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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HEARING, BELIEVING. OBEYING.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, Sunday Evening, February 12th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported—Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c.,
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"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."—Acts 2:41.

The text and the chapter we read together this evening direct attention to the foundation of the Christian church and to the apostolic method of propagating the faith, and although it is such a familiar chapter I ask you to join me this evening in an examination of the principles which are here set forth.

Here faith came "by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." I should like you to consider *the word which they heard and received; the faith which received it; and the obedience which followed.*

1.

WHAT WAS THE WORD WHICH THE MULTITUDE HEARD at the lips of the Apostle Peter on that Pentecostal occasion? I wonder how much of modern preaching would be likely to lead anyone to faith and obedience? This sort of preaching did, and we may wisely enquire as to the content of this apostolic sermon which issued in such grand results.

The word which Peter preached on that occasion was *a word of a verified Scripture.* You cannot listen attentively to the reading of that second chapter without observing how full of the Old Testament scripture that apostolic sermon is. Peter contented himself with merely quoting the word of God, and then in a very simple fashion making application of its principles and precepts to his hearers.

He began his explanation of the manifestation of supernaturalism on the day of Pentecost by insisting that it was a fulfilment of Scripture, that that which had been written had now become verified in the experience of those who believed it. That is a principle which obtains in almost all spheres of human enquiry. A man comes back from some

remote part of the country with something he thinks is gold. What does he do? He takes it to an expert that the ore may be appraised as to its gold content, whether there is a sufficient percentage of gold in the ore to pay for its mining. If an experiment is conducted in some department of science, men do not immediately run wild about it. They demand that the thing be carefully examined, and that the principle announced as discovered in this new branch of science shall be established as trustworthy and altogether reliable. When some picture turns up in an old gallery that is alleged to be the work of one of the great masters, some connoisseur, an expert, is called in order that the picture may be duly authenticated, that it may be learned whether it is one of the master's works or not. The cashier at a bank, when a cheque is passed across the counter to him, does not pay it until he has examined the signature, and has assured himself that the cheque is good. When telegraphy was discovered, and later the telephone, the wireless, and the radio, they all had to be proved.

We do not complain when people enquire whether the Bible is really the word of God. I think it would be folly to accept it, and depend upon it, until it is proved that it is the word of God. I do not wonder that people should diligently enquire whether this is actually the word of God; so much is at stake. Peter believed it to be the word of God, declared it to be divinely inspired, and rested his whole case upon its reliability. He declared that the Scripture had been authenticated, that its truth had been demonstrated in human experience, that it was no longer a matter of theory, but that it had been translated into actual experience by those who trusted it—"This is that which was spoken."

I venture to affirm that there is nothing commonly believed by men which has been so utterly and to the limit proved to be true as that the Bible is the word of God. We shall never have pentecostal results without pentecostal authority. The preacher who puts a question mark after his text must expect that his hearers will put several question marks after his sermon. There was no doubt whatever in the mind of Peter that this was the word of God—and he so proclaimed it. And it was because of that that the multitude were led to believe. The Word of God has a way of verifying itself in the experience of those who receive it, so that we know beyond all peradventure that this is the word of God "that liveth and abideth for ever".

Then Peter preached, in the word which the people received, *the doctrine of a certified Saviour*, if I may so put it. Go into a doctor's office, and in many instances you will find his credentials upon the wall, certifying that he has passed through a certain course of training, that he has submitted to many difficult examinations, that he has done certain clinical work, and has had practical experience in the science which he now professes. They certify that he is at last duly qualified as a trustworthy physician who knows the science he practices.

When the ambassador goes to a foreign court he must present his credentials; it must be known that he is possessed of the necessary authority to act for the government he represents.

It is quite legitimate to ask questions about the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, in the days of His flesh, He never discouraged people from asking Him questions. He asked questions about Himself: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" We are not asked to stultify our intellectual powers. We are not asked to set aside our reason and blindly to accept an unauthenticated dictum from anywhere. Much less are we asked to commit ourselves to One Who calls Himself a Saviour, without absolute proof that He is all that He claims to be. That question as to the person and work of Christ has been asked in all ages, and is being asked still.

That was the burden of Peter's message, to tell who Jesus Christ was; whence He came; what He came to do; and what the qualifications of His high office were. He declared that He was a Man Who was manifestly approved of God by the supernatural character of the life He lived, by the signs and wonders He wrought; and Peter threw his hearers back upon their own experience and observation, saying, "As ye yourselves also know."

They knew that as a man He was different from all other men. There were signs accompanying His teaching. There was an authority which clothed His every utterance, which showed Him to be a Prophet of God, a Man approved of the Lord. Never did Peter suggest a doubt as to His origin, as to the genuineness of His character and message. He said His whole career was stamped with Heaven's own approval. He declared also that His death was divinely ordered. He said in effect that the high priest and the rulers of the people accomplished it "by wicked hands", but that it was no accident: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." His death was ordained from all eternity. He came to die "the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God".

It is well, therefore, if we are to believe in Christ that we should have the clearest view of His work in our

behalf, that He came to this earth to execute a clearly defined mission, that He never was in any doubt as to the work He had to do, and that He finished that work to absolute completion. I find myself utterly unable to afford any hospitality to the idea that there was any uncertainty about the earthly course of Jesus Christ, that the issue of His life was ever doubtful. He knew from the beginning every step of the way. Peter declared that it was all of divine arrangement, that He came to die.

Then he added this great word: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." That was ever the keynote of apostolic testimony because that was the keystone to divine revelation. It was the culmination of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. He declared that He would rise again. Even His enemies were afraid of Him, for they said, "This deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." Peter, speaking to many who had witnessed His crucifixion, declared that when they had exercised the utmost power of their opposition, and had laid Him in the grave, and had set a stone upon it and sealed it with Caesar's authority—that notwithstanding all that, He did exactly as He said He would do, and on the third day He rose again.

If the resurrection of Jesus Christ be genuine, if it be an established fact, then He is divinely certified as the One Whom God said should come into the world.

Then Peter proceeded further to say: "This Jesus hath God raised up, *whereof we all are witnesses*." John stood with Peter, and later said, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life as manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

How different was this apostolic preaching from the doubtful discussions of religious matters we hear from many modern pulpits! These apostolic preachers spoke with the utmost dogmatism, they spoke with the authority of that which had been demonstrated to be absolutely final, a word from Heaven—and the last word—which was proved to be true, that He died, and that He rose again from the dead. A certified Saviour this apostolic preacher offered to the people.

Then he proclaimed also *a sovereign Lord*: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted." That is a figure doubtless intended to signify the utmost of divine power, the acme of almightiness, the outputting of all the might of Deity, challenging not only the powers of this world, but the powers of the world to come. The Head of "all principalities and powers" Jesus Christ was declared to be, and it was said that He was "by the right hand of God exalted", and was then in session at the right hand of the Majesty on high. I shall not beg of you to condescend to receive Jesus Christ: I come rather to tell you that He Who was crucified, was raised again from the dead, and has been exalted by divine power, that He is seated upon Heaven's throne; and that just as surely as the day was appointed for His crucifixion, so is the day appointed for His ultimate coronation, when His enemies shall be made the footstool for His feet, when He shall tread down in anger all those who rebel against Him.

I am not at all perturbed by national, international, or world conditions to-day. Nothing occurs that has escaped

the divine prescience, it was all anticipated; and in God's own good time this sovereign Lord whom God hath made Lord of all will certainly come, and the kingdoms of this world shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever". "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

I have no patience whatever with the—what shall I call it?—the trivial discussions of the hour, the assumption that the ultimate issue of the kingdom of God is hanging in the balance. I heard a man say years ago that he was rather weary of beardless youths just from college, with their faces set toward some mission field, tell their congregation before going, that such-and-such a country was at the cross-roads, that it was now or never, that they must have the gospel now or forever reject it,—as though the Lord of all the ages had not taken all these things into account, and planned for the ultimate sovereignty of His Son, and for His ultimate Lordship over the sons of men. I think if we are to have a virile, vigorous faith in our day, we must get a clear view of Jesus Christ, and remember that He has been "by the right hand of God exalted", and that His enemies will—and must be—made His footstool.

Do not hang your head. Do not apologize for being a Christian. Do not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth".

I love to turn over in my mind that other utterance of Peter when he and the other disciples had been brought before the council for their testimony to Jesus Christ, because they preached through Jesus Christ the resurrection of the dead. Again this same apostle, when he had spoken of the resurrection of Christ, said, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." No weakling is this Jesus Whom we ask you to trust. Of what value would a Saviour be to us if He were not a sovereign Lord? For "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places". If He Who is the Captain of our salvation had not spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, what hope could we have that, following Him, we should be led to victory?

I beg you to trust One Who has all the powers of Deity in His hand, Who is indeed God from everlasting to everlasting, enthroned at this hour at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

Peter preached also *a sanctifying Power*. He spoke of the ascended Christ, but in the same breath he spoke of the descending Spirit. He said that the presence of the Spirit on earth was the incontrovertible proof of the presence of the Saviour in heaven: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Many of those who listened to Peter had stood round about the cross, and I have no doubt that those who were chiefly responsible for His death were in that vast congregation; for Peter addressed them personally and said, "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." He brought home to them the responsibility for the death of Christ. I doubt not they thought back over the few days that had intervened since

that dark hour on Calvary, and remembered how weak and helpless the Figure on the central cross had seemed to be. They remembered how He suffered the taunts of the enemy, and was spat upon by the creatures of His hand.

What does it mean to follow such an One as that? Well might Peter fear when summoned, challenged to become the disciple of the despised and crucified Man of Nazareth. It was necessary for the inspiration of faith, in order to inspire in the disciples a holy courage, that they should clearly understand that He Who was laid in the grave was now in the glory, and that He Who died on the cross was now enthroned on God's right hand. It ought to be easy for one to trust Him there.

Having proclaimed these things, a verified Scripture, a certified Saviour, a sovereign Lord, an almighty and abiding Spirit, he also proclaimed *a free and full salvation*, declaring that in that very book it was written, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Can you have a fuller gospel than that? Is there anything omitted from the category of our needs? Can anybody conceive of anything that is not comprehended in this gospel of the grace of God?

II.

When Peter thus preached the word of God, by the hearing of that word FAITH WAS BROUGHT IN THE HEARTS OF HIS HEARERS. We are told that they "received his word". You know what it means to receive anybody or anything. There are people whose minds are shut against the truth—the truth about anything. Very few people are governed by principle. Very few people are amenable to reason. The overwhelming majority of people are governed by sentiment, by prejudice. They believe what they believe because they want to believe it. It is impossible in many instances to find access to their minds. There are many people who are possessed of what the psychologists call "imperative ideas". The matter is settled. The door is shut, locked, bolted, and barred. We may as well pass on to the next place, for there is no further word to be said on the subject.

But there is a record in this same book of a mind that had been shut, which the Lord opened. It is said of Lydia, the seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Again the Scripture verified itself, and by the power of the Holy Ghost which Peter proclaimed, the hearts of his hearers were opened, so that they received His word.

That is how faith comes. When the Spirit of God enlightens our understanding so that we come to see who Jesus Christ is, what He is, what He undertakes to do, when we see the reasonableness of it, when we see that the whole testimony of the gospel is a message from heaven and is divine, when reason is thus sublimed—or, let me rather say, is restored to its proper exercise, it accepts the word of God; for a man is never so reasonable as when he believes implicitly the word of God that cannot lie.

What does it mean to believe? It means, first, to believe the Book. I wonder how many here this evening do really, unquestionably, as the deepest conviction of their souls, believe that this Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God, that it is actually a letter from the Sky, the very message of Heaven to a bankrupt world. Do you believe that? Many of you do, I know. But I wonder

are there some others here this evening in whom faith has really now been wrought?

I remember someone—I think she is here to-night—who turned to a friend one morning during the progress of the sermon and said, "I believe." Of course. When the mind and heart are opened by the Holy Ghost so that Heaven's truth shines in, there is nothing else to do but to receive the word, and believe it.

Do you believe the Book? What a blessing if you do! The record which God has given to us of His Son. I insist upon that again and again. I want to drive it into your minds. I want you to understand it, and believe it, so that you will never let it go, that not only the New Testament, but the Old, from Genesis to Revelation, is that record. It is all full of Christ, and it is all the record which God has given to us of His Son. The prophecy in the Old Testament, foretelling His coming, is fulfilled minutely in His earthly life, in his death and resurrection.

And then they received the word about His Saviourhood. They said, "It is all true that is written in the Book, and Jesus of Nazareth is the Fulfilment of the world's desire. He is the desire of all nations. We need not look for another. Messiah has actually come." That is what they said in their hearts.

I wonder if I speak to some Hebrew friends this evening? I have heard of not a few among our radio hearers. Oh, my Hebrew brethren, why wait for another Messiah? The disciples of John said, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" To which our Lord replied, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them—ask John if that is the kind of Messiah he is looking for? if that is what he wants? That is what I am doing."

That is what this great company at Pentecost said in their hearts. They looked no farther. Jesus Christ was the last Word, the eternal Logos, the Word made flesh, the Summary, the Epitome, which completed all God had said, or could say. He is the Effulgence of grace, the Saviour of men.

Do you thus regard Him? Can you say in your heart, I believe Jesus Christ is just that?

They believed in His sovereign Lordship too. I shall not preach Him merely as an Example, I shall not say to you that you may take it or leave it. I have told you the truth. God "commandeth men everywhere to repent". You reject the gospel at your peril. I dare say there are hundreds of people—in the course of the years, thousands of people—who have come within these walls, and heard the gospel preached from this pulpit, who have said, "I will not go back again." Some may be listening to-night. Very well. I will meet you at the judgment-seat and dare to say, I preached to you the gospel, and your blood is upon your own head. If you dare to try conclusions with the Lord God Almighty, then you must; but your blood shall be upon our own head.

I ask you to-night if, in your conception of Jesus Christ, He is Lord? Is He the Creator of all worlds, the Judge of all the earth Who must do right? Is He the One Whose dominion shall stretch from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth? I preach you more than a human Saviour, even One Who is exalted to God's

right hand; and I demand of you in the name of the Lord that you receive Him as such.

A certain prominent man in Toronto, according to the papers, announced his determination henceforth to ask the Lord what He wanted Him to do. That is a very imperfect attitude. We are to come to Him as Saviour, I know, for the forgiveness of sins; but we are to come to Him also as our Lord Who has the sovereign, inherent, eternal, right to command. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Ask Him what to do? Listen rather to His command, and remember that the One Whom the winds and the waves obey must be implicitly obeyed by you also. He is your Lord.

What is the gospel? "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord . . . thou shalt be saved." Jesus a Saviour from sin? Yes; but Jesus Christ Who has become Lord.

"Therefore", said Peter, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And I insist that no man rightly receives Christ who does not receive Him as Lord. It is not your duty to ask what your minister or your church has to say about anything: your supreme concern should be to come to the feet of Christ as did Saul of Tarsus, crying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" That is the only appropriate attitude for a renewed soul. When true faith is wrought in the soul that inevitably is the attitude which that soul will assume toward its ascended Lord and Saviour.

Do you believe that the Holy Ghost has come? "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Do you believe that, though Jesus Christ is in heaven, the Holy Spirit is here, and that if you believe on Him, and receive Him, He will come in and take possession of you, and flood your soul with light, and life, and power? How much we need that! That is the trouble with a great many who say, "I should like to be a Christian, sir, if I could believe I could live up to it." I will tell you in advance you cannot. Salvation is all grace from the beginning to the end, and it is only by the power of the Holy Ghost that it ever becomes possible for any man to do the will of God. Thus they received His word—not taking part of the message and rejecting the rest. They accepted it all, with its biblical foundation, and with its coronation in glory.

Best of all, they received the word "gladly". They did not offer a grudging hospitality to the truth. They did not say, "We will try to believe it. I hope what you say is true." When you have been expecting a friend, and at last the door-bell rings, how do you receive him? I know how you receive the agent who comes to sell something—at least, I know how you do not receive him. You do not go to the door at all; or, if you do, it is only to say, "Not to-day, thank you"—and bang goes the door.

That is not the way to receive the gospel. That is not the way you receive a friend. You throw wide the door and say, "I am glad to see you; come in." Thus are we to welcome the gospel: "They . . . gladly received the word." Why should we not receive it gladly?

Are you glad the Bible is true (Chorus of Yes). That is a simple question that the boys and girls could answer. Are you really glad the Bible is the word of God? Does it find a response in your heart? Do you say, "I am glad I have a letter from Heaven with my Father's sig-

nature on it"? Do you receive that truth "gladly"? Are you glad that Jesus Christ died and rose again? Have you looked to the cross and said, "I am so glad that He paid my debt. I am so glad He suffered in my room and stead"? When you come to the open grave do you say, "I am glad it is empty. That grave is my grave. It was my Substitute they laid there. It was my Substitute they slew on the tree, and put in that sepulchre. But now it is empty—empty for Him, and it is empty for me"? Can you say that? And are you glad about it? The gospel is glad tidings, and ought to make you glad.

Are you glad He is in heaven? Jesus Christ said, "It is expedient for you that I go." How proud you are when you have a friend at court! You let all your friends know about it—"My friend, Mr. So-and-So"! What snobs we are! How proud we are to claim acquaintance with any man of position, and especially with some man of authority.

Let me whisper a secret to you. The heart of this sinner bounds with gladness when I reflect that I have a Friend so precious, so very dear to me. He is not Prime Minister of Canada, nor yet Prime Minister of Great Britain. He occupies no second-rate earthly position: He is on the throne of the universe, and He is my Friend. I do not wonder they were glad when they got that news, that Somebody Who had died and was risen again, and was now in glory, condescended to receive them. "They . . . gladly received his word."

I heard of a man once who went to a bank with a cheque. He was a man who had not done much business with banks, but he presented his cheque. The cashier looked at it, and said, "You will have to endorse it." "Endorse it? What do you mean?" "Put your name on the back of it." "Oh, I see." He took his pen and wrote, "I heartily endorse this cheque"! I could do that myself. I like to write my name on a cheque—on the back. I like that ever so much better than writing it on the face. I can always "heartily endorse" a cheque.

That is a pleasantry I know, but when I receive the message of the gospel which tells me of my Lord and Saviour in heaven, and of the imperishable inheritance which is mine—mine for ever—I feel like that countryman; I want to say, "I heartily endorse that; it suits me exactly. I gladly receive that word." Why not?

III.

OBSERVE THE OBEDIENCE WHICH FOLLOWED. "They that gladly received his word were baptized." They obeyed Him. But they were not baptized until they had "received his word". Neither adults nor children should ever be baptized until they are believers, until they have a personal faith in Christ—not my godfather's or my godmother's faith, but a personal faith. That is a prerequisite to baptism always. When we receive the word about the ascended Saviour, and we know He is ours, that faith ought to issue in obedience. That is the faith that worketh by love.

They were baptized. And by their baptism *they recognized and acknowledged the gospel they had heard*. What had they heard? That Jesus Christ was Lord. What else had they heard? That He commanded men everywhere to repent and be baptized in His name. The

apostle said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you"—not some of you, but all of you, as many as repent. That is the Lord's command.

"They received His word." "What word? That Jesus Christ was Lord. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" There is a certain movement quite popular in this district now, that talks about "surrendering to Christ". I should think if I accepted employment in a factory or store to-morrow, and accepted somebody's authority over me, my first duty in the morning would be to say to my master, "What are the orders for the day?" What are the orders? "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." Stop calling Jesus Christ, Lord, unless and until you are ready to do as He says. Let us not be hypocrites; let us do His commandments.

Thus they acknowledged His Lordship. Thus, too, *they showed their readiness to follow His blessed example*, for Jesus Christ walked the road before us. He is an High Priest "tempted in all points like as we are". He came in the beginning of His ministry to the brink of Jordan, and John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He is your Lord. He is your great Example: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." Do as He tells you, gladly receive His word, saying with the Psalmist, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."

Then they gave a *grateful and happy witness to the truth of which they were the recipients*, to the Power to which they were subject.

Somebody wrote me from Kentucky (I wonder are you listening to-night?), saying, "I was a thousand miles away from you last Sunday evening, but I was thrilled when I heard the baptismal candidates, in response to the enquiry whether they believed in the Lord Jesus, say, 'I do'. I heard it as distinctly as though I had been in the church building." It is a loving and grateful witness we bear to Him.

Do you receive His word? With the doors of your heart thrown wide open, can you say to-night, "Lord Jesus, come in; I receive Thy word"? I beg of you to come, as did these three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost. Receive the gospel, and obey the commandment of Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee for a full salvation, O Lord. We pray that many within these walls, and many who have listened to the testimony of Thy word by radio this evening, may really receive the message of salvation gladly, and render a willing and hearty and prompt obedience to Thy will as expressed in Thy Word. For His name's sake we ask it, Amen.

"THERE WAS NO KING IN ISRAEL."

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, February 9th, 1933.

*Thirteenth in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on
Biblical Theology (the tenth on the book of
Judges) which is included in the Curriculum
of Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: Judges, chapters 19-21.

We begin our study this evening with the nineteenth chapter of Judges. You will recall that again and again throughout the book of Judges it is said, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There was no settled government. Periodically judges were providentially raised up. They were men of great personal power, who managed to lead the people for given periods, and to restore some semblance of order to the life of Israel; but as soon as the judge passed on there was a recurrence of this state of disorder because there was no settled form of government, "there was no king in Israel".

There is a type of Evangelical Christianity which professes to be very spiritual, and which concerns itself very largely with matters relating to the future life, almost to the neglect of present-day duty. They claim to be so separated from the world that they have no obligation whatever to fulfil the duties of citizenship. Because they are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, because their citizenship is in heaven, they recognize no duty of citizenship here. I expect you have met with that type. They are not interested in any measures of reform, in any political movements which have for their object the amelioration of the difficult conditions under which people now live. And yet the same people who are so ethereal in their general outlook as almost to suggest that they do not walk this common earth are always ready to take advantage of police protection, fire protection, or any other special benefits which inhere in a properly organized society, and a justly governed country.

We believe that the teaching alike of the New Testament and the Old is that the state, some principle of human government, is divinely ordained: "The powers that be are ordained of God." We are to remember that the first social unit is the family. The family was divinely instituted; from the beginning it was said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." He was never designed to live alone. Human nature has certain social instincts; hence the divine law is given to govern our relationships to God, and to our fellow.

But the second institution we find in the Word of God is the state. After the Deluge the first law that was committed to human hands for enforcement had for its object the preservation of human life: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The state was thus established; hence the first law which man was given to enforce was a law intended to preserve that which is of more value to a man than all other things, namely, his life. The Devil said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." The state therefore, is a divine institution, and was founded upon a law designed to conserve life.

The book of Judges surely tends to show us to what confusion and to what depths of iniquity men may, and will, sink, unless there be some restraining law designed for their governance. We are admonished in the New Testament to pray for kings, and governors, and for all

in authority; and I think we do well when we count our blessings, and name them one by one, to include in the list of benefits for which to thank God, the fact that we are permitted to live in an organized society, in a land of just laws where human rights are at least measurably respected, and where wrong-doing is justly punished.

I believe the chief lesson of these concluding chapters may be taken as applying to organized society. Frequently it is said in these chapters, "In those days there was no king in Israel."

But you will always find that the larger social life of any community has a direct relation to the life of the individual and to the family. It is folly to expect an ideal state to arise without first producing, by some means, ideal citizens of which it may be composed.

I hope you are all spiritual people, not in the sense merely of having a desire for spiritual things, but that your spiritual life is regulated by spiritual principles, and that your spirituality grows out of the fact that you are rooted and grounded in the word of truth; for whatever may have been the condition of the people in the time of the Judges, so far as we are concerned, with our larger light, and our higher and richer privileges as a community of believers, even if we had no temporal government, we should not be among those who have no king, or who are without authority. The authority of the Book, and of its principles and precepts, should so regulate our lives as to teach us rightly to relate ourselves to our fellows in all relationships of life, to the few and to the many, so that we may take our place in the collective life of the state, and properly exercise our God-given functions as men and women who live unto God.

Here is another story of a Levite. Last week we followed, I hope with some interest, the wanderings of a Levite at large. This is the only other example given to us in the book of Judges, in particular of the life of a Levite. This man had taken to him a wife, a wife of an inferior order in that she was without endowment, but she was his wife, and is spoken of as his wife. Her father is called the Levite's father-in-law. This wife went away from home. I do not know what sort of man the Levite was, I do not know whether he was particularly easy to live with, but I think the record rather indicates that he was a man of even temperament, and of a very generous disposition. However, for some reason or another, his wife left him. Had there been laws in the land I suppose he might have insisted upon his rights.

When you young men become pastors you will have all sorts of problems submitted to you for solution. When I was going to Chicago the other evening I got into conversation with some gentlemen. I intended to travel incognito, but it happened that one man had heard me over the radio, and though he had never seen me, said, "I know who you are; I recognize the voice." We had an example of that in our study last week: when certain people came to the house of Micah they recognized the Levite: "They knew the voice of the young man the Levite." Perhaps they would not have known him from his appearance, but they recognized his voice—you see therefore that the book of Judges is right up to the minute.

When discussing a certain problem my fellow-traveller said to me, "Gentlemen in your position naturally take rather an academic view of all these problems, because you are so separated from the actualities of life." I sat back and laughed at him, saying, "My dear sir, I meet more

cases of the sort we have been discussing in one month than you do in a year."

I talked with a lawyer once who thought he had a large knowledge of human nature. "Of course", he said, "you do not understand these things." To which I replied: "Do I not? Most of these troubles come to me, or some other minister, before they reach you—indeed, you get only the few whose differences we fail to compose. Only when they get beyond all possibility of pacific or amicable settlement do they appeal to law."

I commend to you the attitude of this man. Whenever you have problems of that sort submitted to you, it is generally wise to try to get the parties to settle their affairs themselves. I am speaking now, of course, of that social unit, the family. I remember a man's coming to me one day—it was years ago, and I am safe in referring to it now, for none of you could possibly know to whom I refer—desiring to pour a long tale of domestic woe into my ear. I listened about five minutes, and then said, "I am going to stop you. I shall not blame you too harshly, but you go home and settle this problem with your wife, and do not dare let her know that you have been to see me. What you have said this afternoon you have said to a dead man, and no living soul shall ever know that you have been to see me. Go home and settle it, and do not dare talk to me or anybody else like that again. Walk home slowly, giving yourself time to cool off; and be ashamed of yourself. Adjust this matter with your wife—and live happily ever after." I have often seen that man going to another church, with his wife on his arm, passing me by with a mere nod of the head; and I have said to myself, "I would rather see them going to another church together than to be separated, with one of them coming to Jarvis Street."

This Levite went to his wife's father's home because he had a shrewd suspicion that that was where she had gone. Some of them do go home to mother—and some wives ought never to have left home. He found his father-in-law a most agreeable man. He showed him the most hearty and generous hospitality when he came, and he entreated him to stay three days. That is a long time to stay with relatives! Do not stay too long; do not wear out your welcome. When he got up to leave in the morning apparently his wife had repented of her folly, and was ready to return with him.

Then the father-in-law further entreated him, saying on the morning of the fourth day, "Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way—let us have breakfast, and we will talk about it afterwards." That is not a bad idea. Try to get people in a proper mood. They will discuss things better when they are comfortable, and have had a good meal. He besought him to stay another night, and still another night.

There is a very useful lesson, incidentally, in hospitality. That is almost a forgotten art nowadays. There are many who do not know how to entertain strangers—or anybody else.

I have a very vivid recollection of an experience I had a few years ago, when, with a brother-pastor, I was assisting a third pastor with evangelistic services. It was a dreary town, but we had good meetings. We were staying together in a hotel—and of all the dreary places to stay I know of none more desolate than a hotel in a little town. As we came home toward the hotel each evening after the service, the pastor we were visiting was accustomed

to walk with us as far as his own street, when he would invariably say, with great heartiness, "I suppose you won't come down, will you?" What would you have said? That is almost like sending someone an invitation, and with it a reply, "I greatly regret that I am unable to accept your kind invitation"—and a place at the bottom for his signature. Do not entertain people after that fashion.

This woman's father at least knew how to make his guest feel perfectly at home. The difficulty then was to find a way graciously to leave. He pressed him to remain, but after the fifth night the man wisely resolved that he would go on his way. He left too late, however; when the day was "far spent" he left.

There is a story in the nineteenth chapter from the fifteenth verse to the end, which I will pass by, but which you may read for yourselves. It is one of the darkest, blackest, passages of Israel's history. Its only parallel is to be found in the book of Genesis. It is a horrible story, unspeakably terrible; and it belongs to a day when "there was no king in Israel," when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes".

Let us bear in mind that the principle and purpose of law is to restrain the evil-doer. People who are not themselves lawless, who desire to do righteousness, do not need the law. You do not need a law to tell you to pay your debts, do you? You do not need a law to restrain you from the doing of that which is manifestly wrong. The law is for the transgressor. There was no law, and you remember it was said—and the principle applied and still applies to civic matters as well as to spiritual affairs—"It (the law) was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." It was added to save those to whom it was given from suicide, from self-destruction socially, until the Seed should come. Be thankful for righteous laws.

This terrible chapter is a revelation of the awful state of the human heart, the depth to which human wickedness will descend if unchecked. You cannot judge what people are like naturally in a so-called Christian community. During the war there were many men who left the shores of this country who got into all sorts of difficulty, and were given up to every kind of excess of riot, who at home were perfectly respectable. People said, "What a fall!" No; it was not a fall: it was a revelation. It was there before, but due to the restraining influences of circumstances, or of a law-abiding community, it had never come to the surface. Human nature, left to itself, without the restraining effect of law, is indescribably corrupt.

This Levite was led to do a really terrible thing. There are elements in that story which are peculiarly revolting, but into that I shall not go. There is no doubt that individual wickedness is accentuated when it is found in relation to other individuals. I mean to say that a dozen people will together be guilty of iniquity from which any individual in the dozen would shrink. Mass wickedness is very often an accentuation and an intensification of the evil of the individual. And just as that is so, that it takes on a character with which no individual will can cope, so it becomes necessary to have an organized expression of the collective moral will in the form of the state.

Sometimes evils have to develop themselves in order that they may be seen in their true character, and sometimes things have to "wax worse and worse" before they can become better. This horrible wickedness committed at Gibeah had the effect of startling the whole nation, and

of bringing all the tribes together for the application of their collective might in order that they might wipe out the iniquity from among their own people that had characterized the nations which the Lord had driven out before them.

How often we have seen that principle operate in our day. Architects have become careless in the erection of public buildings, careless in the provision of proper exits. A fire breaks out which results in the loss of life, and immediately an inspection is instituted of all public buildings, and new regulations are inaugurated in order to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophe. There is a corner in the city that I think is extremely dangerous. I wrote to the police authorities some time ago, offering them, as respectfully as I could, a suggestion for the regulation of traffic at that particular point, because it is a death-trap. I received a courteous but cool letter in reply, saying that inasmuch as the corner had not been made a stop street they had no authority. It will be made a "stop street" after someone has been killed! That is how things are done. Few look in advance and prevent injury, but when a catastrophe occurs their eyes are opened.

It had to come to this, apparently, in Israel in order to shock the people into action. You remember that terrible saying of Dr. Joseph Parker when he damned the Sultan in one of his Thursday noon lectures in London, and entered a plea for Christian people to develop a capacity for moral indignation.

People become calloused so that they are no longer sensitive to evil. How strikingly that was illustrated during the Great War. I wonder how many of you have thought of that? Go back to the days before the war, when the catastrophe of the sinking of the Empress of Ireland and of the Titanic shocked the world, and put the whole world in mourning. Then we became accustomed to read day after day of casualties that took a greater toll of life than either of these—and people became accustomed to hearing of it. We are in danger of becoming like they are in some parts of the United States—indifferent to acts of lawlessness. Another bank hold-up? What of it? Such lawlessness should be ruthlessly crushed in every community where it takes place, even if the proclamation of martial law and an army with machine guns should be necessary. Fortunately we have an incorruptible judiciary and police force which brings such lawlessness to judgment.

Do you see the point? Here a condition grows worse and worse. The people did not see it coming until this fearful wickedness displayed itself, and the Levite summoned the whole nation to action. He was only, so to speak, a preacher, but he did a daring and terrible thing, with the result that "all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpeh". What a pity it was that they had to have a colossal evil of that sort show itself in order to unify them. But that is often so.

I remember the week before the war reading in *The British Weekly* an article about Ireland. There was trouble there—as there sometimes is. At that time it was between Ulster and the South. The Ulster men were drilling, and there was much political strife. Somebody asked a certain Irishman, "Will Ireland fight?" He

replied, "Yes; Ireland will fight." "Will Ireland fight the British?" "No; Ireland will not fight the British?" "Whom will they fight?" "I do not know, but the Lord will provide"! And before the next issue of the paper—I have never seen attention called to that, but I have a distinct recollection of it—before the next issue of the paper provision had been made, the Great War had begun, and for a time a united Ireland contented itself with fighting a common foe.

So this one great evil gathered together and unified the people of Israel as nothing else had done for many, many years before. They armed themselves, four hundred thousand warriors.

The guilty parties on this occasion were not the Canaanites, but they were of the tribe of Benjamin. It is a good deal harder to fight your own people than to fight strangers. I have known some intense denominationalists who were full of indignation against irregularities in doctrine or practice in all other denominations but their own. I know a certain Baptist minister who trained his guns upon a Methodist college where anti-Christian doctrines were being taught. His exposure had the effect of securing the dismissal of the offending professor, and all his Baptist brethren slapped him on the back and said, "Well done. That was a fine piece of work." When he discovered that the same teaching was being disseminated in a Baptist university, and trained his guns in that direction, they cried, "You wretch"! It depends on whose ox is being gored.

In this particular case the people of Israel had the courage to face evil at home. They made a demand of the tribe of Benjamin that they deliver up to judgment the evil-doers from among their own tribe. That is an illustration of the principle, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." They did not want to involve the whole tribe, but sought to separate the wrong-doers from others, and to visit them with judgment. But when the men of Benjamin refused to deliver them up, they became "accessories after the fact", partners in their iniquity, and were exposed to a common judgment.

Into the details of the battles I need not go; read them at your leisure. But I call your attention to this, that the men of Israel, the united tribes of Israel, going to battle against Benjamin, in the first two battles were defeated. They lost twenty-two thousand men in the first, and eighteen thousand in the second; whereas Benjamin had only twenty-six thousand armed men. In each case they sought direction of the Lord as to whether they should continue the fight, and the Lord in each case enjoined them to go up against Benjamin, to battle against him. Why they were permitted to lose the first two battles, I do not know, except that it suggests to us that we must not suppose, even when we fight in the cause of righteousness, that we shall have no casualties. Even though the battle in which we are engaged is of divine ordering, and though it has a worthy object, the punishment of evil and the establishment of righteousness, the formation and organization of a social condition in agreement with principles of righteousness—even though that be our aim, we may have to pay for it.

I believe Britain's last war was just; but her armies were not wholly invincible, and she had to pay the price for the victory which was ultimately hers. So with Israel.

By wise strategy they enticed Benjamin out of the city, and the men of Benjamin were put to rout; and a united Israel was victorious.

Then when the battle was over the Israelites mourned the fact that there was one tribe lacking from among them. When you have to fight, do it properly. Do not fight if you can help it, but if you must, fight vigorously. The great Roosevelt once said, "There may sometimes be justification for not fighting at all, but there can never be any justification for fighting feebly." Again he said, "It is never wise to shake your fist first, and your finger afterward." Do not be like Andy, who is so brave that he thinks he can do anything, and then so meek that he does nothing. The proper way to attend to a matter of that sort is the way the children of Israel attended to it. But when the battle was over, and the victory won, they said, "How shall we heal the wound? How shall we bring Benjamin back into the family circle?—O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?"

And they found a way of doing it. The record will tell you as you read it. So ought we, in dealing with others, to be severe where severity is justly required, and not to flinch from an unpleasant duty when righteousness necessitates our doing it. But when it has been done, and when the sinner has been rebuked, we must always be sure to let it be known that the door is not locked against his return. To lock the door against the penitent would not be Christian,—to take the highest ground; but it would not be even British principle. Foreigners cannot understand it. Some of us can remember the South African War. We remember how patriotic we all were, how opposed we were to the machinations of Paul Kruger, and to the injustice inflicted on the Uitlanders in South Africa. Smuts and Botha were among the enemy. They fought for their own country against the British Empire. When the war was over, it was not very long before South Africa was given self-government, and two of the sturdiest opponents of Germany and her Allies in the Great War were Generals Smuts and Botha; and no more loyal British subjects could be found in all the Empire than those men who had once been Britain's enemies.

We should learn how to rebuke men for their wrongdoing, and then to shepherd them back to the fold, to treat them generously as well as justly, and seek to bring them back into the fold of God.

As a study in the necessity of human government, and the function of the state, and the inevitable deterioration of human society apart from an ordered government, I commend to you these chapters. Give attention to the spiritual; but remember that the religion of Christ is for the whole man. It is to give him citizenship in heaven, and because of that citizenship, to make him a better citizen on earth, and careless of no duty which properly belongs to a man who would love his neighbour as himself.

So we conclude our study in Judges by reminding you that the key to the whole book is the principle of that melancholy refrain that "in those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

WHY I LEFT THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT

By Rev. W. SCOTT, M.A.,
Chaplain, St. Peter's Hall, Oxford

(The following article is taken from *The Baptist Times*, London, February 2nd, 1933. The note at the bottom records that the author gave permission to *The Baptist Times* to reprint his article from *The Pathfinder*. As Mr. Scott was willing that it should be reprinted in *The Baptist Times*, we are venturing to assume that he would not object to a wider circulation of his views. Since THE GOSPEL WITNESS touches about sixty different countries we think it would be most advantageous to give such circulation to an article so discerning as that which follows.

The more we see and read of the Oxford Group Movement, the more convinced we are that it is not of God, but is a delusion and a snare.—Editor, THE GOSPEL WITNESS)

There is no form of cant more objectionable than recant, and I regret that it falls to my lot to write a recantation. For nearly a year, from 1928-1929, I regarded myself as a member of the Oxford Group, and still look back to that time as one of the happiest in my life. If I am now a renegade, I would make it clear that my quarrel is with principles not with persons. It is with genuine grief that I find myself compelled to join issue with many whom I sincerely love and admire, on certain points of doctrine and emphasis which seem to me vital:

There were several reasons which led me to join the Group. I had returned to Oxford after a long foreign commission, ostensibly for the purpose of research into the by-paths of naval history, actually for the opportunity I believed it would afford of overhauling my spiritual life, reviewing the past and finding inspiration for the future. Fifteen years of varied sea-service all over the world is inclined to blunt one's cutting edge, and the infectious enthusiasm of the Group, and the warm fellowship which it offered, were a welcome tonic and an effective medicine. For I soon discovered that membership was no matter of light-hearted sympathy; it involved a willingness to live a life, devoted, disciplined, and directed. The standards proposed were absolute; perfect honesty, perfect purity, perfect unselfishness, perfect love. The challenge was one which as a Christian man it was impossible to criticize or to ignore.

Again I was impressed with many of the men whom I found in the Movement. Organized religion does not always attract the more healthy type of under-graduate and often repels the thorough-going "hearties." Yet here were many who came from the most unpromising religious backgrounds boldly testifying to a Power which had transformed their lives. Where the Church and other pious people were weak, the Group was strong; and the expectant belief that what He had done for them God would do for others was inspiring indeed. In the face of such facts criticism appeared futile.

Finally, I was drawn to the Movement by a certain sense of responsibility. It is true that much that I saw and heard made me uneasy from the beginning. I mistrusted their methods of seeking "guidance" on every possible subject and occasion, not by considering prayerfully the reasons for a course of action, but by mental relaxation and "luminous thoughts." Whilst I would not deny that God may sometimes speak to His servants by such means, the emphasis and importance which they assign to this method seems to me unwarranted by Scripture and psychologically unsound. I was also distressed at the self-centredness of much of their testimony and teaching. They appeared far more occupied with the sins and "issues" which marred their lives than with the Saviour who had redeemed them. Knowing from personal experience the hopeless quagmire into which introspection leads us, I could not but mistrust the encouragement of such a habit in young Christians who need to be taught to look away from self to Christ. Nevertheless, in spite of these misgivings, I felt led to identify myself with the Movement largely because they professed to desire and welcome the counsel of older men. It was easy to stand aside and criticize the manifest limitations of youthful enthusiasts; it required courage to associate oneself with principles and methods so open to abuse. A sermon preached by a certain Bishop at a

(Continued on page 12)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 10

March 5th, 1933

FIRST QUARTER

CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION

Lesson Text: 1 Samuel, chapter 1.

Golden Text: "Hannah went not up, for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever."—1 Samuel 1:22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Deut. 12:1-7.

Tuesday—Lev. 7:11-20.

Wednesday—Psalm 132:1-18.

Thursday—Rom. 14:1-9.

Friday—Luke 2:22-33.

Saturday—John 3:11-21.

I. HANNAH'S SORROW, (vs. 1-8).

With this lesson we enter the last years of the period of the judges. These were years of sadness under Eli, who, though a good man, permitted his sons to act in an abominable manner in the prosecution of their duties as priests. In addition to this domestic misery the Israelites were beset by outside enemies, the Philistines exercising their power against them, even to the extent of capturing the ark. In Samuel's day there was purity in the religious services. God's messages were given to the people, and victory was gained over their national adversary. It was a time of encouragement, yet the people were not content with the simplicity of the form of government by divine representative, but desired a king to be granted unto them. The Lord acceded to their request, and Saul, the son of Kish, became the first king, followed by David and others. The change in government did not bring an improvement in conduct, taking the whole period into review, and at last God permitted His people to be carried into captivity, the northern tribes being taken into Assyria, and the southern kingdom into Babylon, the whole being an illustration of the principle that we reap what we sow, (Gal. 6:7), and a warning to those who being often reproved harden their neck instead of repenting and turning from their sin, (Prov. 29:1).

The book opens with a description of a domestic scene in the home of Elkanah, a Levite, (1 Chron. 6:19, 27), wherein the misery attendant upon polygamy is manifest, as well as the strong desire of a Jewish woman for children, coupled with

her devout character. The name of the man is stated, together with the names of his wives, Peninnah and Hannah, the former having children, and the latter being childless, (v. 2). According to Jewish law Elkanah went up at stated seasons to Shiloh, the central place of Jewish worship, there to perform his religious duties, (Ex. 23:14-17). On these occasions while partaking of the sacrificial feast, (Lev. 7:15), he gave portions to all the members of his family, but unto Hannah he gave a special portion, (vs. 4, 5), in manifestation of his love for her, and possibly in some measure to aid in consoling her for her barren condition. At such times Peninnah provoked her on account of her condition, seeking to make her fret and eventually succeeding in increasing her sorrow, (vs. 6-8).

Several things are worthy of note respecting this scene. First, the kindness and consideration of Elkanah. He was placed in a difficult situation, and while doing his duty toward the other members of his family he sought to comfort the heart of his favourite wife. Second, the evil behaviour of Peninnah. She deliberately provoked Hannah and made her fret. She was probably stirred by jealousy, but such an action could bring her no real happiness or satisfaction, and its consequences were evil instead of good. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave, (Song of Solomon 8:6), and warning is needed against it, for even among Christians it sometimes shows itself, and bears its evil fruit. Third, the maternal longing of Hannah, so natural, and so outstanding in contrast with many in the present day. The depth of her desire may be gauged by her grief.

II. HANNAH'S PRAYER, (vs. 9-18).

Under deep feeling, and with bitterness of soul, Hannah sought the Lord in prayer, while on one of her periodic visits to Shiloh, (vs. 9, 10). She realized He could help her, and if He was willing He was able to grant her the petition which she desired of Him. She believed in God and in the efficacy of prayer. The whole prayer is not recorded, but that part relating to the vow is stated, wherein she promised that if the Lord would look upon her affliction, and grant her a man child, she would return him unto the giver, and no razor would come upon his head, (v. 11), intimating possibly the carrying out of the Nazarite vow of separation unto God, (Num. 6:5). Note her earnestness, sincerity, unselfishness and devotion.

While engaged in prayer Eli was watching her lips, and came to the conclusion that she was drunken, a sad commentary on the character of the times. His conclusion was due to the fact that her lips moved while her voice was silent, (vs. 12, 13), and he reproved her for the same, (v. 14). Hannah replied, explaining the nature of her attitude and prayer, (vs. 15, 16), she received a favourable answer, (v. 17), and went her way comforted, "and her countenance was no more sad", (v. 18). She was convinced God would answer her

prayer. God honours faith when the same is rightly placed in Him, (Matt. 8:5-13). Faith is necessary to answered prayer, (Matt. 21:22), and without it one cannot expect blessing, (James 1:6, 7). Reference may also be made to the suggestive statement of Hannah that in prayer she had poured out her soul before the Lord, (v. 15). This speaks of intensity of feeling. Too many prayers are cold and formal, they come from the lips, and the soul is not in them. It is no wonder, therefore, that so many prayers remain unanswered. A study of the prayers of scripture is helpful in this respect as that of Abraham, (Gen. 18:22, 23), Moses, (Ex. 32:31, 32), Solomon, (2 Chron. 6:12-42), Nehemiah, (Neh. 1:4-11), Daniel (Dan. 9:3-19), and our Lord, (Luke 22:39-46).

III. HANNAH'S DEDICATION, (vs. 19-28).

After offering her prayer Hannah returned home with her husband, and the Lord remembered her, and she conceived and gave birth to a son, and called his name Samuel, meaning, "Asked of God". In this she gave glory to God for answering her prayer. Sometimes we forget to show our gratitude to God when He answers our prayers. We just take His kindness for granted, but He appreciates a thankful attitude, and desires the manifestation of it in our relations with Him, (1 Thess. 5:18). After the birth of Samuel, Hannah went not up to the tabernacle until the child was weaned, (v. 22), then accompanied by the child she went to Shiloh, where she presented him to the Lord, and offered unto God her offering, (vs. 24-28). In this action she dedicated her Samuel to God in a very real manner in recognition of the fact that He had given him, and therefore belonged to Him. The action also gives the assurance that she fulfilled her vow. She did not forget to keep her word after her prayer was answered.

There are certain things which it may be well to note in connection with this incident. First, the fact that all children belong to God. He is the source of life. He created the first man, and gave him power to beget in his likeness, therefore all the descendants of Adam are His. Second, the duty and privilege of parents to give their children to God, in recognition of His prior claim to them, that He might use them wherever He desires. Third, the blessing of God received by the adoption of such an attitude, others share in this blessing, and the purpose of God is carried out thereby. Samuel's life gives evidence of this. Fourth, the necessity of proper training of children. Samuel was brought up for God, with the thought of divine service ever before him. Note the nature of such training, in prayer, Bible reading, and attendance at public worship, enhanced by godly example on the part of the parents. Fifth, the fact that Samuel was set aside from birth for the work to which he was called. And sixth, the highest example of dedication to service in the giving of His Son by the Heavenly Father.

The Union Baptist Witness

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OTTAWA-MONTREAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

The Annual Winter Conference of the Montreal-Ottawa District of Regular Baptist Churches was held with the Emmanuel Regular Baptist Church, Verdun, Que., on Thursday, February 2nd. Pastor Roy Hisey reports:—

"Our Moderator, Rev. Matthew Doherty, punctually began the service at the hour appointed and Pastor Charles Hardie led the devotional period, then the necessary business was attended to. A vocal duet entitled, "Wondrous Grace", was rendered by Brothers Goldsworthy and Dyson and then the assembly was led in a profitable time of praise and testimony by Rev. R. E. Jones of Sawyerville. It was a timely exhortation concerning Christian thinking and living. A very interesting item in this period was the singing of "Bring them in" by two little girls from Rev. Jules Dautheny's Mission. These children were French but knew enough English to sing the hymn intelligently and sweetly.

Mr. Stanley Goldsworthy gave a missionary address. It was pointed, informative and helpful and the missionaries in Liberia and those at home were very much upon the hearts of the listeners.

Many felt that the earnest message delivered by Rev. James Hall was just what was needed. It was an inspiring one entitled, "The Holy Spirit in Salvation" and step by step in a clear and concise way, Pastor Hall, exalted the ministry of the Holy Spirit and pressed his message home.

The supper hour was a time of glorious fellowship, bountiful provision had been made, and those from the various centres had an opportunity of exchanging greetings, as they enjoyed the repast.

When the clock pointed to the hour of 7.30, Rev. Arthur St. James opened the evening service and this was a most interesting session. Mr. St. James spoke briefly on Christ appearing to put away sin; appearing at the right hand of God interceding and His coming again to earth.

Pastor Lorne Hisey's address entitled, "The God-planned Life" was deeply spiritual, searching and inspiring. It presented a high standard for the Christian.

Again Rev. F. W. Dyson and Mr. Stanley Goldsworthy sang and those hymns carried their own message of comfort and appeal.

The closing address was an evangelistic one delivered by Rev. F. W. Dyson. It brought the hearers face to face with eternal facts and at least one accepted Christ and found peace that passeth understanding. The beautiful invitation hymn was sung by Mrs. Rawlings and Mrs. Donnell. Mr. Brodie Jamieson assisted throughout the Conference as pianist and Rev. Jules Dautheny closed the profitable day by pronouncing the benediction in his native language.

BELLEVILLE NEWS.

Pastor J. R. Armstrong writes, "Our Anniversary Services seemed to mark the beginning of a time of blessing for our church. At our prayer meeting last week God laid a mighty burden upon our hearts for revival and for the salvation of souls. You can imagine, then, how we praised God when twelve walked to the front on Sunday and indicated their desire to take Christ as Saviour. There was one other who returned to the Lord and two asked for baptism. At present there are several awaiting baptism and so we expect to have a baptismal service in a few weeks' time. Besides those who publicly confessed Christ on Sunday night, there were two others whom one of the members had the joy of leading to the Lord on Monday morning. Surely the time of reaping has come and we are more than happy in the way God has dealt with us."

SHENSTONE, BRANTFORD.

The following expression of appreciation has come from the clerk of the Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church, Brantford, Ontario:

"Dear Bro. Atkinson:

I am requested by the Executive Committee of Shenstone Church to write you expressing our deep appreciation of the services of Brother Davey on February 5th and 6th. His visit was both very interesting and profitable. The attendance was good and a number of strangers were present.

The special offering taken will be forwarded through our missionary treasurer.

We trust that should Mr. and Mrs. Davey and the children pay another round of visits to the churches that we may be included in the plan.

May I take this opportunity also of expressing our deep gratitude to yourself, Dr. Shields and to the others who have assisted us during the past few months.

We are looking forward to the services with you next Sunday."

It will be Mr. Atkinson's privilege to baptize several believers at Brantford on Sunday.

YORK RD., GUELPH.

The bitter weather which prevailed on February 10th interfered, to a certain extent, with the service planned at Hespeler that evening and Pastor Chipchase advises us that it was possible only for ten of the fifteen candidates for baptism to start on the trip. Shortly after starting, the one car in which there were six candidates riding became frozen and could not proceed. There were, therefore, but four baptized; the others will follow shortly. In spite of all the hindrances the service at Hespeler was a splendid one. Pastor Chipchase is praying that when the next service is held

others will have joined those who wait the opportunity to publicly by baptism confess Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

At York Road, on Sunday afternoon, February 12th, the Sunday School recorded its largest attendance. Some of the members of the Stanley Ave. Church, Hamilton, choir, assisted by a member of Hespeler Church took charge of the service. It was called, "The pink rose service" and a great message was presented.

A VERY INTERESTING LETTER FROM LIBERIA.

A letter begun by Miss Florence Stacey on New Year's day is of the greatest interest and we are giving many excerpts from it.

"Here I am in the heart of Liberia, sitting in a large hut with a nice fireplace in it. Just now it is about 7.30 p.m. and the only light we have is from burning logs. We are certainly enjoying the fire.

"The folks were up from New Cess over the Christmas holiday but left early on Tuesday morning. Then we left for our trek next morning. We did not intend to leave so early but when they would not stay longer, we decided to leave on our trek right away. We left the Mission shortly after six a.m. Wednesday and arrived at Trobe four days later. We had a lovely time and we all stood the walk well. This being Sunday, we have been at Trobe all day. Tomorrow we are going to visit another town near by and then we will come back here again for the night.

"Some of the path was beautiful but some sections of it are awful. We often had to walk long distances through nasty bogs and when attempting to jump from one small log to another, we would miss our step and find ourselves stuck in thick mud. Again, we found, many of the sticks rotten and our weight would be too great for the frail log and we would find ourselves in the mire. That, however, was only true of some parts and when we passed them we would again reach beautiful stretches of bush where we could not but revel in the beauty surrounding.

"The way was quite hilly and some of the heights we had to scale were quite steep. Eventually we reached the top after much puffing and blowing and laughter at the other one's expense. Then we came to rivers which were very difficult to cross and at one in particular where there was a bridge made of vines and native rope, we had a hard time. The bridge was built high up in a tree, to get to it you had to climb a crude ladder, then you had to walk the shaky bridge, but worst of all, when the end of the bridge was reached, there was no ladder, so we had to slide down a huge log. It was all I could do to hang on for the log was so large around.

"We had a lovely time at Trobe and did not leave until Tuesday morning. We

had fine services and a great many people listened to the Word for the first time. I was never in such an evil place. While we were there on the Sunday, a certain woman who had been away for some time returned and nearly all of the people turned out to greet her. The dance which followed was awful, so full of sin. The woman had been caught for 'witch' palaver and had been taken to some other far away place to be tried and, after the trial, she was pronounced 'not guilty.' She surely looked a character. The Welcome dance which they gave this woman would make your blood run cold to witness. I would give anything to have been able to remain at Trobe and to tell them of the love of the Lord Jesus, but that could not be and we had to leave, just as we have had to leave many other needy places.

"Another terrible thing we saw was, the Devil Dance. Just before the devil dances, the women and some of the men of the town start dancing, then after they

dance for quite a long time, out comes the devil and he dances, but the others stop. Well, here, instead of one devil, they had three and they danced right outside our house. We were in bed trying to go to sleep, for we had a long walk before us the next morning and had to be up early. Mr. and Mrs. Mellish had seen a similar dance, but as I had never seen one, I got up and lit the lantern and went out to see what was going on, but I didn't stay long, for it was all so evil. When I went outside with the light, one man rushed up to me and told me to take my light away. I could not help but think how true the words were, 'But he that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd.'

"One thing I forgot to mention with regard to the Dance of Welcome given to the woman who had been freed for 'Witch Palaver' was that after the dance, there was a man with a branch of a tree who ran around her house waving the

leafless branch in the hopes of keeping away the evil spirits, he kept this up for hours and such groanings and utterings he made.

"You will think I am never going to stop talking about Trobe but what I have told you about Trobe is equally true of the other places we visited. All are deeply sunk in superstition. As we picked our way along the edge of the boggy places and slipped into the miry clay, we thought of that verse in the Psalms and of the chorus we often sing, 'He took me out of the pit and from the miry clay. He put my feet on a rock, establishing my way'. Then the picture of these poor sin-stricken people was before us and often as we were on the path going from place to place, we saw scenes which brought the different passages of the Psalms to us and made us feel that David must have lived under similar conditions and seen similar scenes."

WHY I LEFT THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT.

(Continued from page 9)

Group service on Whit Sunday, 1928, came to me as a direct challenge on this point.

Why, then, have I since left them? No doubt they would assert that the pace was too hot for me, and that I was unwilling to pay the price of full surrender. I hope this is not the case, but were it so it would still be beside the mark. The fundamental principles of sharing, surrender, and guidance remain the same whether I am a saint or a sinner; and it was on account of their teaching about these that I felt compelled to sever my connection with the Group.

I would summarize my scruples under two principal heads: the Atonement and the Bible. I was astonished at the emphasis which they laid upon the psychological acts of sharing and surrender, and the scanty reference, if there was any at all, to the atoning and redeeming work of Our Blessed Lord, "for us men and for our salvation." I readily recognize the force of their argument that, in dealing with present-day pagans, sometimes entirely ignorant and often bitterly prejudiced, it is unwise to approach them with theological dogmas or to antagonize them by using language associated with pious cant. But when prejudice has been overcome and interest awakened, surely clear and unmistakable teaching upon this crucial theme of Christ's work for us, as the only ground of our forgiveness and acceptance, is essential. Yet, according to the Group teaching, it seemed that so long as one "shared" one's sin (i.e., confessed it to the Group), and "surrendered" to the ideals of perfect honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love, nothing else was necessary for a man's salvation. That confession brings a wonderful sense of release and freedom, and "surrender" the peace of mind which comes from an undivided will, nobody will deny; but there need be nothing specifically Christian in such an experience. It is psychological, not evangelical.

I spoke of my scruples on this matter to several of the leaders, but was by no means satisfied with their answers. Many of them appeared to have no personal experience of the atoning work of the Saviour, and certainly no understanding of it as the foundation of our faith and hope. They spoke as though salvation depended simply upon the surrender of the will to the ideals of a disciplined religious life. The "Cross," as they interpreted its significance and practical value, meant the crucifixion of self as the essence of man's consecration, not the death of Christ as the one means of his salvation. Others, whose background was more orthodox, professed whole-hearted allegiance to the message of redemption, but it was surprising how seldom it appeared in their testimony, and how readily they concurred with its exclusion from the general teaching of the Group.

Again, it was impossible for one reared in the Evangelical tradition to feel at home with Christians whose ultimate test

of truth was experimental and not scriptural. The question was never "What saith the Scripture?" but "Does it work?" and the gauge of a man's spiritual state was always "Is he changing lives?" This is indeed a searching test, but I am not satisfied that it is a true one. From passages such as 1 Cor. xii. and Ephesians iv. 11 it would seem that not every Christian is called to definite evangelistic work. His gifts may be prophetic, or pastoral, or just simply "helpful". In Galatians v. 22-23 we read of the fruits of the Spirit; "changing lives" is not mentioned though all testify to a changed life. Finally, in St. Matthew vii. 22-23 we read that even to have changed lives by casting out devils is no real evidence of personal acceptance.

Whilst humbly recognizing the expectant faith of the Group, and its firm conviction that God can and does change the lives of ordinary men and women through the testimony of ordinary men and women, we must not be stampeded into accepting standards of human pragmatism unwarranted by Holy Scripture.

[Mr. Scott kindly consented to the reprint of the above from "The Pathfinder."]

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