

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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

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INDIVIDUALISM AND COOPERATIONISM

There is nothing a Christian prizes more than his personal liberty. The salvation that is in Christ is provided for individuals, not for men in the mass. As we are individually born, so as individuals we must be born again. Faith may be vicariously exercised in behalf of others to bring them to Christ, but ultimately salvation results from, and is evidenced by, personal faith in Christ. Thereafter each individual believer is responsible to God for his own life: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No religious organization can be soundly biblical in principle, which infringes upon the believer's inherent right to live his life as an individual, supremely and ultimately responsible to God.

But it is possible for individualism to border on anarchy. In the name of personal liberty, there are men who claim the right to be a law unto themselves, and to do every man that which may seem right in his own eyes. In the name of personal liberty, certain men—not Christians, of course—claim the right to get drunk, and make themselves a menace to their family and their neighbours, and to society at large. Hence, laws are enacted to restrain individuals from interfering with the personal liberty of other individuals. And the measure of the law's value may be appraised by the measure of its approximation to this standard principle, that a law should restrict the personal liberty of one individual only to the extent of preventing his interference with the personal liberty of others.

A democratic state is a collection of individuals organized on the principle of the above-mentioned restrictive standard. And even on the basis of mere neighbourly benevolence, a member of a democratic state may be not under the law, but under grace. That is to say, that beyond the limit to which compulsion may legitimately go, he uses his freedom voluntarily to exercise his powers in the service of others, of society, and of the state. Which is the principle laid down by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount: legally compelled to go a mile, by grace he voluntarily goes twain.

And wrapped up in that great admonition is the *liaison* principle which unites individualism and what we have called cooperationism.

The same great principle is simply and profoundly expounded by the Apostle Paul in the twelfth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians under the figure of the body and its members. Each member of the body,

whether it be the hand or the foot, the eye or the ear, or even a finger of one of the hands, is a separate, individual, unit; but it is divinely made as an individual to cooperate with the body as a whole. Each member must be allowed to function as an individual. In walking, the two feet do not move forward together, but alternately and cooperatively. In almost every kind of work in which the hands are engaged, each hand cooperates with the other; each finger, with all the others.

It is surely not necessary to labour the illustration which the simplest child can understand. Hence, though God made us each as an individual, He ordained that no man should live unto himself. We must live as social beings, recognizing that we owe some obligation to others; and that the highest good of each individual can be realized only in a cooperative relationship to other individuals.

One sees the principle in the erection of a building. While a large building cannot be erected without individuals, each proficient in his own trade, it could not be erected by individuals only. There are tasks too big for any one man to accomplish; weights too heavy for any one man to lift. The cooperative principle may be seen working in every store, very especially in great departmental stores; in every industrial plant; in every public utility—water works, telephone, electric light, railroads of all sorts. All these great enterprises are dependent upon the wit and skill of individuals, but always of individuals in cooperation with each other.

This principle, in the religious realm, is indispensable to the successful ministry of a church. An individual church member may have many great qualities, he may be highly talented, he may be able to do many things better than some others; and yet if he insists on doing them his own way, in his own time, and apart from consideration of all other matters, he may make himself an individual nuisance!

The four men who carried the palsied man to Christ were both individuals and cooperators. So were the disciples who distributed the multiplied loaves to the thousands organized in groups of fifty. So were the disciples who brought the net to land, full of fishes.

Yesterday, Jarvis Street Church held its annual picnic at Exhibition Park. There were probably eleven hundred at the tables—by actual count, over a thousand. The attendants said it was done with greater ease than the

feeding of about two hundred the day before. How was it done? By many intelligent, skilled, and energetic individuals—but all of them cooperating with each other.

Some years ago we had to do with a certain Board which was served by two salaried officers, both of them noble and able men. One, naturally, was subordinate to the other, and could it have been recognized, each was supplementary and complementary to the other. But Mr. A. found it difficult to do anything other than as an individual, and independently of Mr. B.'s cooperation. Being Chairman of a committee appointed to try to work out a solution of the problem, we talked the matter over with Mr. A.; and after a full discussion he said: "There is only one way by which I can do anything, and that is to do it myself." To which we replied: "By that principle, you may be able to operate a little corner grocery shop, where you can touch all four walls by standing in the middle; but by doing everything yourself, you never can manage a departmental store."

The really useful man is an individualist, a man who has initiative, who thinks things through for himself, who can plan ways of doing things, who is willing to act as a left hand if the right hand is injured; but to be really useful, such an individualist must be a cooperatist as well. He must be ready to lend a hand to others. It is forever true: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour."

Therefore let us jealously guard our individual rights, and, at the same time—in the family, in the state, in the church, and in every organization within the church—let us freely and cheerfully and faithfully fulfil our corporate obligations.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

NORLAND.—*Rev. F. Vaughan.* Workers in the Jarvis Street Bible School remember Mr. Frank Vaughan as one of their most faithful and devoted workers for a number of years. We are happy to share the following letter with them and many other friends who follow his work at Norland.

"For the last few months I have had a heavy programme, conducting seven services weekly, as well as working all day on the parsonage we are erecting. Nevertheless, the work seems to be in a healthy condition, and improvement is noticeable over the whole field. The work in Norland, our central place, is especially gratifying. Our Sunday school there has greatly increased, so that during the winter it has practically doubled its attendance. The Sunday evening service at Norland is drawing a larger attendance than ever, and those who have not previously shown any interest in church attendance are becoming interested. During the last six months I have

carried on a Bible memory contest in the outlying places for the benefit of the boys and girls, and to date 1,279 verses of Scripture have been memorized and quoted.

"About a month ago we began the erection of a much needed parsonage. A splendid stone foundation was built, the stonemason and other workers giving their time and labour free. Next came the erection of the upper walls which are built of logs. This was done splendidly free of charge and last week others helped us to frame the rafters. Thus in one month splendid progress has been made. We trust you will remember us in prayer in this undertaking."

SUDBURY.—*Pastor J. R. Boyd.* Two years ago John Boyd, a student of Toronto Baptist Seminary, went single-handed to the City of Sudbury in Northern Ontario. Today—but read the following letter and be assured that since this was written some greater effort has been commenced and some greater blessing received. The Union office will be glad to forward gifts for the Black Lake building.—W.S.W.

"Sunday, June 18th, was undoubtedly one of the most joyful days we have ever spent in Sudbury. We celebrated the third anniversary of the beginning of our work here by having representatives from our three congregations unite for the day. The Lord gave us joy unspeakable in the morning when a young Ukrainian Catholic whom we met about three weeks ago at the open air meeting, confessed Christ as his Saviour and Lord. In the afternoon the Nairn and Sudbury believers joined with those from Black Lake for an open air meeting of praise and a baptismal service at the Lake. It was by far the largest meeting of its kind we have ever had, and the Lord again made His presence felt as a crowd of respectful strangers and friends witnessed six believers bear testimony to their faith and love in the ordinance of baptism. With tears of joy and songs of triumph men and women moved away from that solemn scene, and returned to Sudbury, where the ladies had prepared a supper, to which nearly the whole family gathered in their happy fellowship as children of God. The day's joys were climaxed in the evening service when we received several new members into the fellowship of the Sudbury church and gathered together at the Lord's table in communion with our blessed Saviour in Whose glad service we are unitedly working in our various fields of endeavour.

Especially significant was the step taken in the interest of our new building which we are planning for Black Lake, a suburb of Sudbury. We already have the lot, and had begun the excavation work for the basement; but until Sunday we did not have a cent toward the building. But Sunday sacrificial givers and determined workers so drained their resources that we received over two hundred dollars in cash and pledges. When we remember that our ordinary expenses require nearly a hundred dollars a month from our people, we are moved to tears by such response as this toward our special needs. But we rejoice especially because we are thus enabled to take at least one step more toward the erection of the first Protestant Church in this large and rapidly growing community. God has marvellously kept the door open and given us leadership in this district which has a great future, and we in this critical hour urgently cry unto Him and to His people for help to enable us to triumph for His glory, in this the most challenging situation we have ever faced. God has given us the best lot in the district, and a most enthusiastic group of workers, but we are desperately in need of more money if the need is to be met and the Saviour thus glorified. So, having done what we can ourselves, and being filled with a determination to go onward, we beg the people of God to pray, and to give, that the first Protestant Church at Black Lake may go up as a lighthouse for sin-darkened souls, and as a testimony to the power of Almighty God."

Visitation of Churches

Last week marked the end of a systematic visitation of our Union churches, the purpose of which was to bring to our people first-hand information of our home and foreign missionary enterprises. During this month Mr. Frey, of Bienne, Switzerland, together with several of the home mission pastors conducted a visitation of most of our Union churches. Last week Mr. J. B. Cunningham, Kirkland Lake, accompanied Mr. Frey, and the following churches were visited: Briscoe St.,

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE PREACHER'S ONLY WEAPON

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Thursday Evening, June 29th, 1939

(Stenographically Reported)

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isaiah 55:10-11.

During the recent visit of Their Majesties, the King and Queen to this country, the proceedings attending their welcome at various centres were broadcast, and the commentators tried to describe the various accompaniments of the reception. But there was one central thing at some points to which everything else was subordinated, and sometimes the broadcaster would say, "I shall have to turn you over to another microphone so that you may listen to the music for a little while, until His Majesty is ready to speak." Through it all, the one thing that focused public attention was the King's speech.

Similarly, in a church which believes in the abiding presence of the Lord in the midst of His people, there is nothing so important as the hearing of the Word of the Lord. What are called the "preliminaries" in some services, the reading of the Scripture, and so on, must be an offence to the Lord unless they are really a part of our worship, and express the devotion of our hearts.

This evening I shall speak to you for a few minutes about the importance of honouring the Word of the Lord, and the imperative necessity of believing it.

We have some advantage when we begin the discussion of a subject where we can meet people on the plane of their own thinking. I think it quite probable that some of you may have observed to-day that "the rain cometh down . . . from heaven"! Perhaps if you were out in it you had reason to believe it! At all events we have had occasion to think of it to-day.

I.

The Lord here INSTITUTES A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE COMING OF THE RAIN, AND HIS PURPOSE IN ITS COMING, AND THE GOING FORTH OF HIS WORD OUT OF HIS MOUTH. Rain and snow come down from heaven. They come at His will. They come by the operation of His laws. They come because nature is constituted as it is. We have read of rain-makers, of people who have tried to produce rain artificially. In the Lancashire district in England they say it rains nine days a week! It certainly rains a great deal. And there is much moisture in the air in the north of Ireland. That is why Manchester is the centre of the world's cotton industry, although they don't grow it; and why Belfast is the centre of the world's linen industry, yet they grow little, if any, of the flax. It is because of the natural moisture of the atmosphere. In Germany, I believe, they tried to produce even that atmospheric condition artificially, so that they might make linen as they do in Ireland, or cotton as they do in Manchester. But they failed. There are conditions within the natural realm which God seems to have reserved for Himself. The Bible is full of that. He gives rain, and He withholds rain. Elijah prayed

that it might not rain, and the "fixed" laws of nature could not make it rain. It did not rain for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and it did rain. Your Modernist would not believe that. He thinks God has made a machine which He cannot control. But He can control it. And so the rain and the snow come down from heaven at His will—true, by the operation of natural laws, but behind all that is the will of God.

Have you ever studied meteorology from the Bible? I had occasion some years ago to touch upon a certain text which required an illustration from the atmosphere. And so I shut myself up with the Bible as a text book first, to see what the Bible had to say about meteorology, as to the clouds, the rain, the wind, the atmosphere, the density of atmosphere, and all the rest of it. After I had given a good deal of time studying what the Bible had to say about it, I dipped into books that were written specially for this purpose. Years later I happened to be at a certain dinner, and I was seated beside the one who was at that time, the head of the Dominion Meteorological Bureau. I ventured, somewhat daringly, to discuss with this expert the science of meteorology, all about his weather maps, barometrical readings, wind direction, high and low pressure, and all the rest of it. He said, "You have evidently given some thought to this?" I said, "Am I correct? Is that how you find out how to predict the weather?" He said, "Exactly! You are absolutely correct." And so I ventured to tell him that I had found out a lot of that in the Bible itself, and that the Bible was a thoroughly reliable text book even on meteorology; that while it does not explicitly teach science, wherever it deals with natural phenomena it is true to demonstrable fact.

Now "the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither" as rain, but it does return thither ultimately. It goes into the earth, finds its way into the springs, and brooks, and rivers, and lakes and the ocean: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again"; "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth." Rain comes down from heaven, and finds its way into the sea, and by and by it is distilled into vapours, and goes back in the form of clouds, and presently comes down again. It comes down as rain, and returneth not thither, until it has accomplished that whereto it was sent. That is why it comes. It watereth the earth, and that is what it is sent for.

There is an economy in nature. Some of our Evolutionists tell us that we have about our bodies certain "vestigial remains." Do you know what they are? We

have something for which the scientists can find no function. There was a time when they said a lot of the glands we had about us—I do not know whether they thought they were for ornament or not—were not useful, had no function. But little by little they have found for them a use. And the study of glandular function is one of the chief departments of medical science to-day. I do not believe we have any "vestigial remains". I believe that my great-great-great-great grandfather was created a man, not a monkey; and I believe if I could get back far enough to see him as he came from the Creator's hand, I should find he was a perfect man; and that all imperfections found in my family were introduced by sin—and in yours too!

There are no "vestigial remains" physically or morally; nor do I believe there are any superfluities in nature. God does not waste Himself. Whatever He does has a purpose, and when the rain cometh down from heaven it accomplishes exactly what God sent it to do. That is His plan. And you remember what our Lord said about the rain's falling on the just and on the unjust. It is no accident; but in His universal benevolence in this era of grace, the rain and the dew are equally distributed. The day of judgment will come by and by.

Now "the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth"—not only the rain, but the snow. I do not know much about it except what I have read. But they tell us that there is something in the snow that there is not in the rain, and when there is plenty of snow, there is something communicated to the soil, some chemical element that makes the soil very much more fruitful than when it has rain only! "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" He uses even the rain and the snow sometimes in the time of battle. Historians say that a little rain was one of the contributing factors which resulted in Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, and in his extinction from European and world affairs. God can send the rain to water the earth, and He can send the rain sometimes, too, to determine the issue of a battle. But when the rain and the snow come down from heaven, let us remember that however natural it may be, and by whatsoever operation of natural laws, that rain may be precipitated, God is above it all, and it comes by His will and by His permission.

He made "a way for the lightning of the thunder." Lord Kelvin said he believed it would yet be discovered that rain without lightning was impossible. He did not quote that text, but that is what the Bible says, that every natural electric discharge precipitates the rain somewhere, though you may neither see nor hear it. But it comes down from heaven, and waters the earth.

And when it waters the earth it causes it to bring forth and bud. It accomplishes something when it waters the earth. Some people water their lawns because they like to hold a hose, because it is a pleasant occupation of a warm evening. But the Lord waters the earth always for a purpose.

And He causeth it to bud that it may produce "seed to the sower, and bread to the eater". You remember how those two things are brought together in the story of the days of famine, when Joseph was ruler in Egypt. He not only distributed corn for bread so that people might have food to eat; but as the period of drought

came to an end, they had no seed with which to sow their land. They had had bread to eat, but no seed to sow. During those years there was "neither earing nor harvest". Do not forget that that word "earring" is an old Saxon word for ploughing. Most people think it describes the wheat when it is coming out into ears. But it does not. It is an old Saxon word for ploughing. And when the Bible describes Joseph as saying: "Yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest", he meant to say that the situation would be so hopeless that it would be of no use even to plough. But when the seven years were ended, and it was time to plough, they came to Joseph not only for bread to eat, but for seed for their fields, that they might till the soil, and sow, and reap a harvest.

So the Lord not only sends us rain to give us food that life may be maintained in us to-day, but that He may produce seed that it may nourish people to-morrow—"seed to the sower, and bread to the eater"; "One generation passeth away, another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever." God does not live for one generation, as you and I do. God does not talk as did Mr. Chamberlain, about "peace in our time". No; He makes provision for successive generations. As you read the Bible, and come to the end of the books written by Moses, and you reach the book of Joshua, you will find they are so linked together that you cannot help feeling that while there may have been a different human amanuensis, yet it is the same Author Who is dictating: "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise". And so all through life that rule operates—bread for the eater; enough to maintain us now; but we need more than bread to eat, we must have seed to sow, that our fields may be fruitful in the days to come.

Now according to this verse, as the wind "returns in its circuits," so does the rain, and so does the earth in its succeeding harvests. Thus God keeps the machine going all the time. If you would know who winds it up, and keeps it going, and why day and night and the seasons succeed each other, the Bible teaches you must enthroned God above it all.

II.

We now come to the APPLICATION OF THIS ECONOMY TO THE WORD OF THE LORD "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." How wonderful to reflect that *God has actually spoken to us!* What a lot was made of it when someone got near enough to the King and Queen just to hear them speak! And when the King said to a reporter, "You must be fagged out, old chap", he was as proud that the King had spoken to him as if he had been knighted. The King called him, "old chap"! Something to telegraph around the world! "The King spoke to me!"

But God has spoken. Is not that singularly significant that it should be possible for us really to hear the Word of the Lord. I have known some people who were great talkers. I was speaking to someone the other day about qualifications for the ministry. I said, "There are men of great ability in many directions, who were never made to be preachers." This man said, "They have not the gift of the gab." But, a man who has "the gift of the gab" will never be a preacher. I told a man once, years ago, "Do you know, So-and-So, the greatest blessing that could possibly befall you?" He said, "No." "For you some day to stand before a congregation with

nothing to say, and have to sit down in confusion." "Why?" "Well", I said, "if you had that experience once, you would be more careful, before you tried again, to have something to say." He looked at me in amazement. I said, "Do not run away with the idea that because people are talking, that they are necessarily saying something. Some people talk all day long, and say nothing." I pity you if you have to live with one like that. There are some women who from the time they get up in the morning until they go to bed at night, talk all the time. They follow the people with whom they live around talking, always talking. They seem to think people will feel neglected if they stop talking. I should prefer to be neglected by such people. I do not think I could live comfortably with that for very long. Of course some are obliged to; but it is a most unfortunate infliction. And there are talkative men who, if possible are worse than talkative women, who are forever talking—saying nothing. Fortunately for the neighbours the habit of talkativeness seldom afflicts two in the same household: that is why some men and some women—are so quiet—they have been forced to listen.

But God never speaks merely for the sake of speaking. Whenever God's word goes forth, it is because He has something to say, and He has a purpose in saying it. Do you see what I mean? There is nothing superfluous in the Bible. What is written here is written for our learning, and because it was necessary that it should be written. And just as surely as every drop of rain has in it, and behind it, a divine purpose, so every syllable of the Word of God has a purpose in it, when it goes forth out of His mouth.

And He says, "It shall not return unto me void." *God never speaks in vain.* I once heard Dr. Conwell in one of his lectures, differentiate between elocution and oratory. He told a story about being in a minister's home one day, when he was sitting with the minister in his study. He said he heard a very gentle and winsome voice call up the stairway, "John, dear, could you come down stairs for a moment?" "All right, dear; just in a minute." But Mr. Husband went on talking, and apparently forgot his promise. Presently a voice that was recognizable as the same voice, but speaking with greater emphasis, was heard again: "John, will you please come here for a moment?" He said, "All right dear, just a moment." But still he continued talking and did not move. The third time the voice came up the stairway, "JOHN! WILL YOU COME HERE?" "Oh, excuse me, doctor", he replied, and away he went down stairs.

Dr. Conwell said, "That was oratory. Now if you call a dog and it comes, that is oratory. If it goes, that is elocution."

When God speaks He speaks for a purpose, and to a purpose, and His word never returns void. I have a dog. I think I have referred to him once or twice before! He teaches me a great many things. And sometimes when I am not very particular I say, "Dash!" He wags his tail, and says, "He does not mean that", and he pays no attention. I call him softly and kindly again, but he does not come. At last I say, "Dash! Come here." The tail stops wagging, and his legs wag instead, and he comes like a streak of lightning. He knows the difference between a word that has no special dynamic, no particular purpose in it, and a word which is a word of command. Most dogs do. They know the tone.

"It shall not return unto me void." God never speaks in vain. Read the story of the days of His flesh, and

remember the words of the Lord Jesus when He said to the leper: "I will; be thou clean." Did His word return void? You cannot explain it, but immediately his leprosy was cleansed. When He lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened" immediately the tongue of the dumb was loosed. When He said to the winds and the waves, "Peace, be still", there was a great calm. His word in the days of His flesh—and in that He was the revelation of God, as in everything else—never returned unto Him void, but it accomplished that which He pleased. Go back to the history of the creation, and you will find the word of the Lord was obeyed. First He said, "Let there be light", and it was so. "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herd yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth", and it was so. Whatever He pleased to do was done.

The word of the Lord is to accomplish that which He pleases—it is His will, not yours, not mine, but His will; and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He has sent it. It seems to me that in these verses there is no place for failure at all, so far as the word of the Lord is concerned. You and I may fail in a thousand ways, but the word of the Lord never fails: it always accomplishes that which He pleases; it always prospers in the thing whereto He sends it; it never returns unto Him void.

Would you like to have a car that never breaks down? I would! Would you like to have a suit of clothes that would never wear out? Would you like to become possessed of some instrument for your purpose that is guaranteed never, never, never under any circumstances whatsoever to fail? I would! But unfortunately in this mundane sphere everything wears out; everything has its defect. Sooner or later you have to say, "That is done. I must get something new." But here is something that is as effective as the rain and the snow from heaven. It never fails. It will always prosper: it can never, under any circumstances, be defeated. But that is not your word, not my word, not any teacher's, or preacher's word. No; the Lord says that only about His own word.

III.

Can we make SOME USEFUL APPLICATION OF THAT PRINCIPLE? If the word of the Lord is as sure as that, *the all-important thing for you and me, as Christian workers, is to see that we accept no substitute for the word of the Lord.* In your reading of the word of the Lord, you must so read it as to find out what that word really says. Our concern must be, as we come to the Book, that we shall hear what God the Lord will speak. That is to say, we must not ingeniously twist and turn the Bible and use it like a crossword puzzle, nor use it to buttress our opinions, and justify ourselves in some course that we would take. Someone has made up his mind to do something. He says, "Perhaps I had better get a bit of Scripture on that. What does the Bible say?"—and he turns to it as though it were a box of conjurer's cards, or a conjurer's trick, to find out what the Bible says. No; our business is really to understand what is the word of the Lord, not to invent fanciful interpretations of it. So if we have entertained any opinion about the word of the Lord that we discover to be erroneous, the only right thing to do is to get rid of our opinion, and abide by what the Bible says.

What is the preacher's duty? It is to expound the

word of the Lord. We are having some signs put up about the building, for the direction of people who are getting lost. So I spent one whole afternoon going about with the signwriter, writing signs with chalk. I said to him, "I am not particular about the lettering, being specially ornamental. I want the signs to look well. But whatever you do, make them *plain*. Those signs are put there so that everyone may be able to read them, and understand where to go, so that they may make no mistake. I don't want a sign like some preacher's sermons". He looked at me. I said, "You know there are some sermons that the preacher himself understands, but no one else does. They may be excellent as literature, and may reflect great credit upon him, but no one can understand them!"

I believe the most effective kind of teaching and preaching is the teaching or preaching that will explain or expose the word of the Lord so that the very word of the Lord will go home to heart and conscience, and the boy or girl, or man or woman, will say, "God said so-and-so to me". That is our duty as teachers and preachers, and as witnesses for Christ, because we have His promise that His word never returns to Him void. You and I may spend ourselves in a good many endeavours, and at the end of the day feel that we have accomplished nothing. But if you have been the mouthpiece of God's word, if the word that has gone forth out of His mouth, through you, has found its way into someone else's heart and conscience, you can go home and rest, and say, "Something has been done for God to-day." When Jesus summed up His brief ministry in that last great prayer of His in the seventeenth chapter of John, He did not say anything about opening the eyes of the blind, nor raising the dead, nor cleansing the lepers, nor feeding the hungry: He summed it all up in one sentence: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." And we must do just as He did: receive God's word, and before we teach or preach it, it must speak to us, so that we are sure we understand what God has said. Then when we know we have an understanding of the word of God, we are to communicate that word to someone else. And when you have done that, you have done the biggest job a mortal man can ever do. You remember what God said to Moses, that He would make him as a god unto Aaron, and Aaron was to be his prophet: "Aaron can speak; now you tell Aaron what I tell you." We are to receive His word, and communicate it to others, and then we may be sure that God's blessing is upon it.

And if that be true, then *you and I must come into such relationship to God that He can speak to us*. We must be able to hear His word. I believe the effective teacher, the effective preacher, before he or she can be of value to other people, must have a personal audience with the King Himself. I have often reflected upon those words of Joseph when he sent his brethren back with the great evangel that he was not dead but alive. He said: "Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not." And then he said, "Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And if my father doubts you, and says, 'Who told you that', tell him, 'We got it from Joseph's own lips'."

Do you know what lip-reading is? I have known deaf people who never missed a syllable. They could read anyone's lips—that is why they do not like a preacher

with a moustache! Joseph, perhaps, wanted to reassure them, and he said: "Come close to me. Watch my lips, and you tell my father that you heard me speak, nobody else."

That is my message. Oh, that we could get so close to God that the word that goeth forth out of His mouth, should be unmistakably first of all His word to us: No doubtful note will be in that man's testimony, whether teacher, or preacher, for he has heard it right from the lips of our Joseph! Then he will speak with authority as one who speaks in Christ's stead, beseeching men to be reconciled to God.

Now if the word of God be the instrumentality to be employed, *then the power of God is absolutely necessary to its effectiveness*. The special duty of a church that takes the position that we do—and I believe that in that matter the position we take is the position all churches ought to take—is to teach the word of God. If we were trying some other method of interesting people, if we had a dramatic society endeavouring to compete with the theatres, with people who could come and make fun, and make us laugh, I do not suppose we should need to have a prayer meeting about that. Do you think so? If we depended upon that sort of thing we could afford to let the prayer meeting pass. Or if we were to resort to athletic games—they may be innocent enough in themselves—to interest the people, the young people, we could have a badminton club, or a tennis club, or something else, a prayer meeting would not be at all necessary.

Years ago before my time the young men had a little room downstairs fitted up for a club room. When this building was being erected a man came here, connected with some of the contractors, and he said, "I used to come to this church years ago, and we fitted up a room for a 'Success Club', and we had a great time!" I do not know whether or not they were "successful". There was probably no harm in it, and perhaps not much good, but their debates did not drive them to prayer.

You may resort to many things, about which there will be little to drive you to prayer. I do not think we have any promise that the Spirit of the Lord will specially bless these carnal efforts, however harmless they may seem. You may make a show of success; that is to say, if the mere gathering of people together be a success. But even then, I should have no hope of keeping up with the theatres. I should have no hope of competing successfully with Hollywood. None at all! And I say, were we to conceive of our mission as a church in such terms as these, it would be impertinent to emphasize the prayer meeting, or anything of the sort. But if we have one task, and one enterprise only, to give people the word of God; and if, in order to make that word effective, we are bound to have the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, then there is nothing for us to do but somehow or another, to secure that. Is not that right? Then we must pray for it, and conform our lives in such a way that He will come to us.

Someone says, "But people will drift away." If so, is it worth while to try to hold them with a sandwich or a tennis racquet? I know people drift spiritually. Oh, no; they are not guilty of irregular conduct, or anything of that sort. But they lose something of their spiritual tone, and the conscious presence and power of the Holy Ghost, and then they say, "What shall we do?" And they look about for some carnal substitute.

My dear friends, it is possible for me as a preacher to continue as I have tried to do these many years, and

preach the word of God, expound it, and yet lose a sense of the divine presence and power. If then my preaching ceases to be effective, what should I do? Should I say, "Oh, well, I am living in a day when people will not endure sound doctrine, and they do not like these great matters of God's law, so if I am to interest and hold them I must modify things a little bit, and see if I cannot make things a little lighter"—and so on? I might do it with an appearance of success. But oh, if the full discharge of my duty and privilege as an expositor of the word of God, does not prove effective, I must seek the reason for it, and if I fail, the failure is not in the word of God, wherever it is. It is not that the gospel is not adapted to human need. No, no! it must be in me! If as a church we maintain orthodox standards and yet fail to be fruitful in the service of the Lord, are we to resort to some human substitute? No; let us rather repent and do the first works. The only thing to do is to get back to God. If any of you teachers at any time feel that interest in your classes is waning, do not think that you will overcome that difficulty by substituting something for the word of God. You may for a while, apparently; but if you feel any failure there, always take it upon your own shoulders. Do not blame anyone else. When the preacher fails, he must not begin scolding his congregation. I know of certain preachers who go away from home, and stir people emotionally, so that when an invitation is given, a lot of people respond to it, and they have a wonderful time. Then when the preacher goes home, and things do not stir, he says, "It cannot be in me. I have great times away from home."

Now you never heard your Pastor blame you for his want of success, did you? If I fail as a preacher, there is only one person in the world responsible for my failure, and that is myself. And if you fail, do not blame me. Take the responsibility yourself. I am persuaded that if we are right with God, and we are blessed through His word, then in the power of the Holy Ghost we shall be effective in blessing others.

That does not mean that five minutes after the rain has fallen you can go out and reap a harvest. We had a good rainfall this afternoon, but the benefit of that rain may not come until September; but the way has been prepared for it.

Once again, some types of modern evangelism have dishonoured the word of God, and dishonoured Christ. Many a man preaches the word, and if it has not become immediately effective, he resolves, "I must make a show", and thereupon he resorts to all kinds of tricks, to make a show of success—as though one could sow in the morning, and reap in the afternoon. The husbandman must patiently wait for the fruits.

So then, it is for us, as a matter of fact, *not to walk by sight, but by faith*. If I have borne my testimony to a man, and have been God's instrument to tell him the truth as well as I am able, whether he makes any response or not, I can just go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I did the best I could. I sowed the seed. I could not do any more." Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God only can give the increase.

How helpless we are in ourselves! One of our brethren, away from home, wrote me a letter. I read it this afternoon. He said, "They call me here a hyper-Calvinist, because I tell them that no matter how the word is preached, it cannot be effective without the power of the Holy Ghost. Please write and tell me if I am correct." I am going to write and tell him that in my view

he is absolutely right. It does not make any difference who teaches or preaches. The best we can do is to be God's instruments and channels of communication. And after that if we have been faithful up to that point, we can fall back on this promise: "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

I have occasionally seen someone in the congregation, when I have said, "I believe the Lord has given me a message for that man", and I have drawn a bow and tried to hit him, but I have hit someone else! Do you know why? Because as I put the arrow to the bowstring, an unseen Hand closed upon my hand, and God's word prospered in the thing whereto He sent it—not the thing whereto I sent it. There was someone in that congregation that I did not know about, but the Lord did.

Have I said enough to show you that this church can never afford to neglect its prayer life? We can do without each other. We do not want to, but we can. Oh, it has been my misfortune, as a minister, in years gone by, often to have to go on without people, just like a man in battle, marching against the foe, when one falls at his side, and then another, and another; but he cannot stop: he must go on. And sometimes we have to go on without people. You can do without me.

A pastor came to me the other day and said, "Suppose I should go to a certain place, can you think of anyone that would follow me?" I said, "I do not know, but if the Lord wants you in that place He has someone else to follow you." Sometimes I have, foolishly enough, wondered who will follow me. But I know that when that time comes the Lord will have someone ready.

The point I make is this, that you and I can be wholly independent of each other. We can do without each other, if we must. We should simply have to go on alone. But there is one person we cannot do without. *We cannot do without the Lord.* That is what Jesus meant when He said, ere the Holy Ghost had been given: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." They could not do without Him; they had to wait for Him. We have not to tarry in that sense for the Spirit of the Lord is with us. But we must be sure that we have Him: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

Let us pray for a deeper consciousness of our dependence upon God, so that in our teaching, preaching, visiting, wherever we go, our trust will be in the Lord Himself. It is He, and He only, Who doeth the work.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

(Continued from page 2)

London, Hespeler, Maple Hill, Long Branch, St. Catharines, Courtland and Churchill.

In each of these churches the representatives of the Union were well received, and the good congregations which were in attendance listened attentively as the reports of the Union's activities at home and abroad were given. In each church there is evidence of a lively interest in our Union enterprises; and one is readily convinced that our churches have taken to their hearts the work of the French Bible Mission. Nor is there any less interest in our home mission work.

Even as Paul in Acts 14 gathered together the church in Antioch, and rehearsed to them all that God had done, so these representatives of the Union were pleased to have the opportunity of telling what God is doing through His servants to those whose gifts make our missionary work possible. There is little doubt that these visits have been a blessing to the churches, and will result in a broadening of their outlook upon our work. Many people voiced their appreciation of the

meetings, and told how pleased they were to hear of our work.

The trip also afforded the visitors an opportunity of seeing the spiritual condition of our churches. Their high standard and their vital interest in missions at home and abroad augurs well for the future of our Union work.—J.B.C.

Bible School Lesson Outline

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

Vol. 3 Third Quarter Lesson 29 July 16th, 1939

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Lesson Text: Exodus 20.

Golden Text: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.— Luke 10:27.

For Reading: Exodus 19, 21, 22.

I. The Source of the Commandments—verses 1, 2.

The Ten Commandments, comprising what is sometimes called the Decalogue, were given by God Himself (verse 22; Exod. 19:19). He spoke with authority as the Lord Jehovah, the Eternal One, to the people who were His by virtue of the fact that He had created them, entered into covenant relationship with them, and had redeemed them (Lev. 26:13; Psa. 81:10; Hosea 13:4).

The Ten Commandments were not set forth as the way of salvation, but as the way of obedience. The people's redemption had been secured by blood, and they were saved by believing in the Christ Who was to come. The Commandments were not redemptive, but didactic; they taught the people how to live "that they sin not" (verse 20). Faith in Christ's atoning work comes first, then obedience to Him.

The Decalogue was based on general moral principles which are of universal application, since they are the expression of God's eternal will. Each of the commands is repeated in some form in the New Testament.

Teachers of younger scholars would find it helpful to illustrate the injunctions by referring to individuals who obeyed or disobeyed them.

II. The Substance of the Commandments—verses 3-17.

The first four sections deal with man's duty to God and form "the first great commandment" (Deut. 6:4, 5). The last six sections have to do with man's duty to his fellow men, "the second commandment" (Lev. 19:18). See Mark 12:28-34; Rom. 13:19; 1 John 3:23.

(a) Man's Duty to God, verses 3-11.

These four commands relate to the Being of God, His Worship, His Name and His Day; His unity, spirituality, deity and holiness, respectively.

I. No gods were to be feared, worshipped or served, save Jehovah (Exod. 22:20; 2 Kings 17:35-39). He alone is God; the gods of the heathen nations do not exist, or exist as demons (Deut. 6:14, 15; 1 Cor. 10:19, 20).

II. No idols were to be constructed, and no likenesses of God were to be made (verse 23; Lev. 26:1; Psa. 115:4-8; 1 Cor. 10:7, 14). God gave no manifestation of His appearance to them at Sinai for that reason; God is a Spirit (Deut. 4:12, 15-20; John 4:24). The word "jealous" as used of God does not denote envious passion, but the feeling which a holy Being would have toward all evil (Exod. 34:14).

Forsaking God is here described as equivalent to hating Him, while to obey Him is to love Him. The results of a sin, and tendencies to sin may remain long after the guilt of that sin has been pardoned, and may be transmitted from one generation to another (Exod. 34:7). Each individual, however, is judged for his own sin in forsaking God (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 14:12).

God extends His mercy "unto thousands of generations" (Revised Version) because of individuals who are faithful to Him (Gen. 26:4, 5; Deut. 7:9; 2 Sam. 7:12-18; Rom. 5:15-19). Let us see to it that we are a means of blessing, but not of hindrance, to others.

III. The Name of God stands for His personality as God,

for what He is in Himself. Therefore, that holy Name must not be dishonoured or profaned by being used in false oaths, in blasphemy, or in frivolous and light conversation (Lev. 19:12; Psa. 139:20; Matt. 5:33-37; Mal. 3:5). Let us reverence and honour the Name of our God, not merely in our speech, but also in our conduct.

IV. God had already intimated that His people should commemorate the Sabbath (Exod. 16:25). One day in seven was to be set apart from other days that the people might remember God's creative power and His redemptive love; that they might rest as He had rested after the Creation, and that they might never forget the rest they experienced when released from the bondage of Egypt (Gen. 2:2; Lev. 26:2; Deut. 5:15; Heb. 4:3, 4). They were forbidden to perform unnecessary labour on that day, but they had liberty for acts of mercy, kindness and piety (Mark 2:23-28; John 5:16, 17). Christians should observe this commandment in connection with the Lord's Day, the day consecrated to the memory of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

(b) Man's Duty to His Fellow Men—verses 12-17. These six commandments have to do with our relationship to those about us. We are to regard the sanctity of home, human life, marriage, another's property, good name and possessions.

V. Parents are to be regarded with respect and loving fear (Exod. 21:17; Deut. 5:16; Matt. 15:4; Luke 18:20; Eph. 6:1-3).

VI. The deliberate taking of life by suicide or homicide is forbidden, although the reference is not to capital punishment for certain sins (Gen. 9:6; Exod. 21:12-15). Our Lord emphasized the spiritual application of this principle, that we must not harbour hatred against a brother (Matt 5:21-26, 38-48; 1 John 3:15-17).

VII. Any practice which violates the sanctity of the marriage relationship is forbidden (Matt. 5:27-32; Mark 10:19; Jas. 2:11). Purity in heart and life must be maintained (Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 5:22). The body with all its powers may be the instrument for the furthering of God's glory, and the vehicle for the expression of the life of Christ.

VIII. People are not to take on themselves that which belongs to another, but, on the other hand, they are to give generously to him (Exod. 22:1-4; Lev. 19:11; Rom. 13:8; Eph. 4:28).

IX. Truth should characterize all our actions, speech and thoughts (Exod. 23:1; Lev. 19:16, 17; Deut. 19:16-20; Matt. 19:18).

X. Covetousness, which is an excessive longing for that which belongs to another, is a grievous sin (Rom. 7:7; 13:19; Col. 3:5).

III. The Scene of the Commandments—verses 18-26.

The thunderings, lightnings, trumpet calls and smoke were visible and audible tokens of the presence and power of God (Exod. 19:16-19; Isa. 6:4; Heb. 12:18-22; Rev. 4:5). The people stood in fear, afar off. Mt. Sinai is a picture of sinful man separated from a holy God. It is also an illustration of salvation by grace, in that Moses drew near. The Lord came down from Mt. Sinai, called Moses, and Moses went up (Exod. 19:20). In the person of Christ, God came to earth, and called men to come to Him, taking away their sin that they might draw near without fear (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:19-22).

The altar for sacrifices and burnt-offering must not be constructed of cut stone (Joshua 8:30, 31; 1 Kings 6:7). The use of tools would pollute it as tools would signify the human effort to make oneself acceptable. Only by grace are we accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6).

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