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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"MY FATHER'S HAND."

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 28th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported)

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."—John 10:27-29.

Prayer Before the Sermon.

O Lord our God, we would be included among those whom Thou dost seek and find, that they may worship Thee in spirit and in truth, for Thou dost seek such to worship Thee. We remember that Thou art a Spirit, that no man has seen God at any time; nor can we by searching find out God, nor by any means find out the Almighty to perfection. But we rejoice that we have seen Thee in the face of Jesus Christ, for the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

We come this morning to worship Thee as we have come to know Thee through Thy self-disclosure in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. We thank Thee once again for His true kinship, that He was born as we were born, that He lived as we live; that He was made under the law to redeem them who are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. We thank Thee that He died for us, that all our sins were laid upon Him, that, indeed, He was made to be sin for us, though He Himself knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We rejoice in the knowledge that He is risen again, for as He was slain for our offences, so was He raised again for our justification, and that now He is in session at the right hand of God as our Advocate making intercession for us.

We are before Thee this morning as a company of needy people. We would fain worship Thee, but oh, how unfit we are, how limited we are, indeed, how impotent we are to do anything of ourselves! Therefore, we pray that Thy Holy Spirit may minister to us the things of Christ, that He may make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. We thank Thee that Thou knowest our hearts, that Thou hearest the cry of our hearts which often finds no expression through our lips. We bless Thee that Thou seest us as we are, that notwithstanding a record that is stained, like that of Peter, we may dare, with the holy boldness of a divinely inspired faith, to say, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. And we come this morning as

those in whose hearts the love of God has been shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. We come to Thee to worship Thee for what Thou art, holy and true. We have seen Thee in the face of Christ; Thou hast taught us to love Thee, and we come to the mercy-seat with a desire to fall at Thy feet, and to adore Thee for what Thou art. In a world of change and disappointment, we thank Thee for the One Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. To Thee we come, and in Thee we hide.

We all need Thee to-day. Some there are, perhaps, who need Thy pardoning grace. May the blood of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, be applied for their cleansing this morning. May the faith which is the gift of God be their's, that so they may trust Him, and be saved. Some are cast down because of experiences which have been disappointing. It may be there are some who find it hard to praise Thee to-day. We beseech Thee, O Lord, be to all such their glory, and the lifter up of their heads. Put a new song in their mouths this morning, even praise unto our God. There are many who are weary, tired of the long journey, and who would fain be at the end of the road; we pray Thee to give to all such strength to climb the hill that is ahead, and courage to face the foes that must be met, strength to bear the burdens which await us all.

We have come this morning that we may find in this hour of communion refreshment for our spirits, that we may be able to go on in the name of the Lord.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, look upon every one in this congregation. Bless, we beseech Thee, this church in all its membership, in all its activities; enter every home, bless every family. Look upon the Bible School, and all the families it represents. Oh, let the grace of our God abound towards all of us, that the unsaved may be saved, and that Thy children may be built up in their most holy faith. Be mindful of all congregations assembled in Thy name, and of all preachers who preach, whether in places of worship, or at the roadside, wherever Thy word is proclaimed throughout the earth, may it be accompanied by the blessing of God.

Now be with us in our morning meditation. As thou didst gather Thy disciples about Thee, and open Thy mouth and teach them, so may we now sit in Thy presence and hear Thy word. Help us that we may yield ourselves to its sanctifying power, and that definite progress may be marked in the life of every one who shall receive the truth in the love of it. Bless us now for Thy name's sake, Amen.

"My Father's Hand."

I am sure you will have observed how easily men spoil the handiwork of God. Whatever God does is perfect, but in how many instances have you seen men mar the works of God! And this is especially true of the gospel of His grace. What a marvellous revelation of divine wisdom and power it is! And yet how persistently men corrupt and pervert it! What strange things are done in the name of the Lord Jesus! What strange doctrines are taught, professedly with His sanction, and under His authority! You have observed, I suppose, religious ceremonies of all sorts, men with fine robes, and many incantations, speaking sometimes another than their mother tongue, a language which even the people whom they profess to lead and serve cannot understand. Compare that with the simplicity of the gospel, the plain teaching of the New Testament, and see how far afield men have wandered from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. What a complicated thing we have made of the matter of salvation! Oh, the volumes that have been written in disputation! How widely men have been separated one from the other in respect to things that one would suppose might easily and simply be understood!

Our Lord Jesus said He was like a good Shepherd, and He said His people were like sheep, and that as the good Shepherd, He gave His life for the sheep. He said He cared for them like a shepherd, and that He gave to them eternal life. And then He describes the salvation that is of grace in all the height and depth, and length and breadth, and wealth, and fulness of it in just one phrase: in effect He said, to be saved is just to be in "My Father's hand". Are you this morning in the Father's hand? Are you sure that God has a grip on you, that you are held in the grasp of Almightyness?

Let us look at that simple figure, which the youngest child here this morning can understand. Salvation consists in being held in "the Father's hand".

I.

Surely it is suggestive, first of all, of THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER. It would be difficult, it seems to me, to conceive of any figure which might more fully, more accurately, represent absolute and eternal safety than this figure, to be held in the Father's hand.

What do we understand by the hand of God? God is a Spirit; we cannot see God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." We understand God as He is revealed to us in the person of His Son. And here Jesus said that the hand of God is engaged for our salvation.

What do we mean by the hand of God? Surely it is representative of all the creative wisdom and power of God: "The sea is his", said the Psalmist, "he made it; and his hands formed the dry land." All that we see came from the hand of God. He "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance"; "He taketh up the isles as a very

little thing". The hand of God is representative of all the powers of Deity. I wish I could make it clear to you that men never save themselves, that no man ever saved himself, that no church ever saved anybody, nor any priest, nor any preacher—that every soul who has ever been saved has been saved solely by the hand of God. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord", and all the creative powers of God are engaged in our salvation.

This is a wonderful world, is it not? Sometimes we stand amazed, almost aghast at the disclosures effected by the investigations of men of science. We have looked at the surface of things, but we have had no skill to go into the heart of things. There was a time when if anybody had said there was a light that could shine through this book, that could shine through it no matter what it was made of, he would have been laughed to scorn. But the greatest scientist knows very little about nature, very little about the resources of nature, very little of the marvellous power that God has treasured up in His world, when He made the sea, and when His hands formed the dry land. It is something like a father of great wealth possessing himself of a thousand treasures, and then deliberately hiding them away somewhere for his children to find, and finding infinite delight as he says, as he packs all away, one thing after another, "Oh, how pleased they will be when they find this!" And even in the physical world God has packed His creation full of good things. We have found a few of them on the surface; but if the Lord should tarry, and the earth should remain, in a few years men will look back upon our day and say, "How little men knew then!"

Professor Elisha Gray to a class of students years ago, said, "Something like fifty years ago a professor of physics in one of our colleges was giving his class a course of electricity. The electric telegraph was too little known at that time to cut much of a figure in the class room, so the stock experiments were those made with the frictional electric machine and the Leyden jar. One day the professor had, in one hour's time, taken his class through a course in electricity, and at the end he said: 'Gentlemen, you were born too late to witness the development of this great science.' But they did not even know the alphabet of it. He said sixty years or more ago they had learned all there was to learn, when really they had learned nothing. And in another sixty years, should the Lord tarry—I hope He will not—men will learn, by discovering new paths, ten thousand fold more, than they now know, but whatever they find they will never discover anything that is not in the hand of God—in "My Father's hand".

And "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation". The same wisdom, the same divine skill, the same limitless power which brought into being by His almighty fiat, this universe of wonder, undertakes the salvation of our souls. That is the foundation of faith. I will not tell you that if you do your part God will do His; that on condition you do certain things God will do certain things. I will not tell you that salvation is part of works and part of grace, some of God, and some of man. That is not salvation: salvation is "My Father's hand", all of God, nothing apart from God; all in "My Father's hand."

And so, dear friends, if yours is rather a difficult case, if sin has all but destroyed you, and if you say the work of the potter has been marred, and you are but a wreck, I point you to the myriad stars, I point you to the mountains, to the everlasting hills, to the mighty ocean, and to all the dry land, and the powers of the air, and ask you

to consider the lilies, and to put your microscope upon the flower and your telescope toward the stars, and survey the infinitely small or the infinitely great, if the Maker of all these things undertakes to make you over again, do you not think He can do it?

What is it to be a Christian? It is to believe God, to commit yourself to "my Father's hand".

The hand of God is *representative of His redemptive work*. I mean by that—what shall I say—the moral foundation upon which the whole scheme of redemption is based. "The works of his hands are verity and judgment". His right hand "is full of righteousness". God never saved a man at the expense of truth, or by the sacrifice of justice and judgment. The hand of God has found a way whereby in perfect harmony with those—I was going to say fundamental; let me use a stronger word—essential elements of the divine nature, out of which all law, moral and physical, proceed—God has found a way whereby He may save men without doing violence to His own moral nature. O the wonder of that! That is the glory of redemption, that at the cross mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

"My Father's hand", said Jesus! Yes; and He said, "My hand," too: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "He showed unto them his hands and his feet." The scar of the nail was there. And the hand of God is representative of that perfect blending of all moral qualities that reside in the Deity; so that He has provided and conferred upon us a salvation that is in harmony with His own oneness, with all that is essentially and eternally right. And upon that everlasting foundation of divine equity and judgment the feet of our faith stand, and we know that we are saved because the hand that holds us was wounded for us.

Throughout the Old Testament God speaks frequently of *delivering His people from the bondage of Egypt*, and from the hand of Pharaoh by a mighty hand. A mighty hand! A hand of deliverance! My friends, it took something to get you out of prison. It was no human power that broke the shackles, that unlocked the door. You were like Peter, were you not? You were in prison, with a soldier beside you, fastened with chains; and door upon door was shut upon you until the angel of the Lord came into the prison, the light of the glorious gospel of grace shone upon you, and somehow or another you scarcely knew how, and you do not know how yet; you arose and moved toward the door; it opened. And when you came at last to the iron door that leadeth to life and liberty, it opened of its own accord. You remember how Peter was confined, shut up in the prison. But the Lord God almighty—how shall I put it—was the Usher. He just opened the door, and said, "There you are, Peter. Walk out." And all the power of Rome could not keep that door shut when God willed to open it.

Some of us here have been delivered by a mighty hand. A hand has wrought upon your mental faculties. What perplexities, what confusion of thought, what mental problems have been solved! What barriers have been removed, dissolved, as you have come out into the light and liberty of the gospel!

And the hand of God, of course, is intended to signify *our eternal safety*. Are there any here this morning who suppose it is possible for one who has really been saved by divine grace, born again, washed in the blood, made

a child of God, adopted into the royal family, made an heir, a joint heir with Christ—do you suppose that it is possible for such an one ever, under any circumstances which hell itself could devise, to be lost? Well, if you do, my dear friends, I beg of you turn to your Book. I should not like to cross the Atlantic on a leaky ship. I should not like to set sail under a captain who was not sure—at least as a human can be—of bringing his ship to port. There could be no peace for this soul of mine if I were not sure of salvation, as sure of salvation as if I were within the gates of pearl.

What is salvation? "My Father's hand." Listen: "I give unto them eternal life". He never gives any other kind of life. And eternal life does not mean merely endlessness of duration, but it means that in its very nature and essence it is eternal; that it is of the nature of the life which God gives that it shall never end. It is like His own life. And I say to the praise of the glory of His grace that God could as soon cease to be as that any one of His little ones should perish.

"Eternal life!" But lest you misunderstand it He adds: "They shall never perish." And as though that were not enough He says: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." And as though that were not sufficient He continues, "My Father, which gave them me"—they are all my Father's gifts to Me—"is greater than all"—greater than all circumstances; greater than all temptations, and than all tempters; greater than all enemies, enemies in the flesh, than all principalities and powers—"greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." We are saved through the blood of the everlasting covenant; not a covenant that can be broken. And here the Lord Jesus says, "I and my Father are one"; "My Own and My Father's hand are one."

A coloured man, who was wont to rejoice in his security as a believer, and frequently to express his gladness in contemplation of it, was once asked why he was so sure he was saved. He put it in a simple way, and yet it was profoundly true: "Why", said he, "the Bible says I am held in the hand of Jesus, and Jesus is in the Father's hand; and you would have to 'bust' the Godhead to destroy me." That is true. God Who is true, and Who cannot lie, must cease to be God, and violate His own essential nature before He can fail to implement the promises which He has made to the children of men through Jesus Christ our Lord. We are held in the Father's hand.

I have heard people talk about the horrible pit, and the miry clay, and of having someone let down a rope bidding the poor sinner lay hold of it. And I have heard some who were orthodox enough in their hearts, but whose heads needed a lot of instruction,—I have heard them pray that God would permit them to see "the end of a praying life". They hold on to the rope's end, and say, "If I can only hold on long enough I shall be saved." The horrible pit and the miry clay are scriptural enough, it is a horrible pit, is it not? And oh, how the miry clay sticks, and how it holds us so that we cannot get out of it!

What is salvation? God's coming down to us in the person of His Son, and just as in the days of His flesh He took the sick by the hand and lifted them up. He stoops to the lowest depths of the horrible pit and lays hold of us with His almighty hand, even with the power that made the worlds. And He hurls His challenge into the teeth of hell itself, saying, "I have got him!" To change the figure: With Satan standing at the right hand of the High Priest to resist Him, the Lord says, "Is not this a

brand plucked out of the fire? I did it Myself; I laid hold of Him and saved Him, and He is in My Father's hand." Rejoice in your salvation this morning.

II.

Suffer this word: THE TEXT SPEAKS OF COMPANIONSHIP. Salvation is not in an institution,—I tell you that so often; nor in ordinances, nor in abstract truth. Now do not misunderstand me: it is important that we should know the truth. Only thus can we be made free. But I am afraid there are many people who know the truth in an abstract fashion who are not Christians. A man said to me only a week ago, "I suppose, Mr. Shields, you would not dispute the fact that there are many fundamentalists who are not Christians?" I said, "Just what do you mean?" He said, "I mean there are many people who know the truth in the abstract, as a theory, who have an intellectual knowledge of the truth; who can argue about it; who can contend for it; who know the theory of the gospel, but who do not know Christ."

Salvation is in a Person, and not a person remote from me, far away, nor yet a Person removed from me by superiority of character and position. There are some people so exalted that we can not get near them at all. And this Saviour is at the right hand of God, exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. Notwithstanding, salvation, I say, is in a Person Who is near to me, and Who is near enough to hold me in His hand. Well, that is something, is it not?

Some of us have never known what it is to suffer *severe affliction of the body*. I have been told by certain friends many, many times that I shall never really know the sweetness of the Lord's power until I have been sick nigh unto death, and have been divinely and miraculously healed. I have no doubt that when God, in His mercy, comes to one thus afflicted and raises him up, he knows much of God's grace and power. But humbly would I praise God that He has never suffered me thus to fall upon a bed of affliction, and humbly would I walk before Him and pray daily that if it be His will, He would give me grace to serve Him in health, and to recognize His goodness in giving me a sound body. But oh, how many of the Lord's saints have suffered affliction. And I beg of you do not tell them that sickness is always of the devil, and is a mark of divine disfavour! That to me, is a cruel doctrine, and certainly it has no authority in the word of God. You know, and I know, that some of the truest saints that ever breathed have been chosen in a furnace of affliction. Have you not known such? Some of the greatest saints I have ever known have been the greatest sufferers, who were willing to say, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Go through the hospital to-morrow for your own instruction—I do not know in what word you will find it. Go through the Sick Children's Hospital, and you will find somewhere a little boy or little girl suffering terribly, in fearful pain. And I will tell you what else you will find. You will find father or mother, or perhaps both of them, sitting at the little cot, and holding the sufferer's hands. Ah, I remember once sitting at a bedside some years ago when one who was suffering terribly said to me, "Won't you please just hold my hand?" And I took hold of that sufferer's hand, and just a little touch of companionship, having somebody close, helped a little.

My dear friends, we are held in our Father's hand. Oh, how sweet it is when you have felt His touch upon

you. You know what it is, do you not? I cannot describe it. You must know it to rejoice in it.

Sometimes there is a *comradeship in conflict*. And sometimes when we feel the hand of God upon us, we are nerved for the battle. I have heard that there are some men who cannot fight alone; they need to feel a comrade's shoulder touching them. I know this, that the Lord comes and holds our hand, saying, "Fear not; I will help thee."

And then there are *times of evil report, and misunderstanding*. I remember a pastor who stood valiently for the faith, and his stand for the faith brought him into a great deal of trouble. His enemies conspired against him, and actually brought him into court. At a distance there was another pastor, a quiet man. And when the court assembled he was there. He simply sat there, every day. The trial lasted for more than a week. Saturday he slipped home to preach, but he was back again Monday morning, sitting in the court. And every day he contrived somehow to get near to this sorely tried pastor. He did not say anything: he took him by the hand. But that was a great comfort to him, because it gave him a sense of companionship.

I remember an experience in my own life—not many of you would remember it. Many of you have come since that time. It was eleven years ago now. One day a little boy came to my house, his head all bound up with plaster. He had just come out of the hospital. He had been knocked down by a motor car, and had been confined in the hospital for some time. He came to my house just at the time when we were having our great revolution in Jarvis St. Church. There was to be a great business meeting the following Friday night. And this little chap said to me, standing in my hallway, with his little Scotch cap in his hand, and fire in his eyes—he was only about eight years of age—"I am going to make a speech Friday night." I said, "You are? You must be careful." "I shall be, but I am going to make a speech Friday night." His name was Donnie. I said to him, "What are you going to say?" And squaring his shoulders, and looking around as though he were looking around this gallery, he said, "I am going to say, 'Where is that man that says Dr. Shields does not love children?'" And then he paused with fine oratorical effect, and clenching his fists, and stamping his foot, he said, "I am going to tell him he lies! Why would he come over to see me at two o'clock in the morning at the hospital if he does not love children?" I said, "Donnie, it is lovely of you to think of doing that, but you must be careful on Friday." "Well," he said, "I shall have something thought up by that time."

Friday came, and we had a great business meeting. Some of you can remember it. I sat down here in one of these seats to the left of the platform. And while the storm was raging I felt somebody at my side, and a little hand was put through my arm and just gripped it. I looked down, and there was my little friend, Donnie—he was not a member of the church, but he had come with his mother. You could not have kept him out. And he just snuggled up to me and looked up and said, "Don't you worry now; you are going to win alright. Don't be afraid." And he just held me by the hand. Presently, when God did give us a great victory, he smiled and with fine assurance said, "Didn't I tell you? I knew you would win." And when it was all over he said, "Good

night, Pastor. I did not speak this time, but I will speak the next time."

Only a few weeks after that the angels carried Donnie home to the glory; and I know that I shall see him one day.

My friends, there is all that in "My Father's hand". Companionship? Yes; in times of loneliness. You have all been lonely and homesick. I remember when I used to go down to a certain railway, and envy the lines of steel as they went off into the distance, because I thought if I could only get on them I should be able to go back home. And periods of loneliness still come over us, ah, me, yes! When we long for "the touch of a vanished hand," but God is with us, and the touch of the "Father's hand" will ever be our comfort, my Father's hand can never be a vanished hand!

III.

Just this simple word and I have done: Here we have AN ASSURANCE OF GUIDANCE. Are you ready for tomorrow? Do you know the path? I will tell you what will happen to-morrow, or some day soon,—I expect it will happen to-morrow somewhere. A mother will take her children out to the Exhibition, and if you are there and listen you will hear exactly what I tell you. You will hear, some mother say, "Now let me hold your hand. Do not run away. I do not want to lose you." There is nowhere a child can be lost more quickly than in a crowd. And you will see them there during the week, mother holding one in each hand, and perhaps father holding another hand. And father and mother will say, "Let us all keep together, so that we may not be lost in the crowd." Did you ever feel like that? Lost in a crowd? I remember someone who is here this morning saying to me about a year ago, in effect, "This is such an infinite universe with its myriad stars and its countless human beings; do you suppose God cares for just one soul?" Lost in the crowd? No; no! Held in "My Father's hand." And we cannot be lost there.

Did you ever go over a *strange road*; perhaps it was not altogether dark, but just dusk? And a friend said, "I know the road. I know where to put my feet. Give me your hand"; and he took you by the hand and led you on. We have the street lights here. I think we miss something of the beauty of the night that they know in the countryside; but *sometimes it is terribly dark*, and when you do not know where you are you are almost afraid to take a step, are you not? At such times we have but to remember that we are held in our Father's hand.

Somebody told me once that he did not like Newman's hymn, it was not positive enough. I am sorry it is not in this book; it is quite positive enough for me, and I think I am fairly positive. It is a mirror of human experience. I trust my hand is in the hand of God, but I have learned to sing:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom
Lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on!

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

"I was not 'ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Should'st lead me on!

I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead Thou me on!

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on!

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till
The night is gone,

And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since and lost—awhile."

May God hold you in His hand to-day and forever.

Let us pray: We would trust Thee, O Lord, with a firmer faith than we have ever yet reposed in Thee. Make us all conscious of the tender grasp of Thine almighty hand this morning. Be with us till the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

MORNING AND EVENING IN JARVIS STREET.

By request of many—and incidentally to serve the Subscribers' convenience somewhat, both sermons preached indoors are published herewith, instead of one. Following the evening service, Dr. Shields preached to a great crowd out-of-doors from the text: "Behold now is the accepted time".

A WITHERED HAND.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Sunday Evening, August 28th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported). Broadcast over CFRB—690 k.c.

"And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

"And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

"And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

"And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

"And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out; and his hand was restored whole as the other."—Mark 3:1-5.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown, B.A.

Thou who hast with Thy light pierced earth's darkness, Who hast come upon the clouds of glory, and in Jesus Christ hast appeared unto men, we thank Thee for the light of Thy gospel which flowed from that Cross where God's justice dealt with the sins of men, and where righteousness and truth kept company with mercy, and where mercy rejoiced against justice. We bless Thee, O Lord, to-night for what Thou art, for what of Thyself Thou hast revealed to our poor minds, that we who are of the earth might understand heaven and God and the things of that greater and larger world.

We rejoice that Thou art the Holy One and that Thou doest Thy will in the earth, and rulest in the armies of heaven. We thank Thee because Thou art all righteous and all powerful; but we rejoice most to-night that in Jesus Christ Thou hast revealed Thyself to us as a loving Father Who cares for those who trust in His beloved Son. We pray then that Thou wouldst have mercy upon us.

Especially do we beseech Thy blessing upon the preaching of the Word to-night. We thank Thee that we speak not with an authority that comes from man, but with the authority of heaven. O Thou who hast opened the hearts of men and women down through the centuries, open the hearts of many to-night to the reception of Thy gospel, that hearing they may live. Some are here who are in special need. We all need Thy grace and help, but some have special trials, and we bring them to Thee. Especially would we pray for those who are sick. Upon such as it may please Thee to restore, lay the hand of the Great Physician of body and of soul. For such as must suffer, make Thou their bed in affliction, and teach them that affliction worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

We pray for those who may be near the river that separates us from the world beyond. Help them to grasp the hand of Christ—nay, rather, do Thou grasp their hand, and lead them to the land which the glory of God doth lighten.

Bless the preaching of Thy gospel over the air. Vouchsafe Thy presence to those who gather around their radios. Some may listen carelessly; speak to them, we pray Thee. Speak also to the multitude of people who, on this Thy day, have no thought of Thee. Oh, by Thy providence through Thy messengers, may they learn that the wages of sin, although it may be delightful sin, is death; and that the only way to live now, and to have abundant life both now and hereafter, is to find life in Jesus Christ. Call men and women to Thyself. Draw them with the cords of love, and bind them to Thyself.

These our petitions we present in the prevailing name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The gospels are replete with stories illustrative of God's method of saving men. The healing virtue of His life ever flows to the touch of faith; and, fundamentally, all men and women are saved in precisely the same way. God is God, and He never denies Himself, nor in any way does violence to the laws of His own nature.

Let us look, then, at this simple narrative this evening, that we may find therein principles which still apply to the healing of the souls of men.

I.

First of all you have here a picture of what are invariably THE MAJOR ELEMENTS IN ANY CONGREGATION ASSEMBLED FOR WORSHIP. The scene is laid in a synagogue where the people have come together to hear about God.

The Lord Jesus Himself was there. Mr. Brown read to you this evening that when He began His public ministry in Nazareth "as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day". We are accustomed in our marriage service to refer to the presence of our Lord on a marriage occasion in Cana of Galilee. The very fact that He was there indicated that He sanctioned the institution and the occasion. Similarly the Lord Jesus, in the days of His flesh, always honoured the institution of public worship. Whatever others might do, it was always His custom on the sabbath day to meet with those who assembled for the worship of God.

There is a special value in such assembly. I know that our Lord frequently went to the mountain top alone. He often resorted to some place of solitude where He might hold commerce with His Father. He did not confine His devotion to places of public assembly, for He was ever in fellowship with God. But for our learning, that He might set us an example, during the days of His flesh He always made it a practice to attend the institution of public worship.

There is no substitute for such assemblies. The great revivals that have swept the earth have always brought great assemblies together. It is instinctive in the renewed soul to desire others to share in his or her devotion: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

So I speak at the outset of the advantages of coming together as we are assembled in this place this evening. I address myself to any who may hear this message over the air: if you are infirm, if you are ill, if you are so situated that you cannot possibly attend a place of worship, we welcome the opportunity of reaching you in this fashion. But private hearing of the word of the Lord is not a fit substitute for attendance at public worship. There are special advantages in it, and the place of all

believers properly is in the assembly of the saints. We are admonished to "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is". I say, in the days of His flesh, our Lord always consorted with those who thus assembled for the worship of God.

But the principle to which I specially direct your attention is that *as He was in the synagogue on this occasion, so He is with us this evening*. It is still His custom to come into the midst of those who assemble in His name. If there are but two or three, if they really gather in His name, they have His promise, "There am I in the midst of them."

I wonder why you have come to church this evening? Why have the majority of people who are found in places of worship this evening resorted thither? To how many is the presence of Jesus Christ real? In how many places of worship are the presence and power of God expected? And yet, my dear friends, we read this holy Word in vain, we sing these songs of Zion to no profit, and I speak to you the word of the Lord to no purpose also, unless this story is repeated, and Jesus Christ is actually in the midst. That is the great truth that I would remind you of this evening, that we have come here to meet with God Himself, to experience something of the presence and power of the risen Saviour.

"Do you mean to say that is still possible?" someone will ask, "did He not leave this earth and ascend to heaven?" Ah yes, He did. But if you read the record of the establishment of the church, and the continuance of its ministry, you will find the writer says, referring to Luke's gospel from which Mr. Brown read, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." He *began* a miraculous ministry in the days of His flesh: the Acts of the Apostles is a record of the continuance of that ministry after He had become invisible to the natural eye. You recall how, on the day of Pentecost, when the early church was there endued with Power from on high, and the people observed the tongues of fire, and heard the Galileans speak with other tongues "as the Spirit gave them utterance", Peter explained that phenomenon by saying that the absent Jesus, the departed Christ, had ascended to the throne of glory, and "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear". In that first great service the presence and power of the Saviour of men was manifested in the salvation of about three thousand people.

I beg of you to conceive of these occasions of privilege when we come together in the house of God as occasions when we shall do more than greet each other, when we shall do more than sing and pray; but as occasions when we shall actually come into contact with the Saviour of men; for as he was present in the synagogue in the instance recorded in my text, so is He present here this evening. That is always, I say, the major factor in any such assembly as we have here. That is the all-important consideration, not who is going to preach, or who will sing, but, is God Himself present? Is He? I am sure that He is. He is as truly present as we are, and He is here in all the fulness of His saving power, to work miracles to-day as He did in days of yore.

Then my text records that *there was a man, there who had a withered hand*. There is always such an one in any congregation where Jesus Christ is. There is somebody here this evening who has a withered hand. There are many here this evening whose spiritual condition is

symbolized by the case of this man of the impotent hand.

Look at him for a moment. This is another element in the congregation, and it is with that I am concerned particularly, just as my Master was. A man with a withered hand; *a man whose defect was negative*. It is not charged against this man that he had committed some outrageous offence. It is not charged against him that he had any physical superfluity, or excrescence. He had not three hands: he had only one, because one of his hands was withered. His defect was negative.

Do you know what sin is? Sin is a negative thing, in a sense. Literally, it means missing the mark. God's charge against us is that we are negative, that we are not what He wants us to be. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We are short-measure. As a matter of fact, we are not all here! I know we sometimes speak of people who are mentally deficient in that manner. But the fact is, the man or woman who is without Christ is a mental defective.

There are people here this evening who would tell me of the things of which they are free. They never committed any great offence. They do not do this or that. God's complaint against you is that your hand is withered, that you are not doing the day's work, that you are not fulfilling the requirements of His law, that you are not living up to the standards which God has set for mankind, that you are short-measure, that you are underweight. We are defective, just like this man.

He is representative of *those who are functionally impotent*. He had a hand, but it was no good to him. It had not been amputated: it was there as a useless member, failing to fulfil the function which it had been ordained to fulfil.

Sin renders us all functionally impotent, so that the Scripture says we cannot do the things that we would. Our hands are withered.

Here is a man who is disposed to boast, to himself perhaps, of his mental superiority. Because he has outgrown the ignorance of his youth, and knows a few things, he supposes he has outgrown other people. I have met many students like that. (I hope our students will never offend after that fashion, Brother Brown.) I have known some preachers who were very fond of talking about "the original Greek". They supposed because it was new to them, it was new to everybody else! Do not display your ignorance by boasting of your superiority, especially in relation to the word of God: There are some people who say, "I cannot think God's thoughts." Do not be proud of that, my friends: your hand is withered. Your mind is not functioning normally.

The Bible says that men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge, (and) God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness". The mind that is not exercised with God becomes incapable of thinking the thoughts of God. It is possible for a man so to fill his mind with unbelief that he cannot rid his mind of the weeds that he has sown there; and forsooth he says, "I cannot believe", and prides himself on his skepticism as though he were superior. The fact is, he has atrophied his mental powers. They are incapable of the enlargement necessary to comprehend the thoughts of the Infinite. They have withered hands, and are functionally impotent.

I shall not discuss with you the theological dogma of total depravity—I do not need to, because you and I so admirably illustrate it. I will give you an example. Some-

body says, "I have a short memory. I cannot even remember the preacher's text last Sunday." No! There are many things that you cannot remember, but are there not some things you wish you could forget? As a little practical experience, let your mind function for a few minutes—not too long. I do not want you to recall many of those things. But there are people here this evening who say, "My memory is keen enough on some things, but it is sadly defective in other directions. I cannot remember Scripture; I cannot even remember a hymn." But you can remember ten thousand things that might better be forgotten.

It is written, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

The famous "Billy" Sunday resorts sometimes to rather coarse speech. Personally, I wish he would not do it. I have a conviction that the gospel of the grace of God is never served or furthered by vulgarity of any sort. But I recognize that God has used that man mightily, far more mightily than he has ever used many of his detractors, with whom I refuse to be numbered. But I told a company of preachers one day that one of the outstanding proofs of total depravity might be observed in the facility certain ministers displayed in remembering only the objectionable things which Mr. Sunday said. If there is some doubtful thing, that might better be forgotten, that is what most people remember.

We can easily remember evil. Why? Because we have withered hands. Our minds are steeped in sin. We are powerful in the doing of evil, but impotent for the doing of good. There is not a man or woman here who has not a capacity for affection. You know how to love some things, somebody. But why is it that our affections are set upon things on the earth instead of being set upon things above? Why is it that the very powers of heart and of mind that were ordained to be exercised in the divine service are, alas! exercised in the opposite direction? It is because of the truth suggested by this story, that our powers are actually withered from want of use.

Have we not all found *the impotence of our own wills*? That is what the Apostle Paul complained of when he said, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." He declared that he could not of himself do the things that he knew he ought to do. He was a man with a withered hand.

You will find many applications of this principle. Some of you sit there this evening and say, "Ah, Mr. Preacher, you have not read me clearly yet." I know there is something else, and you know there is something else. Identify it for yourself. Apply it to your own case. You know there is within you an inherent weakness which makes it impossible for you to do the things that you would.

Apart from his withered hand, this man may have been a fine specimen of manhood. He may have had a fine figure in every other particular than that. Perhaps people said, "What a pity that so fine a man should suffer from that deformity, a withered hand." He was like the ex-Kaiser, who had a keen mind, who was a master of men, but alas! with a withered hand and with a corresponding defect in his moral nature.

Life is very incomplete. You remember the story of the man who came to Jesus Christ, who was such a splendid man, and said, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life"? Our Lord replied "Thou knowest

the commandments." You recall how he responded?—"All these have I kept from my youth up", to which he received our Lord's reply, "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me"—"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" This was a man who was well rounded in character, and yet Jesus Christ discovered his central defect. He too had a withered hand.

And so have you. I do not know what it is, but something that contributes to the incompleteness of life, that makes life segmentary and eccentric and all awry, instead of being symmetrical, and growing up into Him Who is our Head.

So much, then, for this typical congregation. The two major factors in it, the divine Healer and Saviour, the Creator of men; and there beside Him the man with a withered hand.

II.

But that was not all. INVARIABLY THERE ARE PRESENT SOME WHO ARE AT HEART ANTAGONISTIC TO CHRIST. That was a congregation of religious people. That is why they were in the synagogue, because they were religious. But the text says that "they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him". They had a religion, but they did not like Christ. The religion they had was essentially antagonistic to that of which He was the centre and Sum. They were at heart in opposition to Christ.

There are always to be found in any congregation people like that. I doubt not there are some here this evening. I do not suppose that these people would readily have acknowledged that they were antagonistic: they were there to conserve the truth! And mark you, *they clothed their antagonism with a kind of Sabbatarian virtue*. They were very anxious that the law should not be broken. They were interested in this Prophet. There were many things about Him they admired! They would have spoken well of Him up to a point—but, I suppose they said, "We wish He would not do certain things; and as this is the Sabbath day we do hope he will not break the law by healing on the Sabbath." Thus they would have talked—as they did on other occasions; but the root of the matter was, they were antagonistic toward Him.

How many there are who are antagonistic to the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe in Christianity. They believe in the Christian church, in Christian systems and institutions, but they have not submitted themselves to the person of Christ.

Here is a man who tells me that he would like to be a Christian. I say to him, "Why are you not a Christian?" "Well, sir, I am sorry to have to say it, but I have read a number of books that puzzle me. They show the Bible in such a light that I cannot believe it. The reason I am not a Christian is that my reason will not allow me to accept the Bible as divinely inspired." The man walks on stilts and says, "I am not a Christian because I have a passion for that which is true. I can believe only that which is demonstrably true. That is why I do not believe the Bible."

You are talking nonsense, my friend. What you are really doing is clothing your native antagonism toward the

person of Christ, your inbred enmity against God, with all sorts of excuses, camouflage, disguise; with a profession of devotion to truth.

I do not know how many men I have heard speak like that. They tear the Bible to pieces; they take the crown of Deity from the brow of our Lord; they deny the efficacy of the precious blood; they deny the possibility of miracles, of divine interposition in human life; they pour contempt upon the doctrine of prayer, and laugh at the idea that God ever hears prayer; they tell us that they have discovered that which negatives the Bible.

I was glad to read that that company of scientists at Ithaca the other day seemed to be getting a modicum of sense. They have been telling us for some time that man came from the monkey, but these scientists said that the monkey came from man! That is easy to believe, for I have seen men that have almost arrived already! This perfectly silly philosophy—I will take the responsibility for saying it—called Evolution, has not a solitary fact upon which to base its assumption. It is not science, but a philosophy that is based in vain deceit. Men strut around and tell us, "I wish I could believe the Bible as my father did, but I am so devoted to truth that I cannot accept it." The fact is, your evolutionary philosophy does not trouble the conscience, but permits a man to go on in his sin; whereas an acceptance of the word of God involves repentance, and the yielding of heart and life to Jesus Christ. It means, in short, a revolution—not an evolution but a revolution, an upheaval, a right-about-face, the acknowledgment of and submission to a new Master.

I wish I could pierce these disguises. I wish I could relieve your minds of that delusion of the devil, and make you to see that those who take up that attitude toward Christ and His gospel—while they may not be conscious of it—by reason of their carnal minds that are enmity against God, in reality seek some way whereby they may accuse Him, and justify their antagonism toward the person of Jesus Christ.

III.

WHAT HAS JESUS CHRIST TO SAY ABOUT THIS? I have often wondered to myself what would interest my Master most in a congregation like this. I have tried to imagine sometimes His being here in the flesh, and standing in the pulpit looking out upon this great company of people. What would He think of us all? In what sort of people would He be particularly interested? I think I can tell you, for that day in the synagogue He singled out one man, the man with a withered hand.

First of all, *He spoke to Him and said, "Stand forth."* He did not tell him to lift his hand, but simply *separated him from the crowd*. He made that man to understand that he had been discovered and identified, that there was Somebody there Who knew his condition.

When Jesus Christ is in the midst that always occurs. Has He not been doing that this evening? Is there not someone here this evening who has been saying, "I dropped in as a stranger. I do not know the preacher, nor does he know me; but if he had known me all my life he could not have described my case better. I am a man with a withered hand. I thought I could slip into a seat unnoticed, but Somebody challenges me to stand forth and acknowledge that I am the man with a withered hand." That is how it ought to be. I am sure of this, that the Lord is supremely interested in those who are in need. If you are in that condition this evening, saying perhaps,

"Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments—I wish Somebody would touch me where by hand is withered, and really minister to the completeness, to the symmetry, to the wholeness of life,"—that is what we are here for. For that we pray, that the Divine Healer may always discover in the congregation the man with the withered hand.

So *He spoke to him*. And I am confident that wherever God's word is preached, wherever the Holy Ghost finds utterance through the exposition of His word, the man with a withered hand is always discovered.

But *Jesus Christ had a word to say to His critics too*. He knew they were there. Every preacher knows whether or not he has critics present. They do not need to stand up: they only need to look down. Sometimes they are like little children who have on new shoes: they look down so much. Jesus Christ knew they were there: He always does. He always knows the difference between the man who is conscious of his need, and the man who is there to give expression to an innate antagonism.

This is what he said to them, and I say it to you if there are any superior people here to-night, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" Said Jesus Christ in effect: What is the sabbath law for? What is all law for? What is the law of God for? Is it to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? You who boast of your devotion to the law, said Jesus in effect, would use the law to drive a man to destruction: I use the law to save him from destruction.

What is the gospel for? To do good. What is the Bible for? To do good. I remember in one of his rare bursts of indignation, my great predecessor in this pulpit for twenty-one years, the late Dr. B. D. Thomas, when speaking of the critics of the Bible, in expression of his own exasperation because of their folly, said, "What do the fools think they are accomplishing? Why do they want to tear the Bible from us?" Read the newspapers. Listen to multitudes of preachers to-day. What are they doing? They go to church to preach, and you go to hear—and what do you hear? You come away with your confidence in the Bible destroyed. You come away having been told that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. You come away having heard that God does not interpose in human life. You come away having been told that the only salvation for any man is a salvation the man works out for himself. I ask these gentlemen, What do you expect to do by your mad philosophy? What has the Bible ever done that you should assume such an attitude of antagonism toward it?

Follow the record of its ministry as its truth has been spread in heathen lands. It has made saints of cannibals, it has made an earthly paradise of the jungle. Wherever its light shines, it is like the light of the sun: it purifies, it ennobles, it lifts men higher. I ask these alleged scholars, What do you expect to accomplish for the world when you seek to destroy men's faith in the Bible?

I remember crossing the sea during the war in the same ship with a great American lawyer, Clarence Darrow. I talked with him and the famous "Tay Pay" O'Connor. One day at lunch they said, "Let us go up on the upper deck and talk religion." We went. There were some outstanding men there, men whose names you would recognize as great leaders were I free to mention them. We spoke of one subject only, religion. And Mr.

Darrow said, "Religion is the finest dope in the world. My wife takes it, and it seems to do her good. I wish I could take it, but I cannot." He was utterly irreligious, utterly atheistic, and yet withal apparently a kindly disposed man.

If religion were only dope, as Mr. Darrow says, if it were only a delusion, what of it? It would be a sad thing for us. And yet I do not know that I would take it away from a man. It has done good; but the fact that it heals withered hands, that it sheds light everywhere, that it has a morally uplifting power that has exalted nations wherever its principles have been received, ought to stamp it as being of God—as some of us know that it is of God.

Is it lawful then to do good? Why should we in this place be held up as the offscouring of the earth? I have been here now over twenty-two years, and I do not preach a thing that I did not preach when I came. I have believed these fundamentals of the faith since the day that God saved me. I believe when a soul is really saved he receives the truth in germ, and if he lives to be as old as Methuselah, while he will enlarge and develop, he will always be true to the great principles of salvation by grace. What harm have we done? We have seen literally thousands in the last twenty years whose hands have been made whole. But it is enough for the servant that he be as his Lord.

Jesus Christ, having thus spoken to the critics, *they held their peace*. I wish our modern critics would do the same. When you have devised a gospel that will make the drunkard sober, that will purify the lips of the blasphemer, that will reunite severed families, that will make the thief honest, and the liar truthful; when you have devised a gospel that will bring employer and employee together in happy and cooperative service, when you have devised a gospel which can do for man what this gospel, where it is believed, has always done, then you may boast. But until that time, if you cannot heal the withered hands of men, if you have no balm for the wounds of the world, if you know of no means whatever by which their sins may be washed away, I beg of you, in the name of God and humanity, hold your peace and leave men to the sinners' Saviour.

For when He had so said, He "looked round about on them in anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts". *It is one of the few instances in which our Lord showed anger*. His anger was manifested toward the carping critics who were waiting to find fault with Him, as He was waiting to do good. He looked round about Him with anger.

A dear friend said to me the other day, "Why do you rebuke the critics? Why do you pay any attention to them?" I said to him, "He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. When I see wolves coming in sheep's clothing, when I see religious leaders exploiting the people, feathering their own nests, merely playing at being religious, it will not be my fault if I do not strip the sheep's clothing from them, and show them for what they are, wolves in sheep's clothing.

Have a care for the sheep, my friend, instead of for the wolf. Be a little more thoughtful of the policeman

(Continued on page 12)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

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No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 38 September 18th, 1932

THIRD QUARTER.

RAHAB AND THE SPIES.

Lesson Text: Joshua, chapter 2.

Golden Text: "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."—Exodus 12:13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Psalm 83:1-8.
 Tuesday—II. Samuel 17:15-22.
 Wednesday—Numbers 35:13-28.
 Thursday—Genesis 19:11-24.
 Friday—Exodus 12:1-13.
 Saturday—Revelation 7:9-17.

I. THE SPIES IN JERICHO (vs. 1-3).

Before crossing the Jordan, and in order to gain knowledge of the land in accordance with the wisdom of good generalship, before he should advance therein, Joshua sent two men to spy out the land, instructing them to, "Go view the land even Jericho." This was not a manifestation of lack of faith on the part of the leader, but a natural use of means in order to gain information. We infer from the record that the sending of the spies, and the receipt of their report on their return, were both done secretly in relation to Israel. The report of former spies had wrought great havoc (Numbers 14:1), and Joshua took no chances of the same thing occurring on this occasion. Departing on their errand, the men arrived in Jericho, and "came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there". The men would probably choose this house as the most convenient place in which to stay, without particular knowledge of its inhabitants; but divine leading is manifest in that God would save the people associated therewith. This emphasizes the necessity for being in touch with God at all times, that He may direct us in His way, for He has His prospective people in the most unlikely places. Note how God may use His own under all circumstances, as Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 41:16), Daniel in Babylon (Dan. 2:28), and Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:31); and how He can turn even adverse circumstances to His glory.

The arrival of the men in Jericho had been noted by someone, possibly a sentry, and the king was informed of it. In their disturbed state of mind—due to the presence of the Israelites a few miles away—the people, especially those in authority, would be more than usually alert concerning the arrival of strangers in their city. The purpose of the men in their midst being realized, the king requested Rahab to bring them forth unto him. The request was a natural one under the circumstances, but the result of complying with it would be serious for the men, as they would undoubtedly have been put to death. Spies, in war time, are generally rewarded in some such fashion when caught. The mission of the spies was therefore dangerous. They were taking their lives in their hands in

the performance of their duty. They counted not their lives dear unto them that they might by faithfulness carry out their mission. Note the necessity for the manifestation of the same spirit in Christian work (I. Corin. 4:2); also observe the fact of the number of spies sent, one would help the other, as also in the case of the disciples (Mark 6:7).

II. HIDING THE SPIES (vs. 4-7).

Rahab answered the king's request by making an untruthful statement concerning the men: she declared she did not know from whence they were, and that they had left her house about the time of the shutting of the gate, and advised instant pursuit of them that they might be captured. "But she had brought them up to the roof of the house and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof." The spreading of vegetables upon the roof at a certain season of the year for the purpose of drying was a custom of the east. The reason for the woman's attitude, so full of danger to herself, was due to the fact of her knowledge of Israel's power, and her faith in the future victory of that nation over her own people (Heb. 11:31). There would also be in operation within her the principle of protecting those who had eaten of her salt. She may not have realized the wrong of stating that which was untrue, but may have justified her attitude by the circumstances attendant thereupon. Her faith was not misplaced, she had rightly understood signs of the times, and in throwing in her lot with the people of God she gained life and its attendant blessings.

Her faith was not unattended by works. Mere belief in the destiny of Israel would not have saved her, as mere intellectual assent to scriptural truth is also insufficient to salvation; but she manifested the same in works in hiding the spies—as each person must put his belief into operation in actually trusting Christ. The ruse of Rahab was successful, and the men went on to the Jordan fords in pursuit of the spies, the city gate being closed after their departure. The spies seemingly were trapped, but a way of escape was found for them over the wall, reminding us of Paul's similar mode of exit from a likewise dangerous position (II. Cor. 11:33). In the service of God there is at times adventure of a somewhat exciting nature. The servant of God must be prepared for anything.

III. THE COVENANT WITH RAHAB (vs. 8-24).

After the departure of the men who were seeking the spies Rahab ascended to the roof to converse with the latter, and to come to some agreement concerning the preservation of herself and family. She admitted, first of all her knowledge of the fact that God had given the land to the Israelites, and confessed that the terror of them had fallen upon her people, due to their knowledge of that which God had done for them. In this statement God received the glory for that which was done. There is also implied in it the fact of a widespread knowledge of the work of God on behalf of His people. When God works in accordance with His desires the world takes notice of it, and bears testimony to the supernatural power manifested, as witnessed in the history of the early church (Acts 2:6), and in many a revival movement since then.

After her candid confession Rahab appealed for the preservation of her family from death, basing her appeal on the kindness which she had shown them. It implied the returning of one good turn for another, and gave further proof of the presence of faith. A request was also made therein for a token of their consent to her request. Such was readily granted on condition that their business was not disclosed (v. 14). The men promised that kindness would be shown her family, and gave directions concerning the binding of the scarlet cord in the window, and the gathering of the members of the family into the house (vs. 17-21). It was probably after the giving of these directions that she let them over the wall by the cord, after which they hid themselves three days in the mountains and then returned to their camp in safety (vs. 15, 16, 22-24). This agreement was in the nature of a covenant, with two parts, and its fulfilment dependent upon the faithful carrying out of both.

Certain things are worthy of note in connection with this covenant in the light of its typical teaching. First, it was made in view of impending judgment. Jericho was a doomed city on account of its sin, and the whole world is likewise under condemnation for the same reason (John 3:18). As in the former, the judgment of the future will be certain and complete, and will be experienced by all who are not sheltered in the divine place of refuge. In the second place it may be observed that the salvation promised in the covenant was depending upon the persons concerned being and remaining in the chosen place of safety. In God's plan of salvation only those will be eternally saved who are in Christ (John 5:24). All those outside of Him will perish. It is of interest further to note that all who were saved in Jericho were sheltering behind the scarlet cord which was the token of their salvation. We are reminded by this of the Israelites in Egypt who were sheltered by the blood on the lintel and side posts of their doors (Ex. 12:13), both speaking of the blood of Christ which in the judgment to come will shelter all who before that will take refuge under it. Such a place of refuge is eternal, divine, secure, free, and for whosoever will.

Several additional matters are worthy of consideration in connection with the divine plan of salvation as herein illustrated. Salvation was dependent on another Rahab, and the members of her family could not save themselves: all they could do was to await the fulfilment of the word of the spies, in their coming to take them from the scene of strife. Man can do nothing to save himself from the penalty of sin: he can only trust Another to do this for him (Eph. 2:5). Action was necessary on the part of those who were saved in order to benefit from the plan of salvation. They were enjoined to enter the house. This meant putting their faith into practice. Without this manifest exercise of faith they would have been lost, and without personal trust in Christ men will be lost eternally.

While in the house Rahab and her family were under the protection of the covenant, and saints of God are in the enjoyment of the benefits of the new covenant (Heb. 12:24). And it may be observed further that those persons were saved unto a larger life with the people of God, Rahab becoming an ancestress of our Lord (Matt. 1:5).

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The Union Baptist Witness

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THE HISTORY OF OUR LIBERIAN WORK.

From time to time it has been contemplated putting into pamphlet form the story of the establishing of the Liberian Mission and eventually this will be done. For those, however, who wish to have the information before them at this time, an outline covering the beginnings of the work and the choosing of the field is given.

A Foreword.

The Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec is a fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches, operating as a Convention, for the furtherance of missionary endeavour at home and abroad.

The Union was formed on October 19th, 1927. It was the expression of some ten thousand people within the Convention known as the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, and was definitely organized to protest against the teaching of modernism prevalent in that Convention, and to maintain a testimony concerning the historic belief of Baptists, a belief which was consistent with accepting the sixty-six books of the Bible as the inspired word of God, as no other book or books have been or will be inspired.

Taking such a position as the above, it will be understood that the policy of the churches was distinctly missionary and evangelical and one of the first actions of the Executive Board, appointed by the Convention, was to consider a missionary policy.

From the inception of the Union, Home Mission churches were supported and a Foreign field considered.

Choosing Africa.

For years, the burden of Africa had been laid upon the hearts of the Canadian Baptist people, but under the old regime, it did not seem possible to open work in that land. The consideration of a Foreign Mission field by the Union resulted, after much prayer, in the choosing of Africa. It was surely indicative of the Lord's guidance that there was not a dissenting voice—all were of one mind.

The Special Field.

Africa and its great need—east and west and north and south—was considered. Where should the Union begin to work?

Much of the land was already possessed by missionary societies, although evangelization had not been undertaken by them in great areas.

While Baptists ever claim a distinctive message, it was felt that a land permitting of expansion and encroaching on no territory of another missionary society would be the most acceptable. With the map of Africa before them, the Executive Committee made the choosing of a field a matter of earnest prayer, looking to the Lord to guide concerning it.

Rev. A. W. Banfield's Visit.

In the month of April of the year 1928, Rev. A. W. Banfield, representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a man whose knowledge of Africa is exceptionally wide, met with the members of the Executive Committee of the Executive Board of the Union and reviewed with them the districts in Africa which presented the greatest need.

Mr. Banfield spoke of the opportunity awaiting those who could enter the French Ivory Coast, but advised that it was not open to missionaries other than those trained and educated in France. He told of the need in Abyssinia but pointed out that that door was also closed to British missionaries. Latterly he mentioned the Republic of Liberia—a country where the Government was nominally Christian, but where little work was being done by any independent missionary society or denomination. The aborigines of Liberia were still savages. The governing class, known as Liberians, were for the most part importations, negroes from America, or the descendants of American negroes.

Liberia, Our Field.

In his statement to the Executive, Mr. Banfield said that it was the desire of most missionary societies to work in a country protected by one of the European powers and pointed out the many difficulties of working where the Black man ruled.

With all this in mind, the Executive Board of the Union was burdened for the country situated on the West coast of Africa between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast; the country where great tribes of people were still under bondage. They were persuaded that should the door open for work in the Ivory Coast that a Mission established in Liberia would be able to expand its work and send workers into that country more readily than if located elsewhere. Furthermore, the Union proposed doing a pioneer work and Liberia seemed to offer a virgin field. Before God, believing it was His will for them, the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, through its Executive Board decided that the first foreign missionary enterprise would be undertaken in the Republic of Liberia, Africa.

The First Missionaries.

Almost coincident with the choosing of the field, applications were received from experienced missionaries, the Rev. A. J. Lewis of Philadelphia and Mr. H. L. Davey of Ottawa.

An Important Date.

Rev. A. J. Lewis and Rev. H. L. Davey were eventually accepted for service and after some visiting among the churches of the Union proceeded to the chosen field of labour, leaving Canada on the 5th day of October, 1928, and reaching the shores of Liberia on December 1st, 1928, having spent several weeks in England gathering what information they could and arranging for transportation.

(To be Continued)

MORE GOOD NEWS FROM MONTREAL.

St. Paul's Bilingual Regular Baptist Church.

Some four months ago, it was decided to separate the French and the English work at St. Paul's Church. Now the two races hold separate services. The French and morning services are conducted by the Rev. A. St. James and the English and evening services, and the Sunday School, are conducted by Mr. Burling, assisted by Mr. Brodie Jamieson.

During the four months of operation much encouragement has been received and the English work is experiencing growth. The Sunday School which began with about twenty children has now between forty and fifty in attendance. The mid-week prayer meeting is splendidly attended. The evening services on the Lord's day which began with less than a dozen people, now attract between fifty and sixty adults and children.

In reporting the services, Mr. J. W. Jamieson, writes—"We must say and acknowledge that God has blessed us exceedingly both in spiritual and temporal blessings. We have sought Him in fervent prayer asking His blessing and He has not disappointed us." It is hoped that the English work will soon become a strong Regular Baptist Church.

French Beneficent, Montreal.

It is always a joy to hear from the Rev. Jules Dautheny. Mr. Dautheny's letters are always interesting and we publish the one of August 29th in its entirety:

"Sunday morning the 27th of August, the French Beneficent Regular Baptist Church, had the joy of receiving into its fold, three new members, by confession of their faith and baptism, in St. Paul's Regular Baptist Church. A man and his wife, and an old lady of eighty years of age. For several months that old lady has not missed a service, and when the baptism was over, she said to me: 'Pastor, I am young again, I start a new life now!' All the three were Roman Catholic before, and now rejoice to be soldiers of the Lord. I was happy, too, and cannot hold the tears from my eyes, in seeing their happiness.

"God be blessed, it is not in vain that we sow the Good Seed, the harvest will come surely.

"Do not forget our work in your prayers, the field is ripe now for the harvest."

Such a letter as that which comes from Mr. Dautheny brings us much happiness and his appeal on behalf of prayer for the work must not be made in vain.

REMEMBER THE WORK AMONG THE FRENCH PEOPLE IN PRAYER. MAKE ITS SUPPORT ASSURED THROUGH YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS.

AN ADDITION.

Last week we reported special services being carried on by Messrs. Lorne and Bruce Hisey. We did not know at that time that Mr. Roy Hisey was also assist-

Frank E. Johnson
Jack E. Johnson

ing as preacher and that the campaign at Avoca had been in progress since August 8th.

We hear that the meetings are growing in interest and that numbers are under conviction of sin. Prayer is asked that salvation will come to the town.

ALTON.

For a considerable period, we have had no report concerning the work at Alton and it is a pleasure now to tell of the progress of the work there. Mr. Raymond Le Drew is much encouraged as he labours for God in that place. On Sunday evening, August 28th, a congregation of well nigh two hundred people gathered in the church and listened to the true gospel message.

Next Lord's day, the Rev. W. J. Thomson, recently returned to Toronto after some five months in Western Canada, will preach at Alton.

ESSEX.

Good times are being experienced at Essex. At the close of a recent Sunday

evening service two expressed their desire to know the Saviour. Last Sunday evening Mr. Fullard preached to a crowded church and one believer followed her Lord in baptism.

TORONTO CHURCHES.

During the summer months, it is necessary for many churches in Toronto to close, but if there are any of the churches associated with the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec that close their doors during the vacation period, we do not know of them. The services in the Toronto churches of our Convention during the summer months have been greatly blessed of the Lord and on August 28th, salvation visited more than one place where the Word was proclaimed. Praise Him!

A NOTE FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Sometimes the Union Office wishes that it were possible for all the members of the churches who make the work of the

Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec possible, to visit the Office and share some of the interesting letters which so often find their way to 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto. Letters concerning the Missionary Bulletin have been just lovely and sometimes when a letter is received in acknowledgment of some service rendered, giving, in its pages, bits of news from far away, the whole day is brightened and it seems that the ties of fellowship are strengthened.

From British Columbia, the following letter is received:

"I received the information on Liberia. It was most helpful and I thank you so much. We were glad to know how well the work is going and we can plainly see the need. . . . Personally, I have felt a great drawing to the work in Africa and Liberia in particular ever since we as Baptists in British Columbia thought of taking up that work in conjunction with you. . . . I pray your efforts will be blest and souls saved in that needy land."

A WITHERED HAND.

(Continued from page 9)

than of the thief he is trying to catch. I find my pacifist friends are always readier to take sides with the critics of Christ than with those who defend His gospel: they refrain from criticising the critics, but are ready enough to rebuke us for our defense of the faith.

He "looked round about on them with anger", and I think I do well to be angry with the deceptions and the deceivers that characterize our day. We do well to carry people back to the simplicity of faith in Christ.

Then this great Saviour, having thus turned His glance for a moment upon His critics, turned to the man with the withered hand and commanded him to do the impossible: "Stretch forth thine hand." He had no difficulty in standing forth, for his feet were not withered. He would have had no difficulty in speaking, for his tongue had not lost its power. He could see, and speak, and walk; but he had a withered hand. Jesus Christ pointed to the withered hand and said, "Stretch forth thy hand."

What happened? He did as he was told. What followed? As he stretched forth his hand it was made whole. You say, "How could he do it?" He could not have done it in response to any other than the command of Jesus Christ. But with that command there went a promise. When Jesus Christ said to him, "Stretch forth thy hand", in effect he said, "I put at your command all the powers of God. If you will trust Him you will be made whole." And this man trusted Jesus Christ for what He was, his Creator, his Lord. He yielded his will, and the moment he did so divine power came into him, and he was made whole.

What is it to believe? Simply to give Jesus Christ His proper place. I met a young lady this morning who said she could not quite understand, but that she wanted to. I said to her, "Next week there is to be an eclipse of the sun, and astronomers from all parts of the world will be yonder in Quebec where the eclipse will be total. It will be slightly over ninety per cent. here." I wonder how they know to a fraction of a second when the shadow will appear on the face of the sun? We are sure it will not be behind: it will be right to the fraction of a second. I have a good watch, but I do not know what it will be next

week. I may forget to wind it, or let it fall. It may be behind time, but the sun has never been behind yet. In this material universe God's laws are invariable and inexorable. They are like Himself, unchangeable.

So men of science, reading the face of God's clock, say, "We will tell you to the fraction of a second when the eclipse will appear. A group of astronomers meeting in Spain a few years ago said they could predict an eclipse a hundred years in advance to a fraction of a second. You say, "Wonderful men, are they not?" Ah, but who made the clock? Who keeps it wound? What intelligence is behind it? What invariable purpose is behind it all?

What is faith? It is enthroning God apart from all others. Faith means separating God from everybody and saying, "I cannot trust my best friend. However willing to help me he may be, he may not be able. But I can trust God because He is God."

When Jesus Christ said, "Stretch forth thy hand", this man attempted to do what God told him to do, and the Lord honoured his faith.

You have heard that story of Napoleon when he was once reviewing his troops? His horse broke loose and galloped down the line. A private stepped from the ranks and caught the horse by the bridle, and brought it back to the Emperor. "Thank you, Captain", said Napoleon. "Of what regiment, sire?" asked the private. "Of my guards," the Emperor replied. The Emperor had called him a captain, and he believed his word.

The Centurian said to Jesus Christ, "I can command, and people obey me; Thou canst command, and whoever and whatever Thou commandest will obey Thee." This man believed, and when Jesus said, "Stretch forth thy hand", he did it; and was made whole.

Will you take God's word for it that Jesus Christ died for you, that He was buried in your room and stead, and that on the third day the angel rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and that that poor sinner, in the Person of his Substitute, sitting down in the pew came out a free man, a free woman, with all debts paid? Now you are on resurrection ground with Jesus Christ. Judgment is behind you, and nothing ahead but the path of the just that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day". Will you trust Him? He will make you whole.