wilderness, and seeing the Israelites abiding in their tents the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he gave forth a parable concerning them, (vs. 1-3). He terms himself "the man whose eyes are open", and the one who had "heard the words of God which saw the vision of the Almighty", (v. 4). He then makes reference to the goody tents of Israel spread forth as "gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters" (vs. 5, 6), denoting their beauty, and orderliness, and the divine power manifested in their presence. He further makes mention of their future greatness, "his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted" (v. 7). The Amalekites were then the most powerful of the desert tribes, and Agag a title of their kings: The Israelites therefore would be the greatest of all the tribes according to this prophecy. This is followed by a statement concerning their past; they had been brought out of Egypt; concerning their strength, they were strong as an unicorn; and in relation to their future power over their enemies, they would eat up the nations their enemies, and break their bones, and pierce them through with their arrows. The parable ends with another figure of speech relating to the lion, and gives the conclusion of the matter respecting all efforts at cursing such a people. "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee", (vs. 8, 9; Gen. 12:3). Note as in the former lesson the security of the children of God; if the Lord has blessed, no one can curse; also the consequences of contact with God's people, the nature of these depending upon the attitude adopted. God is a reality, and He is vitally interested in His children. This may be observed in His relation to Israel, and in His connection with the church. Note our Lord's expression in intercepting Paul, (Acts 9:4).

II. BALAK'S ANGER, (vs. 10-14).

It is not difficult to understand the anger of Balak at the result of his en-

deavour to have Israel cursed. Instead of his desire being fulfilled, this nation which he feared was blessed. His anger is evinced in the smiting of the hands, an eastern characteristic, and in the words which he uttered. Three times Balaam had blessed the Israelites when he was expected to curse them, (v. 10), therefore there was no further use for his services, and he is ordered to return home, being reminded at the same time of the great honour which he had lost in consequence of failing the king, (v. 11). In answer the prophet again stated the limitations of his service, and announces his purpose of declaring what God's people would do to the Moabites in the latter days, (vs. 12-14). It is of interest and profit to note that if we would do the will of God we must be prepared not only to forego the reward of the world, but to brave the wrath of the same. The honour of the world very rarely goes to the one who is faithfully carrying out the will of God. It should be our purpose to seek the honour of God, and not strive to gain honour from men. (I Sam. 3:30). Note the conditions of the divine service, (Matt. 16:24) and the reward of the same. (John 12:26).

III. BALAAM'S PARABLES, (vs. 15-25).

These further parables of Balaam relate to the victories of the Israelites over their enemies, prophetically foretold, and completely fulfilled. First, there is a prediction concerning the royal person who would arise out of Israel, referred to as the "Star out of Jacob", and the "Sceptre" which shall "rise out of Israel". This monarch would "smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth", (v. 17). Edom would also be a possession, and "out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city", (vs. 18, 19). "The fulfilment of this prophecy commenced with the subjugation of the Edomites by David, (2 Sam. 8:14; I Kings 11:15, 16; I Chron. 18:12, 13), but it will not be completed till the end of the days, when all the enemies of God and His church will be made the footstool of Christ, (Ps. 90:1)". The fulfilment is therefore partial in reference to the earthly monarchy, and complete in relation to the Messiah. He is the one above all others who will gain the victory over His enemies, (I Thess. 1:6-10). His servants are incapable of completely subjugating them, but He will rule them with a rod of iron, (Ps. 2:9). Note the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord, and its two-fold consequence in relation to saint and sinner, (I Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Pet. 3:7). A prophecy respecting Amalek follows, wherein the destruction of the Amalekites is foretold, (v. 20). These people were the first to attack Israel, (Ex. 17:8), and by the direction of God war was to be carried on with them from generation to generation, and the remembrance of them was to be put out from under heaven, (Ex. 17:14-16). Prophetic statements were also made concerning the Kenites, (vs. 21, 22), and other nations, (vs. 23, 24) after which the prophet returned to his place, (v. 25).

IV. THE WHOREDOM OF ISRAEL? (25:1-18)

What Balaam could not accomplish by cursing, owing to the opposition of God,

he effected by subtlety, in advising the moral and spiritual contamination of Israel, (31:16). It is thought that after leaving the Moabites this hireling prophet went to the Midianites and offered his services in the hope of gaining the reward which he had failed to receive from Balak. The lure of gain led him to disregard principle, and made him willing to serve anyone who would pay him. It may be, as some imagine, that he informed the Israelites of his prophecies, expecting something in return, and being disappointed in the same, he spitefully suggested to the Midianites this plan of undermining their allegiance to God, in the hope that the Lord would cast them off in His displeasure. The plan was partially effective in this respect, although fortunately it was not permitted to be fully carried out. A man of the type of Balaam is fit for anything, is totally untrustworthy, and distinctly dangerous. He is dead, but many of his descendants in action, are in our midst. They profess to be servants of God, yet they are willing to do the most reprehensible things in order personally to profit therefrom. Principle is not their guide in deciding issues, the personal equation is uppermost. They are hirelings, always expecting to be paid their price. Note the menace of such persons, whether in the ministry or out of it, and their fate, here and hereafter.

As a result of Balaam's plans, the Israelites committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, (v. 1), and joined in worshipping their gods. "Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor (vs. 2, 3). It seems incredible that such should take place, and yet with an ordinary sense of human nature it can well be understood. No persons are immune to temptation, and the possibility of falling is always present. This does not excuse those who commit sin, but it should warn us to be on our guard at all times. The Israelites were privileged to have in their midst the visible sign of God's presence, yet despite this, many sinned in idolatry, and immorality, the latter possibly being associated with the former. We are warned to take heed lest we fall, (I Cor. 10:12), and even in the midst of religious duties there is danger of the subtle temptations of the evil one succeeding. The sins depicted here, while sensual, were yet associated with religion, with sacrifice and worship, and throughout the ages great have been the sins committed under the same auspices. Care requires to be exercised that every action in the religious realm corresponds with the book wherein the will of God is revealed.

Against the sin of Israel the anger of the Lord was kindled, and the command is given to Moses to hang up the heads of the people that He may be appeased thereby (v. 4). The direction is then given by Moses to slay the guilty persons (v. 5), twenty-four thousand of them dying in the plague, (v. 9). An incident is recorded of a guilty pair slain by Phinehas the grandson of Aaron, (vs. 6-8), who was commended by God for his act, (vs. 10-15). Note the necessity for zeal in the service of God, (John 2:17; Acts 4:31), and the blessing attached thereto. The command to vex the Midianites closes this section, (vs. 16-18).

The Union Baptist Witness

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A PANORAMA.

In a sense, the items which appear in the pages of "The Union Baptist Witness" from week to week provide a panorama of the work at home and in Liberia. We trust, however, that the reports are received by the readers in a way that makes them more than a picture, more than a story, and that they come as definite messages.

Here in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec are, comparatively speaking, a few churches that have dared to band themselves together in a day and age that demands strength and wealth and numbers to be impressed. Verily the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec has raised the standard of Jehovah and is marching on in His Name. Oh, how much there is for which to praise our God! What miracles have been accomplished during these years, and what blessing has come!

At the present time as word of the salvation of souls comes to us, even though it is a time when, in some respects, we stand with the enemy at our back, the sea in front, we look to God for marvellous provision. And now, as we sweep the horizon and view the cloud of blessing, promise of the out-pouring upon a dry and thirsty land, let us see and know that of a surety the thing is of the Lord; that the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec is an organization of co-operating churches with a definite missionary programme and an all-powerful Ally, the One who will miraculously supply the need.

IN THE GLOAMING.

From Miss Lane, we have a picture of the Sunday evening visit made to a neighbouring town. As she tells of it, she breaks into praise and expresses her profound thankfulness for the opportunity which is hers.

When all the others were ready to start on the journey which would bring them to the place where the Sunday evening service was to be held, Miss Lane found that there were several things which she still needed to look after and she asked the others to go, saying that later she would overtake them. When her duties were attended to, she was weary and for the moment, was tempted to remain at home and rest, but after a little hesitation, she went on her way and by hurrying caught up to the others as they were nearing the village. Oh, that we could picture such a village and become more interested in its people. Well, the missionaries began their preparations for the service and Miss Lane visited the huts to invite the people to listen. We wonder how she introduced her subject! Do the missionaries in Liberia study their approach? Do they talk about the weather and many other things before they come around to the point of inviting the people to the service? We think not, at any rate Miss Lane says that she tries out her Bassa on them and it may

be that speaking in their own language is enough introduction, even though it may not be good Bassa as yet.

Here is a smoky, dirty hut. It looks filthy, possibly it is unoccupied and the missionary will not investigate, she will just pass on to the next one? Miss Lane says, "I would have passed it by, but I came to Liberia to carry the message of the Gospel to the people." She therefore asked permission to enter and there found a sick baby. The poor little mite was on a mat on the floor. She saw the baby after she had managed to get her breath and her eyes became accustomed to the smoke. Even in Africa a mother can be interested through her child and so the condition of the little babe was the subject of conversation. It was almost too weak to cry. Its little body was covered with sores and its limbs seemed paralyzed. Yes, it had been given the country medicine and when such treatment was resorted to, there was nothing that could be done, unless the mother were persuaded to stop it and allow the child to be given proper care. The service was held but all through the evening, the little sick baby was upon Miss Lane's heart.

The missionaries returned to the Station, once more they had had the privilege of bringing to these people, the message of salvation. They had listened well but with little comprehension of the length and breadth and depth and height of the love offered them and the missionaries are praying that Holy Spirit conviction will fall and that the Lord indeed will take the simple gospel message and interpret it to their hearts.

On Monday, in the midst of many duties, the poor little baby and its anxious mother kept coming to Miss Lane's mind and then, would you believe it, there they come making their way to the missionary's house. The mother begged Miss Lane to heal her baby. She had left the medicine of the Medicine Man and wanted the treatment which the missionary gave. Did something of the love which prompted the missionary, for Jesus' sake to enter that filthy hut, speak to the mother, in the very best Bassa, the most understandable words of the language and make her willing to break the spell of her charmed country medicine? The fact is, however, that the baby looked a great deal better after a bath and an oil rub. The mother's heart was rejoiced too by the fetching little garment presented to it, a shirt made in the homeland and sent out with one of the boxes. Then as the little one was receiving treatment, the Mother was told of the Lord Jesus Christ and His care. She was really interested, but could not understand the possibility of it all, and so a native Christian helper was sent for and finally the two workers had the happy experience of seeing another Bassa woman on her knees committing herself and the baby into the Lord's keeping. The prayer of the woman was accompanied by tears, but when she

arose she smiled, for the joy of the Lord had entered her soul.

Let the folk at home remember the missionaries, as sometimes, through the gloaming, they go from village to village and feel their helplessness in making the people understand. Truly, they are helpless, but the Holy Spirit is the teacher and the Lord has been pleased to call men and women to witness of Him, promising them the presence of the Comforter.

REFUGE IN A TENT.

Last week preparations were being made for the special services to be held under the auspices of the East York Regular Baptist Mission—the tent was erected upon the lot at the corner of Sammon Ave. and Glebemount Ave., and the Pastor was making the meetings known in the district by means of a truck bearing posters. The meetings were announced to begin on Sunday, July 10th, but they really began on Thursday evening, July 7th, and this is the story. A meeting of a number of unemployed men was taking place nearby. There were several speakers, some of whom, it would appear were ready to take advantage of the opportunity to present communistic views, but while they were yet speaking, a heavy downpour of rain interrupted—but there was the newly erected tent, so the crowd just took possession. When Pastor Bernard Jeffrey returned, he found a meeting progressing splendidly. Men with much more experience might not have been capable of handling the situation, but Mr. Jeffery made his way to the front and spoke to the chairman. He stated that he wished to speak after the one who was holding forth and although he was not readily given permission, in his own meeting place, he firmly held that it was his privilege as the one representing those who had erected the tent for a definite purpose. At the close of the address, therefore, and before the other speaker took the floor, Mr. Jeffery was upon his feet. He told the men just why the tent was there and told them that they were welcome to its shelter. He then called upon them to lift their hearts with him in prayer to the Heavenly Father. Hats were removed, heads were bowed and the servant of the Lord presented their needs to the God who can undertake for men and lift them from their poverty and wretchedness to the enjoyment of heavenly things. At the close of the prayer, an invitation to the Gospel meetings to be held in the tent was extended and more than half of those present promised to come. Pray with Pastor Jeffery that the Lord will help them to redeem their promise and that in His own way they will be brought to a saving knowledge of Him.

The above story is but an introduction to the meetings which are being held every evening. To reach the Mission take a Bloor St. car going east to Glebemount and walk north to Sammon Ave.