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THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER

in the Light of the Virgin Birth as Found in the Gospel of Luke.

By George B. Fletcher

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THE poor of God's people, Israel, who were obliged to sell their property, or even themselves as slaves, could be redeemed by a near-relative who was able and willing to pay the price of their redemption. The near-relative who thus acted was known as the "goel", or kinsman-redeemer.

The facts relating to the kinsman-redeemer as found in the Old Testament are a beautiful type of the Lord, Jesus Christ in His Person and Work as our Redeemer. The Old Testament reveals three facts concerning the Person, and three facts concerning the Work of a kinsman-redeemer. We will gather these facts together first, and then see how they are directly applicable to the Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament Kinsman-Redeemer

First of all, the law of Moses defined that in order to have the Right to redeem one had to be "nigh of kin", i.e., a near-kinsman, or relative. This is plainly stated in Leviticus 25:47-49, and illustrated in the experience of Naomi, in the Book of Ruth. Boaz was "nigh of kin" to Naomi, Elimelech's widow, and therefore had the Right to redeem her alienated inheritance. (Ruth 2:1; 2:20 margin). The first qualification necessary then, in order to be a kinsman-redeemer was kinship with the one for whom he acted.

The second qualification necessary was the Ability to redeem. One could have been "nigh of kin" to a distressed brother, but unable to pay the price of his redemption. This too is illustrated in the Book of Ruth where we learn that Boaz could not have redeemed the inheritance of Elimelech had he not been "a mighty man of wealth". (Ruth 2:1).

The third qualification was — the kinsman had to be Willing to redeem. For one could possess the Right to redeem, and have the Ability, and yet not be Willing to do so. This also is illustrated in the Book of Ruth, for when Boaz approached a nearer-kinsman than himself to Naomi, Elimelech's widow, he agreed at first to redeem the inheritance. But when Boaz said he would have to marry Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth the Moabitess, he no longer was Willing. (Deuteronomy 25:5, 6; Ruth 4:4-6).

When one could qualify as a kinsman-redeemer by possessing the Right to redeem through blood-relationship, and was Able and Willing to do so, his Work as a kinsman-redeemer was threefold. (1) He was to redeem the property, or buy back the inheritance. (Leviticus 25:25) (2) He was to redeem the persons. (Leviticus 25:47-50) (3) He was to execute vengeance on the oppressor and enemy of the distressed brother for whom he acted. This appears in Numbers 35:19-21 and Deuteronomy 19:12, where the word "goel", meaning kinsman-redeemer, is translated by the phrase "avenger of blood".

Our Redeemer — Jesus Christ

Let us now apply these six great facts revealed in the Old Testament to the Lord, Jesus Christ, our great Kinsman-Redeemer. First of all, in the Gospel of Luke for the first time in the New Testament the word "redemption" is found, thus setting it forth as the Gospel of the Kinsman-Redeemer. (Luke 1:68; 2:38; 24:21).

Further we have seen that the Redeemer had to be a near-kinsman. Therefore if Jehovah Himself is to be the Redeemer of man He had to become one with man in order to possess the Right to redeem. In other words, He must assume our nature. It is Luke who records the wonderful announcement to the Virgin Mary of the birth of the Redeemer (Luke 1:30-35), thus fulfilling the ancient prophecy that by woman alone should the promised Deliverer come. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 1:14) He also traces his genealogy back to Adam, the father of the human family (Luke 2:23-38), thus linking Him up with the whole race. In the Epistles Paul declares by the Spirit of God that, "it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren," and therefore, "he took not on him the nature of angels, but . . . the seed of Abraham," and "was found in fashion as a man." (Hebrews 2:14, 16, 17; Philippians 2:7, 8). Thus by taking our very nature, sin excepted (Romans 8:3), He became "nigh of kin" and laid claim by His Virgin Birth to the Right to redeem all who would believe.

His Ability to Save Is Sure

How wicked, then, for the modernist in Protestantism to deny His Virgin Birth, and rob us of a Kinsman-Redeemer, and Him of His Right and Ability to redeem. How blasphemous for the clergy of Romanism to teach the idolatrous doctrine of Mariolatry, ascribing to the Virgin Mary virtues and graces and honor belonging solely and only to the Lord Jesus Christ our Kinsman-Redeemer.

But it was not enough that a near-kinsman have the Right to redeem, but also had to have the Ability. Now, if our Lord, Jesus Christ were mere man as we are, He could by no means redeem us. (Psalm 49:7). But Matthew declares that the One born of the Virgin Mary was "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew 1:23). If Christ is not in the same person both God and man, he either could not die, or his death could not avail. Thus he was Very God, and Very man, the God-man, our Kinsman-Redeemer, and being man he had the Right to redeem, but seeing he was "God manifest in the flesh" he has the Ability or power to redeem.

Now, as to whether or not He was Willing to pay the price of our redemption, and apply its benefits to the trusting heart let the Scriptures answer. The declaration, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God," spoken by the Psalmist, is directly applied to Christ in Hebrews 10:7-9. Thus possessing the Right by His incarnation, and having the Ability because of His Godhead, He willingly "once in the end of the ages appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and on the cross, "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God," and in resurrection, "by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained an eternal redemption for us." (Hebrews 9:26, 14, 12).

Christ Saves Those Who Believe on Him

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Kinsman-Redeemer has the Right, and is both Able and Willing "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Hebrews 7:25) And all who came can say with the Apostle, Peter, "Redeemed — not with corruptible things as silver and gold — but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Furthermore our Kinsman-Redeemer restores our lost inheritance, so that what we lost in Adam we have "much more" gained in Christ, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. Paul in his epistles declares, "all things are yours — and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." "And if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ . . ." (1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Romans 8:17) "Thus now is being proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of salvation, through the preaching of the Gospel." (Luke 4:18-21; 2 Corinthians 6:2).

But the day of grace will not last forever, and soon our Kinsman-Redeemer will rise up to execute vengeance on the oppressor and His enemies, and usher in the day of vengeance of our God. "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." (2 Thessalonians 2:7-10)

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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"And the devil (the oppressor) that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone — and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:10).

Reader, have you, as a helpless sinner, personally appealed to the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Kinsman-Redeemer? Remember, He says, Him that cometh to me — whether virtuous or vicious, moral or immoral, of reputation or no reputation, catholic or protestant, black or white, rich or poor — "I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37).

Will you be found among that company, who, "purchased with His own Blood" (Acts 20:28), shall sing throughout eternity — "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9)?

NEW SURROUNDINGS

During the past two months the Seminary Building has been redecorated externally and internally. Offices, lecture rooms, hallways, etc., are painted in various pastel shades. The houses to the north of the Seminary building on Jarvis Street, during the summer, have been demolished by the Department of Parks and replaced by a colourful park, replete with benches. To harmonize with the new surroundings the Seminary has been pointed and painted and thus put into first rate condition. When former students and freshmen gather on Monday, September 23rd, at 2 p.m. they will find an environment conducive to mental and spiritual alertness.

REGISTRAR

SEMINARY CALENDAR FOR THE YEAR 1957-58

Registration Monday, September 23, at 2.30 p.m.
Lectures Begin Tuesday, September 24, at 8.30 a.m.
Convocation October 17
Graduation May 8

The Saint's Valleys

By Andrew Bonar

BUNYAN somewhere says, that the days are coming when men shall talk of Antichrist as a matter of history — telling their children how that mystery of iniquity leavened Christendom, how it prevailed, how it was destroyed by the Lord's coming. Even so, the days shall come when the saints shall speak one to another of their past pilgrimages; and all shall have to tell more or less of what they met with as they journeyed, and how the Lord led them, every one, through — (1) The valley of Trouble, *Achor*, in their awakening; (2) The valley of *Berachah*, or Blessing, when they were brought to peace through the work of Christ; (3) The valley of Weeping, or *Baca*, at various stages and times; (4) The valley of *Eshcol*, where first-fruits, or earnest of glory, were given them; (5) The valley of conflict with foes, when victories were won for God in the valley of *Rephaim*; (6) The valley of *Shaveh*, or the King's Dale, where the Lord met them, as Melchizedek did Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; (7) The valley of Decision, or *Jehoshaphat*, where at last they saw Antichrist, and Satan, and every foe overwhelmed and swept away, and began their triumph with their Lord and King.

I. ACHOR.—This is the spot where Achan's sin was exposed and punished before all Israel and before the Lord, — the sin that had troubled Israel and Moses; the sin that had brought woeful fatal trouble on himself and his house; the sin that could be dealt with aright only by the stroke of justice, — death, and the consuming flame. Now, every awakened sinner opens his eyes some morning to find himself an *Achan*! Every awakened soul is taught by the Spirit somewhat of sin, and his own sin, and is made to cry 'Amen' to the judgment of God that dooms the sinner to death and hell (Josh. 7:26; Hos. 2:15).

All do not linger long in the valley, though some do. There are those, indeed, who seem to get their most memorable view of it after having got clear of it; they are made to look back and learn its lessons. But others pass slowly through, burdened with the sight and sense of sin, and guilt, and wrath.

One thing is sure: all of them do learn the lesson taught in Achor, *viz.* that sin is exceeding sinful, and deserves the eternal wrath and curse of the Holy One, whether it be sin in the heart, or sin in the life, or sin on the tongue, or sin in the form of omission, or sin in the openness of positive transgression; sin against law, or sin against love. It is always a gloomy valley; the clouds that hide the sun are ever over it.

II. BERACHAH.—The Lord delights, in due time, to lead His own to a more pleasant place, where they find favour, and peace, and joy. He leads them to see the Substitute, Jesus, "made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), that the "blessing" might come upon us. And thus they enter the valley of Blessing.

The history of King Jehoshaphat furnishes a beautiful type of the way in which the sinner becomes possessed of all the blessings of redemption. In the valley, ever afterwards called *Berachah*, that king led on his army to gather the spoil of foes, and "they were three days in gathering it, it was so much" (2 Chron. 20:25). Their part in the

matter was simply to look on and "believe in the Lord" (2 Chron. 20:20); and so they saw Him work salvation by His own arm. They found the *work done* to their hand; they gathered immense riches, and returned up the valley homewards, "blessing the Lord".

It is thus with the believing soul. Fearing, it sets itself to seek the Lord; and the Lord sends the tidings of his salvation, calling on the soul to come and see. And lo! it is done! Another, in our name and for our sake, has gone forth, has obeyed the law, has borne the burden, has given to God what we, by our sins, took away; and our part is simply to "bless the Lord" that this is done — to "bless the Lord", and say "Amen" to it all! to take it as our own, gathering the spoil which another has won for us, and so to "bless the Lord," and go homeward! Happy valley! happy soul!

This is the stage of "joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13). Not by what we have done or felt, not by prayers nor by tears, but by discovering what the Lord Jesus *has done*, we are blessed. The cloud that overhung our path is gone; the sun has burst forth. The valley of *Berachah* is the place for songs; every song a recognition of the Lord's gracious acts accomplished for them.

III. BACA.—God's saved ones go on their way, never forgetting *Berachah*; but, nevertheless, they have many sorrows. They oft traverse "the valley of Weeping", or *Baca* (Ps. 84:6). Care, trial, pain, sickness, cause them to weep. Friends and foes, corruption and temptation, the church and the world, furnish from time to time causes of sadness.

How then, do they pass through this valley? Very much by remembering the spoil gathered in *Berachah*. Their tears send them ever back to Him who has removed the curse; and He turns their sorrows into holy blessing. *Baca* becomes a well of life to them. "Lord, by these things men live" (Isa. 38:16). An old poet has sung of the matter in these strains:

"Seemed not thy spouse unkind to see thee weep?"

When one said to a friend who had lost a son, "God gave you His own Son, ere He took yours from you," that was a well dug in *Baca*. When another said to a godly widow, who had newly gazed on her husband dead, and who said, "I have lost my husband!" "You forget that you had a Husband before you had him," it was a well in *Baca*. The "Man of sorrows" meets the weeper here with his most tender sympathy.

IV. ESHCOL.—To cheer on Israel in the desert, the Lord caused the spies to be sent into the Promised Land; and an immense cluster of the richest grapes, with figs and pomegranates, was brought to them as an earnest of what they were yet to possess (Num. 13:23). This earnest was from the valley of *Eshcol*.

The Lord "knows our frame." He does not forget to dry up tears, and to brighten hope by special joys arising from the glimpses of glory which He sends. The Holy Spirit himself is the true "earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1:14). The Spirit gives samples of the "joy of the Lord", "the new song", "the love of God", "the peace that passeth understanding"; and, by the light which He casts on the pro-

phetic page, brings near to us the pearl-gates of new Jerusalem, the jasper walls, the golden streets, as well as the "no night there," "the throne of God and of the Lamb", "the river of the water of life", "the kingdom, and the King", with the multitude of the saved — the happy, holy company of the redeemed.

Many such earnest do the saints find — *Eshcol-grapes* in the desert. It is thus that *hope* is nourished and hope is one of the soul's eagle-wings.

V. REPHAIM.—All saints do some work for their God, and fight some battles. It was thus with David when seated on the throne; he was led forth to repel invading Philistines in the *valley of Rephaim*, between Jerusalem and Bethlehém. Twice was he called to this conflict in the same spot (2 Sam. 5:19-25); both times he won the victory; but the circumstances were not alike on the two occasions. On the one occasion, he asked the Lord; and the Lord said, "Go up," at once. On the next occasion, he asked the Lord; and the Lord said, "Thou shalt *not* go up," but instead, he must go round by the mulberry-trees, and wait quietly till he heard "the sound of a going in the top of the mulberry-trees." The impatient warrior-band obeyed; and at last the appointed signal came, and they rushed on and conquered.

Memorable conflicts for the church of God! They teach us to expect foes just when all seems peace. They teach that Satan will try to find us off our guard after a former victory. They teach us to move not one step till we have consulted the Lord. They teach us to consult the Lord anew, as every occasion comes, and not to trust to old direction and old answers to prayer. Yes, *Rephaim* (the "valley of Giants", and gigantic men of old) teaches us that, though at one time the Lord may bid us, at once go forward, He may at another say, "Sit still a while"; be patient: be neither too late nor too soon.

*"God waits to bless us day by day;
But we must trust Him for the time and way."*

There is nothing for it but a continual leaning on the Lord for guidance, while we use His word and examine His providences.

VI. SHAVAH, or the KING'S DALE.—It was here that (Gen. 24:7) Abraham was met by Melchizedek, who refreshed him and his army with bread and wine so seasonably and suddenly, after the battle against the five kings. He whose name means "King of Righteousness", and who was at the same time "Prince of Peace", thus kindly thought upon faithful Abraham and his worn-out company, on their way homeward. See! they sit together on yonder grassy plot, watered by Kedron, and shaded by the Mount of Olives. Emblem of such scenes as occur still among God's Abrahams! — when they meet together, their King in the midst, enjoying sweet fellowship in ordinances, or yet more specially when they sit at the Lord's table, and realize there the future days of rest, when the feast of fat things has come.

VII. JEHOSHAPHAT.—The prophet Joel has shown us this valley, "the valley of Decision," or of "the judgment of Jehovah!" Here the summons goes forth: "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the *valley of Jehoshaphat*" (Joel 3:13). "Put in the sickle"; "there will I sit to judge."

What a day! His saints shall be with Him there, when He comes to judge; but to them it shall be no time of fear,

for "the Lord shall be the hope of His people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain" (Joel 3:16, 17).

Happy, happy they! for it is a day that ends the sinner's rebellion; it is the day that decides the controversy in favour of God. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Decision" (Joel 3:14); and here the prophet repeats it: "The day of the Lord is near in the *valley of Decision*."

In prospect of that day, shall a man remain undecided still? Do you hope to escape — peradventure to be overlooked amid those "multitudes, multitudes?" No, it cannot be; you shall not evade notice. The eye of Him who "made all things for himself" shall fix upon you; for He knows how to glorify His justice in you on that day of evil. He will require you to come forth; He will insist on your abiding by the choice you made when your unbelief said, "Away with Christ; away with grace! away with the blood of Christ! away with the obedience of Christ! away with the righteousness of Christ!" This is the valley of *Decision*, the valley of "Jehoshaphat", the "Lord's Judgment".

Up from this valley the saints go in triumphant procession to the city of the Great King. They have passed through all the valleys at last — Achor, and Berachah, and Baca, and Eshcol, and Rephaim, and Shaveh, and now, last of all, Jehoshaphat. They have come to their rest in the promised Kingdom.

All the rivers run into the sea, and there they help to swell the vast volume of ocean's waters; and even so shall all the wanderings of saints end in the one blessed home, where the memories of the past shall all contribute to the never ending variety and freshness of the ineffable bliss.

—*The Reaper.*

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The Sermons of Dr. T. T. Shields

"The Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel"

(Stenographically Reported)

Romans, chapter fifteen.

I HAVE frequently called your attention to the suggestiveness of the biographical passages in the Epistles of Paul. They show us how he lived, how he taught, how he planned — delightfully natural, and yet unmistakably supernatural. In this fifteenth chapter that is particularly noticeable. I will read from the seventeenth to the twenty-ninth verses:

"I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

Some years ago when I was going away for a vacation in the summertime, one of the Deacons of the church, bidding me goodbye, expressed the hope that I should have a pleasant time, and find many interesting occupations. He said, "To me, one of the pleasures of travelling about is to look out the jobs I do not want, and to observe how many men are occupied in doing unpleasant things. I find some ground for thankfulness that I am not required to do those things." I have felt a little like that when I have gone along the street and seen men carrying out ashes and throwing them into a truck; I have said to myself, If there were no one else to do it, I could try that job, but it is a disagreeable task.

It is interesting, on the other hand, to look for the jobs we should like to do. That is why we window-shop — to see what we should like to have if we had the money. I

never do it in Toronto, but occasionally when away from home, and I have to wait for a train, I enjoy looking into the windows and seeing things I would buy if I could. In imagination I feel myself rich! It is interesting to read of other lands and climes, and in imagination travel thereto and explore their beauties. It is still better, when travelling, to see some of the things that you have read about, see some of the mountain-peaks to which you cannot attain.

The Bible is a very practical book, as we have often observed; yet it is a very challenging book. Its standards are sometimes dazzling, their attitudes defy us. We see what we ought to be, and what we might be — and then feel how far short we come of the possibilities of the Christian life. Out Dufferin Street way, there is a flying-school, and whenever I pass it I drive slowly. I like to see them "take off", getting away up into the clouds. I think every devotional service such as this ought to be a kind of flying-school —

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

How earthbound we are! But "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Biographical literature is always interesting and instructive, when one is permitted to keep company with some great soul, and to feel something of the possibilities of life. When Sir Wilfred Grenfell as a young medical student in London, heard Mr. Moody preach, he said that he was resolved to make his religion real or "chuck it" — an English phrase. I heard Sir Wilfred tell something of his missionary work, and of the hazards of that life of privation in Labrador. As I shook hands with him afterward I said, "You make me feel as though I want to get away somewhere and see nobody for a year or so." It makes one feel ashamed when he sees what some men have done. I always have that feeling when reading of the exploits and achievements of the Apostle Paul.

In closing this profound epistle, the greatest piece of logic ever written, he drops down to rather commonplace observations in some respects, telling the Christians at Rome that he has for a long time desired to see them, and that he hopes to do so in a short time. He has a little money that he is taking to the saints at Jerusalem, expressive of the affection and fellowship of saints more fortunately circumstanced than they; and in due time he hopes to go to Spain. Then he adds this tremendous statement, "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

How many of us dare say that? If there is anyone that can now make that Scripture their own, I am half inclined

to invite you to stand. Would you dare to write to anyone and say, "I hope to see you soon, and when I come, I am sure that I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ"? To what spiritual stature must a man attain before he dare to use such language as that! But if we may not say it, we can at least aspire toward it. If we have not scaled that mountain-peak, we can at least look at it, and see how far up we can climb. Shall we do that?

Very simply: a possession to be desired, a benefit to be conveyed, and an assurance to be coveted, and, if I have time and the courage, I will dare to speak of an ideal that may be attained.

I.

What does Paul mean by the "fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ"? What a tremendous sentence that is! We know something of the gospel as a revelation of truth. We know something of it as a message representing the divine purpose and will for us. The doctrines of the gospel are not unimportant; we ought all to know what the gospel is; we ought to be scripturally informed, thoroughly instructed. It is important that we know what we believe, and why we believe it. So I might outline to you that system of truth which we call the gospel, but I assume you are familiar with it — the person of Christ and His work, His atonement for us, the necessity of the new birth, and so on. We may know the gospel after that fashion. I have known a great many people who were thoroughly instructed respecting the letter of the gospel, who apparently knew very little of the "blessing" of the gospel. But evermore "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." We may be sound theologically, perfectly orthodox, and yet as dead as the book from which we have learned our orthodoxy, having no life at all.

Paul did not say to these Roman Christians, "When I come to you, I shall come thoroughly competent to tell you what the gospel is." He did not say, "I shall come well able to expound its great principles, and to discourse upon its mysteries." No! No! All that was involved, but there was something vastly more than that. He speaks of the "blessing" of the gospel. It would be very interesting if some of us should receive a communication containing a copy of someone's will, informing us that we had fallen heir to a considerable fortune. That would be to us a gospel, good news. But if we had nothing more than the envelope and parchment, we could read it over until we were blind and it would benefit us nothing. You say, "That is all right. It tells me of what is mine. But I think I will get in touch with the executors, and find out where to get it. The will says there is a house for me — I want to live in it. The will says there is money for me — I should like to have it. The will says there is old silver and beautiful pottery — I should like to have them. The will says there is a great estate where I may roam at liberty — I want to discover it."

It is well to have the will, but it is better to have the "blessing" of it. It is one thing to read in the Bible the will of our great Benefactor; it is another matter to have the blessing of it, to be enriched by it. That is what Paul was talking about. The gospel had, to him, long since ceased to be a mere abstraction, a mere philosophy of things. It was A BUNDLE OF BLESSING. He said, "I have it."

It would be possible to spend our time on an inventory of the "blessings" of the gospel, and break this great phrase up into its constituents and say, "What is involved in the

blessing?" We should speak about the forgiveness of sin; the pardon of all our transgressions; of our standing in Christ, justification in Him, His robe of righteousness about us; the priceless jewel of peace — "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." We should speak too of the joy of the Lord, the assurance of our present standing before God, and of all our hope for the future. We might easily spend the time at our disposal, I say, speaking of the elements of this blessing of which, I trust, we have all had at least a taste: "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Taste it! I trust we have all tasted that the Lord is gracious.

But it was not of the gospel in abstraction, nor yet of the mere blessing of the gospel as a reality of Christian experience — that is not what Paul speaks of; but of the "fulness" of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. I apprehend that he meant by that, that *such blessing as he enjoyed had come to him in the superlative degree*. He was a man of faith — not little faith, not just like one walking on thin ice, afraid of breaking through, but walking with firm and steadfast step, as though he knew there was a solid foundation beneath his feet. We read of one who was "full of faith".

Have you ever been one, let us say, of a party of two or three, where some absent person was under discussion, and some word more or less derogatory of the absent one was spoken? Someone said, "That is really so, is it?" "Yes." Another said, "Well, I scarcely believe that. I did not think that of him." But a third stands erectly and says, "I do not believe it. It simply is not true." "How do you know?" "I know the man." "And what do you know of him?" "I know him intimately; I trust him absolutely; he is incapable of the thing you suggest." One had no faith at all in respect to that absent one; the second had a little faith; but the third was "full" of faith, faith in the superlative degree.

Paul enjoyed the "fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." He was full of faith. When a thing is full of one element, there is no room in it for another. I heard of a father reproving his boy for the poor report he had brought from school. The boy said he was sorry, but he had done the very best he could. "I am sorry, too," said his father, and apparently dismissed the subject. Presently he asked the son to go with him out into the garden, where he had some clearing to do. He set the boy at work filling a basket with sticks and shavings. When it was full, the father said, "Pack it down, and put in more." When the lad had done so, he repeated the instruction. He filled and stamped, filled and stamped, until the top of it was rounded up. "Now," said the father, "I want you to carry those apples down cellar; put them in the basket." "But I cannot: the basket is already full." "I tell you to fill that basket with the apples." "I cannot. It is full of chips and shavings." "And that is why your head would not hold anything your teacher tried to teach you. It was full of something else."

When a man is full of faith, there is not much room for doubt and uncertainty. This man was full of all Christian graces and virtues. He enjoyed them to the full. I suppose he was full of peace — not just a superficial peace, but that peace that has depth to it. They say that no matter how rough the ocean is on the surface, in its depths it is unmoved; all the storms are superficial. I suppose that is true of the thoroughly instructed Christian: any disturbances there are are on the surface of things. I suppose that is what Paul meant when he said, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Just a little ripple on the surface of things, but down in the depths, full of blessing, full of

peace, and full of joy. We need that. I do. There are some people who are naturally cheerful; they can whistle all the day long — and when they are not whistling, they sing. There are some other people who are disposed to walk in the shade, naturally a little gloomy. We need grace, not only to have joy, but to be joyful. So we might go on and enumerate all the qualities of a truly Christian character, and I suppose in Paul's experience these were more fully developed than in other cases. He had the "fulness" of the gospel.

Of course it meant that he had a larger conception of the scope and sweep of the gospel. The gospel, to him, was something far bigger than it was to some others. Full of blessing. How shall I put it? It is refreshing, is it not, to meet a man or woman manifestly in exuberant health? As I was turning the corner of a street one day this week, I saw a man — not an old man — with a walking stick, that he carried not for ornament, but for use. I had to slow my car as this comparatively young man almost shuffled across the street. I said to myself, Poor fellow, I wonder what is wrong with him? But one sees other men with firm step, whose eyes are almost like a flame of fire. The glow of health is upon their cheeks; there is a sprightliness and spring about all their actions; and one exclaims, What a healthy man he is! Such an one is full of life, full of health — not living at a poor dying rate, not an anaemic, half-starved soul, but a man of brawn and muscle, well-developed, fit for the day's task. Is there anything in life that is more inspiring than to see a human personality just literally tingling with health, ready for anything?

I remember walking with a friend some years ago, and as we went along the sidewalk, a team of horses were pulling a great dray across the sidewalk, entering a lane. They were two magnificent creatures, gray, I rather think they were Clydesdales; with flowing mane, and harness nicely polished, arched necks. They had a tremendous load behind them. As they bowed their heads and put the strength of their great shoulders against that load, and pulled it triumphantly across the obstruction, the godly friend who was with me paused, as was his wont, and touching me, he said, "Look! How good our God is to give us such noble and able servants as these." Those animals were so full of life and of power they challenged one's admiration, and made him feel, I wish I were like that, that I could do anything. I fancy Paul was like that, so glorious a Christian, manifestly "full" of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

II.

And there were BENEFITS TO BE CONVEYED. The gospel, Paul conceived, was not for himself alone; he had something that he would fain impart to others; for said he, "I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." In effect, "I am going to bring all my wealth with me when I come." He was going for that special purpose, for he had desired that he might have some fruit among them also. The gospel was not given for our own enrichment only. It is a message to be delivered. We often see the postman on his round with his bag of letters. He is not carrying a bagful of ornaments, he is not proud of the fact that he has been entrusted with a bag of literary treasures which are to be analyzed and admired: he has a message to deliver, and it is his business to deliver it. He is someone's deliverer.

That is what the Christian is. We have the message in its fulness, and Paul says, "I am keen to deliver it. I want

to get out on my rounds. I have a long time desired to come to you, these many years." Can you maintain a spiritual ambition with the possibility of gratification for a number of years together? We have some worthy impulses, but our goodness is like a morning cloud that vanishes away. But here was a man who had cherished a secret desire that had grown into a definite purpose, saying, "I will go to them some time." Year after year he nursed that idea in his heart, until at last he said, "I am coming soon now; I have wanted to come for many years, and I have not changed my purpose; I have my aim, and I will pursue it."

So ought it to be with us. That is what our gospel is — certainly something to be enjoyed ourselves, but something to be communicated to others as well. To Paul, it was a seed to be planted — and that is the gospel. The seed is the Word, and the Word is seed; and we are to find some place to plant it. This husbandman said, in the opening of the epistle — to repeat a quotation I made a moment ago — "I purposed to come unto you . . . that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles — I have so much of the good seed that I have not yet been able to find ground enough in which to plant it. I have had my eye on Rome; I think it would make a good bed for the garden of the Lord. I am going to visit you, and have some fruit to the praise and glory of God among you also."

That is why we are put in trust with the gospel. We are seedsmen. Next time you pass a seedsman's window, stop and look at it. Did you ever see anyone window-shopping at a seedsman's window? Not very often. Who wants to look at dry seeds and bulbs? They do not look attractive. If that is all we are, just a seedsman's window, we are not very attractive either. You had better get out and do some planting, for when we plant it, and it brings forth fruit to the glory of God, we adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things. Then we will make the gospel attractive.

The gospel is a trust to be invested. What is a bank for? Just to receive money, and put it in a vault, and lock it up tight to assure no one's stealing it? Is that how banks operate? No! I read somewhere that the art of banking is getting rich on other people's money. If banks are to exist they must invest the money entrusted to them. What would you do if you had a few dollars to spare? Would you put it in a glass case so you could look at it every day and say, "How rich I am! I have money — there it is"? Would you not rather say, "I do not need it at the present time, so I will put it to work." In the parable of the talents, our Lord set forth that principle: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." He said, "I expect some interest on what I give you. I make you my agent; go and invest it, so that when I come I shall have not only the original deposit, but an increase beside." We ought to be multiplying the gospel by the investment of our spiritual gifts, by putting out the gospel deposit that it may earn something for our Lord's glory.

We are all social creatures, even if we are not sociable, for "no man liveth unto himself". There are a great many things in life that one cannot enjoy alone. Have you not noticed, when people are together, they keep exclaiming, "Look!"; or, "Did you hear that?" Other people saw or heard it as well as you — why did you call attention to it? For the simple reason that you cannot enjoy things unless someone shares it with you. That is natural. So is it with the gospel.

"The meal unshared is food unblessed
Thou hoard'st in vain what love should spend."

We must be at work, sharing the blessing with other people.

It means that *we have to communicate life to others*. We are to be the medium of such communication: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In a certain sense, life is given to give away. That is our business, not to live unto ourselves, but to carry enrichment to all about us.

III.

All that has been more or less commonplace, but here is the wondrous thing. Here is a man who said this extraordinary thing: "I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Would you like to be able to say that? How desirable thus to be spiritually rich! What do you want a great deal of money for? Do you say you do not? There is not one here who has not dreamed of it a hundred times. What would you do with it? If you are a Christian, I will venture to say you have indulged the delightful fancy — I have scores of time — of being in a position to meet the needs of needy people. It is hard to stand helpless in the face of human need. How humiliated those disciples were when the father of that poor boy said to the Master as He came down from the mount, "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him"! They had not the "fulness of the blessing"; they were helpless in the presence of that great need. I say, they must have felt a deep sense of humiliation, as you and I have done so often when we have looked upon some distressing case and said, Oh that I had power to bring blessing into this human life. In your fancy, even as you have dreamed of the possession of material things, there have come up before your mind a procession of needy friends, and you have said to yourself, Would I not love to go to them and say, All your troubles are over; you have a rich relative. Who of us would not like to be in that position?

It seems to me that **SUCH AN ASSURANCE WOULD BE BLESSEDLY COMPELLING**. If you and I were sure, absolutely sure, that we had the power to communicate "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" to someone else, do you suppose anyone would have to exhort us to go visiting? We would get up in the middle of the night to go. We would go anywhere if we were sure that our visit would not be in vain.

Why is it we do not go? Why is it we fail to do so many things? Simply because we are profoundly conscious of our own poverty and impotence. If I should say to you, "Will you go to see So-and-So?" You might say, "It would do no good." "Paul, how would you like to go to Rome?" "Oh, I have wanted to go for a long time." "Will you go?" "Certainly I will at the first opportunity." "Would it do any good?" "Certainly. When I go, it will be in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. It is bound to do good." If we had that confident assurance, how it would compel us in a hundred directions! How beautiful would be our feet upon the mountain, preaching good tidings, and publishing peace, and saying unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! If only we were thus sure!

How profoundly comforting it would be to our own souls to live in the consciousness of that possession, with such a power at our command! It is a high ideal, is it not?

If our teachers in the School had that, when we got our reports on visitation, they would all be one hundred per cent. There would be no excuses for work undone. If you were sure you could convey blessing, you would make time, you would do it somehow, nothing would stop you if you were sure that you would never go in vain.

IV.

It is **AN IDEAL THAT IS ATTAINABLE**. Paul reached it. He was sure. Therefore, somehow or another, it is possible for all of us to be sure. Will you think of that matter? It is possible for every teacher and every preacher and every private witness for Christ, to be absolutely certain that he will never speak wholly in vain. We may not always see the result immediately, but we may go about our work, like the man who drops the seed into the soil, and covers it up and goes home, confident that it will bring forth fruit. You might say to the sower, "What have you done to-day? I see no green fields." "No; but I am sure that when God's time of visitation comes, when the seasons roll around, that the seed I planted will grow and bear fruit. I have not wasted a minute of my time to-day. I am sure." I say, that ideal is within our reach; we may be sure.

We may be sure on the ground that it is *scripturally assured* to us. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." It will not be in vain. But we must sow in faith. Not all that we do will spring up like Jonah's gourd. Not always shall we see immediate results — but we may be sure that when we go, we go "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

And as it is scripturally assured to us, it may be *experimentally demonstrated*. What the gospel has done for you, it can do for others — and what it is doing for you, it will do for others. The question for us always is, Are we living now in a present experience of the abounding grace of the Lord Jesus? Do we know something, for ourselves, of the "fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ"? They have in the United States and in England, and here, little refreshment booths that they call "Snack bars", or, "Snack counters." They do not undertake to give you a real meal, but just a "snack", just something to go on. That may not be so bad provided you have a good solid meal behind you, and in prospect; but if you live on "snacks", you will be some sort of a snag after a while. There will not be much of you.

A good many religious institutions in our day are just "snack counters". Let us not be satisfied with that. Let us be ambitious to possess the "fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ". Let us pray that we may have grace — and I would be in line with Scripture in this — to "covet earnestly the best gifts". Let us ask God so to fill us with His fulness that we may be full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost. Then we shall be full of the "blessing of the gospel of Christ"; and of that fulness we shall be able to communicate to others.

May the Lord give us this holy ambition, for His name's sake. Amen.

October 28, 1937.

To Jesus then your trouble bring,
Nor murmur at your lot;
While you are poor, and he is King,
You shall not be forgot.

—WILLIAM COWPER

"LET US GO ON"

A Sermon by Rev. John Wilmot, D.D.

Of Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, England.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

"Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."—Hebrews 6:1-2.

Prayer by Dr. Shields

We come to Thee, O Lord our God, as to the great Storehouse, in Whom are hid all the treasures which we so urgently need. We thank Thee for Him Who is the Door thereto, for the One Whose name is our password, to Whom Thou hast pledged Thy word in everlasting covenant, and for Whose sake Thou art able to have mercy even upon sinners. We thank Thee that if we have Jesus Christ we have everything, and we are rich for time and for eternity. Draw near to us this morning, we pray Thee, and fill our hearts with joy, and our lives with practical thanksgiving because of all that Thou hast done for us in Christ Jesus the Lord.

We thank Thee for that godliness which is profitable to the life that now is. We thank Thee for all the joys of the Christian life, for all the delightful experiences that are ours because, by Thy grace, we have been brought into fellowship with Thyself; for the earnest of our inheritance which is ours until the time of the redemption of the purchased possession.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for that which Thou hast given us while as yet we have not come of age, nor are entitled to our full inheritance in Christ. Help us that we may take full advantage of all the riches of Christ, the spiritual blessings wherewith Thou hast blessed us in heavenly places in Christ.

We thank Thee for this prospect of which we have read this morning, of a day of ultimate victory, of spiritual completion, when we shall be like unto our glorious Lord. Help us this morning by Thy grace that we may not be unmindful of that which is reserved for us in heaven who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Bless us in our meditation upon Thy word this morning. Speak to us through Thy servant, we pray Thee, as he declares to us the unsearchable riches of Christ. Look this morning upon every member of this congregation, men and women, boys and girls. Make us all to be partakers of the grace of life, sharers in the victory of Jesus Christ. Save such as are unsaved, and sanctify those who are Thy children, and glorify Thyself in us all, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

THE content of this chapter is somewhat depressing, but it concludes with the certainty of hope in Christ.

There is a saying in England — I suppose you use it over here as well—that "fools and bairns should not see things half done". We need to take into review the whole of the chapter in order to see clearly the whole truth. A half truth is sometimes a lie. You will be familiar with the term Calvinistic as descriptive of the manner in which some Christians hold the truth. They believe in the sovereignty of divine grace; that if once they are in Christ they are in Christ forever; that it is God Who has begun the good work in them, and He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Your Pastor is one of those ("Amen!"); and I am another! I trust you all are such who profess faith in the Saviour.

There are, however, professing Christian people who take another view. The reason why some speak of their salvation as dependent in measure upon themselves is possibly because they do not take into account the whole

counsel of God on the subject. They will cite texts which, if read apart from their context, appear to place the responsibility for their final salvation upon themselves. And there are passages of Scripture which, taken out of their context, might seem to teach the reverse of that which, with their context, they are obviously intended to teach. So there are people who say they believe they may be saved to-day, and lost to-morrow!

The salvation which is in Christ Jesus is eternal. When once God has begun the good work we may be certain that He will perfect it. The comforting assurance of salvation may be received from separate passages of Scripture; but it is most clearly perceived from the whole New Testament doctrine of the salvation wrought for us by the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, however, is a passage of Scripture which, if it be not rightly understood, may occasion doubt respecting the believer's final destiny.

I have noticed that this passage is by some dismissed from application to Christian people in general because it is written in an epistle addressed to the Hebrews; and they, being Gentiles, consider that it is not addressed to them! But I would remind you that this epistle would never have been written at all were not these Hebrews also Christians. It was not written to them because they were of the Hebrew race; but because they had embraced the Christian faith. And it has application to all who are Christians, whether they be racially Hebrew or Gentile. The epistle takes into account, necessarily, the religious customs of the people to whom it was written, and the conditions which obtained among them. It is peculiar in its character, and cannot be compared with any other epistle in the New Testament.

Have you heard the simple couplet respecting the Testaments—

"The old is by the new revealed,
The new is in the old concealed"?

The reason then why we do not have such a book as Leviticus in the New Testament is that we have the epistle to the Hebrews. The "shadows" of Leviticus are revealed in Hebrews, and the realities of Hebrews are concealed in Leviticus. Hebrews explains those things ordained of God and observed by Israel during the dispensation of the types, which were pictures of the salvation accomplished by Christ Jesus. And so this epistle is intended to show us, by comparison and contrast, that the Reality has come! And yet we could not possibly apprehend the fulness there is in Jesus Christ our Saviour but for the ministry of these types and shadows. I question if any believer could have perceived in the one offering of the Lord Jesus upon the tree the fulfilment and fulness of Divine requirement, but for the revelation in the Old Testament of many sacrifices as types of His one perfect Sacrifice. Could we ever have

understood without the Old Testament, that the one sacrifice of Christ fulfilled the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, and many lesser sacrifices? The Old Testament supplies the figures of the true; and the New Testament points out the realities; because in Christ the shadows have passed away, and the true light now shineth.

Last Sunday morning I suggested to you that in this epistle the key to its revelation of Jesus Christ is given in those words occurring in both the first and last chapters which speak of His immutability; there is no change in Him or in His achievements. But of those who profess allegiance to Christ the reverse is the case — there is change in us. We need not to be told that: we are reminded of it in a thousand different ways. And so, it would seem, the key words in respect to Christian people, are given in the exhortations — “*Let us go on*”, and on the other hand, *Let us not be drawing back*. “*Let us go on unto maturity*”, that is the word here; and at the end of chapter ten we read: “*Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*” And blessed are they who with assurance can say, “*We are not of them who draw back unto perdition: but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*”

The Apostle in this chapter refers, not so much to backsliders, as to those who become apostates. The opening half of the chapter describes apostasy; the disavowal or abandonment of the position previously held; and the latter half of the chapter speaks of our assurance — if faith in Christ is genuine, if we are truly founded on Him; if the root of the matter is in us. And we can give proof of the root of the matter being in us by our going on, by growing up into Christ in all things. To a Christian himself the evidence of the reality of his profession, of his possession of spiritual life, is that he makes progress. If there be no growth where is the evidence that he has living root? (vs. 7-8). That is the principle of this chapter. The Scripture sometimes places the responsibility for evidence upon us. We are to make our calling and election sure, that is, evident. The Lord Jesus and His apostles spake in this manner: “*He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him.*” “*If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.*”

I.

We are admonished, then, to *leave certain principles in order to obey this precept: “Let us go on.”* What are these principles which we are bidden to leave? Sometimes we get a clearer understanding of our version by a paraphrase, or another translation. It would be in accord with the meaning of this opening sentence to substitute the words— “*Starting out from, and leaving behind, the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on unto maturity.*” As applicable to Hebrews the word first of all might have reference to the Old Testament typical revelation of the Lord Jesus, as though that were the word of the beginning of Christ conveyed to Israel in those types and pictures and shadows. The shadows were to be left for the substance in Christ. But passing to New Testament doctrine in general, the explanation is given in six principles here enumerated. The principles of the beginning — “*the first principles of the oracles of God*” (v. 12) — are laid down here so that there may be no mistaking what they are. We have them in three couplets. They constitute the foundation, namely: “*Repentance from dead works, and faith toward God*”; “*the doctrine of baptisms, and, of laying on of*

hands”; the “*resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment*”. They are foundation principles essential to the beginning of the Christian life.

The first two, Repentance and Faith, represent the inward and individual aspect of the case. They pertain to the sinner’s heart and conscience. They are first principles which an evangelist must preach. They are solemn subjects which the apostle Paul told the Ephesians he had preached among them to which their conversion must be attributed (Acts XX:21). He declared all the counsel of God, but he mentions these two essentials especially because they concern the question of our sin and guilt, of which we need to repent, and of salvation in Christ Jesus which is received through faith.

Secondly you have the ordinance of baptism, coupled with the laying on of hands. You do not require to be reminded in this place that baptism is enjoined to be observed at the beginning of the Christian life. There are two ordinances given by the Lord Jesus to His Church. One is baptism, to be received by each professed believer upon his believing. It is the foundation ordinance. The second is that of the Lord’s Supper, a Church ordinance, for the observance of the whole company of God’s people banded together in Christian fellowship, a memorial feast to be kept until the Lord shall come again. The laying on of hands, here associated with baptism, might be taken to represent the method by which the baptized believer, the newly converted person, was apostolically received into the fellowship of the Christian Church. So that these two principles indicate the outward and corporate aspect in laying the foundation.

In the third place there are named, “*resurrection*” and “*eternal judgment*”. They respect the future, for the gospel is designed rightly to relate the believing sinner to the future. Here then is the forward and eternal aspect. The Christian life at its inception has regard to future destiny. Therefore, these principles of the beginning, individual, corporate, eternal, being settled, “*let us go on unto maturity*”.

Having started out from these principles we are to leave them, in the sense of not laying again the foundation — but not, of course, to abandon them. Our church has a stone pulpit, rather ornate in appearance, a good piece of sculpture; but it has no stairway into the auditorium. It is entered by a door at the side. Before I came away I looked over a sketch prepared by an architect, of stairways proposed for the two sides of the pulpit. The draughtsman remarked that he had shown no foundation, and the builder would require to allow for some brick or stone work under the floor. This was not shown on the plan, but was understood as being absolutely necessary to the scheme. You cannot build a superstructure save upon a foundation, but you do not finish with the foundation: you begin with it. The foundation is for the sake of the superstructure. That, I think, is a very simple illustration of what the Apostle had in mind when he wrote those words. We leave the foundation, not by abandoning it, as though it were obsolete; but by building upon it.

So it should not be necessary to be repeatedly laying down foundations for people who are already professed Christians. You plant a seed in the ground. It germinates. It forms root. Then the stem comes up. The seed and the root are for the sake of the stem and the fruit. But you are not content with the root; your objective is fruit, yet you could not have the fruit without the root. And that, to change the figure, is the meaning here. Some things belong

to the beginning, but they suppose, and are for the sake of the intended course and end. Thus the Apostle writes: "Leave these things of which you have already been persuaded, which relate to the beginning of your faith, and go on unto maturity"; that is, until you have reached the complete and the intended end; until the spiritual building is finished; until the fruit appears; until the babe has grown to full manhood.

II.

Now to "go on" supposes that a *beginning has been made*. If not there can be no advance. It may be that not all of us have made the beginning. It is a solemn prerequisite to the fulfilling of this exhortation that we begin by being founded upon Christ. The beginning is made by the communication to you of the gospel message, and the embracing by faith of its first principles. When you have thus embraced them once and for all, cleave to them as you would a foundation to rest upon. Paul said to the Corinthians: "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon". Everywhere this apostle-evangelist went, to every company of unconverted hearers, by preaching the elements of the gospel he would be laying the foundation of Christian faith and life and confession, and of Christian Churches, by preaching, and re preaching those old truths. But having so done, he rightly expected to observe in those who had been founded upon Christ, and who had confessed Him in baptism, and reception into Christian fellowship, an advancement unto maturity. And if that were not the case, doubtless he would as reasonably question whether there were any reality in their profession.

In the vestry just before this service began, your Pastor remarked to me that the history of a church is a history of decline and advance. You do not abidingly have your fruitful seasons, although it is always true of the genuine believer that his leaf does not wither: Only in the heavenly city does the tree bear twelve manner of fruits every month. Yet, my friends, if we are united to Christ, and so have the Spirit of Life, if we have the earnest of that inheritance, is it not to be expected that we should grow, that we should advance — and in some degree be fruitful Christians, and so go on unto maturity?

Somewhere I have read that Mr. Spurgeon watching his son, when he was a lad, learning to ride a bicycle, made this remark, "If my son does not go on, he will come off." Did you ever prove that? Mr. Spurgeon applies the illustration to the Christian life. If we do not go on we will draw back, there is no standing still.

In our road in London I noticed one day that the concrete pavement was cracked, and breaking without apparent cause. Then I noticed that the root of a small tree in the garden behind the fence had penetrated under the wall, under the path, and gently, but surely, by the life-force that was in it, had broken the pavement, and lifted it up. So is the spiritual life. It will surely overcome obstacles, and manifest its growing strength unto maturity.

III.

The Bible is a book whose words are full of meaning. If our Bibles gave the full translation and the full content of the inspired words of the original Scriptures, we would be carrying much larger volumes, as big as a pulpit Bible! Take this little expression: "Let us go on". It contains several suggestions, and three of them I desire to mention.

First: It means, just what it says — *Go on*. But does not the Apostle, in writing thus, have in view the danger

of our stopping? How many there are who having professed Christ seem to think that that is all, and the end! But when we have received the Lord Jesus, and are founded upon Him, we have only begun, and there is a journey we must pursue. We are pilgrims, not settlers, and we have to go on. By stopping there we are in danger. Have you noticed how the apostle Paul, thanking God for what he had heard of the Christian life begun, immediately indicated some thought of danger, in his assurance of ceaseless prayer for advance? Take the epistle to the Colossians for example. How glad was the spirit of the Apostle when he received the news of the conversion of those people: "For this cause," he writes, "we also, since the day we heard of it (i.e., of their conversion) do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." He realized the peril of this new position and how necessary it was for the saints, having begun, to go on; and so he prays to that end. We do not usually slacken off abruptly: decline is generally a gradual process. You remember the first Psalm, of the blessed man: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." There is represented a progression in evil. The reverse would be true of the ungodly man, who does so "walk" and "stand", and at last is found sitting in the very seat of the scornful. We go on step by step to the glory land, or we go back little by little. Oh how needful it is that we exhort one another continually to go on, to follow on to know the Lord; to take up our cross daily and follow Him; to go on in the labour of the Lord, not wearying in well-doing, lest we should lose heart, and not to be content with the elementary truths with which we are already acquainted, precious as they are to us, but seeking ever to understand the deep things of God, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. "Supply in your faith", says Peter, other graces — which he enumerates — so being neither barren nor unfruitful, and putting your salvation beyond all doubt!

Secondly, the word bears the sense of *pressing on*. That term would indicate another danger — that of discouragement. We shall have troubles, and trials, and difficulties, and obstacles in our path all the way along. I believe Bunyan's analogy of the Christian pilgrimage is true to Bible teaching, and to experience. It may not represent the path of discipleship proposed from many pulpits to-day. We are not always enjoying a picnic; the way to heaven is not by choruses and clapping! Albeit there are rich compensations. But we have to "press on". Have you not found it so? One of our hymns has it — "Twas tribulation ages since, 'tis tribulation still". To "go" is simple; but to "press" is strenuous. I believe that tribulation is especially pertinent to the Christian dispensation. Many teach that the tribulation has nothing whatever to do with Christian people; but it has; and is designed to test our faith. "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." Thus we prove that we have received the grace of Christ. We are not saved because we endure, but our enduring is the evidence that we are saved. We are to strive to enter in at the "strait gate". We are to strive against sin. We have not yet resisted unto blood in so doing. What is the meaning of such words if the Christian life is not a pressing on?

I heard a Baptist minister, speaking of the Victorious

Life, say, "God will never help a man who struggles against sin". I profoundly disagreed with that statement, and I immediately produced this passage: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin". Yes; we strive, and we struggle in the assurance that we shall win. In our lesson this morning (Phil. III.) toward the end of his Christian journey, the Apostle said that he had not then attained, he had not yet fully grasped that for which the Lord Jesus Christ had apprehended him. We should always be pressing on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". In some of our hymn books words are changed. The hymn: "Art thou weary, art thou languid", has an alteration in it — I do not know whether it is so in the book you use or not; but in a number of books the alteration has been made presumably because the compilers considered that struggling and striving were not appropriate to the Christian life. So, in place of the words: "Finding, following, keeping, struggling," they have it: "Finding, following, keeping, trusting". But in finding we trust; and in following we trust; and in keeping, we trust; and in struggling, we trust. It is trusting all the way through.

"Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?
Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs
Answer—"Yes!"

Thirdly: *The word will carry this meaning: "Let us be borne on."* Here is suggested the danger of our supposing that God leaves us alone, and so we have included in the word the thought of His carrying us along. A child may go on! We heard an illustration a week ago given by Dr. Shields, of a little girl who wished to go alone, and who would not take her mother's hand, and who consequently stumbled! As beginning the Christian life then, we go on, we are but children; and as we grew up, and become confronted with the many spiritual and moral obstacles to our going, and the sin that surrounds us, and the fierce hostility of the Evil One who makes us his special target, then we find that our going must be a real pressing on. But lest we should think we are our own saviours and the accomplishers of our own salvation during pilgrimage, the word is, that we are carried along. It is of God from beginning to end! Our commencing and our going, are accounted for by the work of the Spirit of God, and so also are our pressing and striving. For this is the secret: We are borne along. You know how the Scriptures came to be written. They were written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost", that is, as they were borne along by the Holy Ghost. And that is the word we have here. In the account of Paul's shipwreck given in The Acts of the Apostles, we are told how the time came when they released the ship of cargo and "let her drive" — that is to say, they committed her to the wind, and the wind carried her along.

So is the Christian life, my friends. We go on, we press on, only because we are borne along by the Spirit of God, Who began the work, and as we pursue the pilgrim path, and press onward, is still performing and will perfect His work until the day of the Lord Jesus.

I have a great liking sometimes for children's hymns. We sang one last night in the prayer meeting about little children, redeemed, who will be displayed as His jewels when the Lord shall come. And this is another hymn we sing when in Sunday School:

"Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through."

That is good theology; that is true to Scripture. We have to resist the devil; we have to flee youthful lusts; we have to strive against sin; but all the time He will carry us through.

There are two sides to this question, my friends; and we shall manifest a genuine work of God in our souls if we are found going on, and pressing on, while trustfully depending all the time upon Christ our Saviour, Who by His Spirit will carry us through!

SUNDAY SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET

SUNDAY, September 1st, was a day of rejoicing in Jarvis Street. We were happy to welcome back the Pastor, Dr. H. C. Slade, along with many visitors and former members and students of Toronto Baptist Seminary from near and far.

Dr. Slade's morning subject was "The Symbolic Teaching of the Lord's Supper." We have summarized in the two ordinances, believer's baptism, and the Lord's Supper, the heart of the gospel. At the threshold of the Christian life, after conversion, the believer is identified with Christ by baptism. Christ died in their room and stead. His resurrection is their resurrection. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. In the Lord's Supper the believer owns the fact that Christ died, His blood was shed, His body was given on the Cross. Life is received in Christ and sustained by Him. If men were to rob us of our Bible, in the two ordinances the gospel would be preserved. Christ died for our sins. His blood was shed for many for the remission of sins.

In coming to the Lord's table we are to exercise three faculties; memory, faith and hope. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service. We are to look back and see that Jesus Christ effected in the cross of Calvary complete, full atonement for our souls. There is nothing to be added. Jesus paid it all, for in shedding His blood He paid the debt completely. This ordinance is a perpetual pledge of God's pardon. We are to remember Somebody: "This do in remembrance of ME." Christ must fill the horizon and dominate our thoughts. In what connection are we to remember Christ? In His virgin birth? In His ministry of healing? As King? As Christ dying on the cross, suffering, bleeding, bearing our shame.

We are to exercise Faith which discerns the meaning of the body and blood. In the Lord's Supper there is a great proclamation: "Ye do show, ye do proclaim the Lord's death, till He come." There is *one* way of salvation and that is in God's dear Son for, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and beside Me there is none else."

In the exercise of Hope we look forward: "Till He come." God has never failed to keep an appointment. "I will come again and receive you unto myself." "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

There is no substitute for the Lord's Supper. Are you redeemed and come not to the Supper? "This *do* in remembrance of Me." Let us examine ourselves, not eating and

drinking unworthily. This speaks not of being worthy, for who is worthy? but of not treating lightly these sacred things.

God in mercy heard and answered the prayers of His people. In answer to the invitation three came for salvation, one for baptism, and three for church membership. Praise God!

It was the joy of our open-air group to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a good crowd in Allan Gardens before the evening service.

For the evening service, broadcast over radio station OHWO, Dr. Slade's subject was, "The World's Sin Bearer". John the Baptist was the divinely appointed harbinger of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He made it plain that he was not the Christ, but a voice crying in the wilderness; Prepare ye the way of the Lord. John was a successful man, preaching in the wilderness, pronouncing judgment against sin, pointing men to Christ. John recognized Jesus as the Messiah, God's Lamb, as the baptizer of the Holy Ghost.

"Behold, the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world." Christ was the Lamb, symbol of innocence, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Christ answers to the type. If the Lord had sinned, He could not have died for the sin of others. Behold, the only One qualified to be the world's Redeemer. We also see in the character of the Lamb perfect patience, bowing to the Father's will. On the cross he cried, "Father, forgive them." He was as a Lamb led to the slaughter. Moses and Elijah, meek servants of the Lord, became irritated; but Christ never.

Allusion is made to the Old Testament Sacrifices. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." We see the superiority of the Lord's sacrifice. In the Old Testament days man provided his own sacrifice, but now God says that He will provide the Lamb. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son." Don't look for a sacrifice of your own; God has provided it. Here is the glad tidings: Jesus Christ, by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. It is finished, Jesus paid your debt.

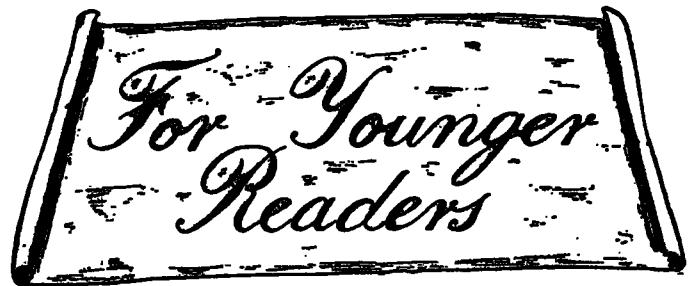
Jesus Christ the Lamb removes sin. Sin, the heaviest thing in the universe, that drives some to despair and suicide, can be removed. Sin weighed heavily upon Christ in Gethsemane, and on the cross He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Listen — Christ beareth sin away, as the Scapegoat. Where are your sins? Has Christ removed them, "as far as the east is from the west"? The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Look with the eye of faith, behold, the Lamb of God. Hear God speaking through the ages, "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and beside me there is none else."

At the Communion Service, six were received into the membership of the church. The Pastor announced that starting September 9th there would be a week of prayer as a spiritual preparation for the Fall work. (See details on back page). We were indeed blessed as once again we acknowledged the Lord's abundant mercies and our dependence upon Him for blessings in the days to come.

—W.P.B.

"You can have a little Christian Science in your Christianity just as little as you can have a little water in your fire; and a little Christianity in your Christian Science just as little as you can have a little fire in your water. The things are mutually exclusive."

—DR. B. B. WARFIELD.



HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

Colin Brown, better known among his friends as 'Lanky' because he usually towered a full head above boys of his own age, shrank down into the corner seat of the crowded railway carriage and glowered. "To think that I've been let in for this, ugh!"

The innocent cause of his annoyance was a merry party of young people bound for a week's holiday at Newsea, on the South-East coast. It wasn't actually the five happy girls on the seat opposite, nor the four boys that made up Colin's seat, nor the six crammed carriages further down the train that made him seethe, but the fact that he was one of such a party. Oh, to be honest, his Kid sister (so named because it was her misfortune to be two years his junior) was also one of the party. But then, girls didn't seem to mind where they were going so long as the 'going' meant new clothes and more pocket-money. "It's all right for her, Janet can have all she wants, but not me — thank-you!" Colin's gloomy thoughts ran on, then a remark of his sister's caused him more annoyance.

"Yes, I'm twelve," Janet's clear young voice piped, "and Colin, or 'Lanky' as we call him, is fourteen."

"Just like a girl to let a fellow down," Colin fumed, "must she tell the whole carriage all . . ."

"Say — are you just fourteen?" a merry voice chortled. "Thought you would have been sixteen. I'm fourteen, but look at me!" The speaker stood to his feet, swaying slightly in the moving train, and Colin saw a short, plump, jolly-faced boy grinning down at him. "You, 'Lanky', oh", he sighed blissfully as if he wished he could deserve such a name. "And I—I'm . . ." (he was going to say Bob Cummings) but the whole carriage chorused: "Shorty!"

Bob sank to his seat and groaned ruefully. "Shorty — you see?" he appealed to Colin. "That's what people call a fellow with such superb physique as mine!"

The young folk roared with laughter.

"Shouldn't eat so much!"

"Stretch yourself!"

"Get up in a morning!"

Shorty clapped his hands over his ears as one witty remark after another rang out.

"Lanky!" Shorty seemed oblivious of Colin's unfriendly manner. "You and I must pal up. I need a little of your height, and you . . . Ahem! . . ." His eyes travelled over the slim figure in the corner seat. "You need a little of my breadth!"

Roars of laughter greeted this sally, and by the time Newsea was reached Lanky and Shorty were fast becoming friends. (Well, at least Shorty was, but Lanky was on his guard; he didn't want to be trapped into anything.) This week was not of his choosing, but was the only solution his parents could find to a difficult situation.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown were invited to attend a business conference in Paris, but what could they do with the chil-

dren? The children's Aunt Betty had said: "Why not let them go to Newsea with our young people?" 'Our young people' being the members of a church of which Aunt Betty was an ardent worker. There was much hanging and jangling, the 'hanging' being on the parents' part, which concerned fees, etc.; the 'jangling' being chiefly on Colin's part; it was 'all religion' and Colin shied at that. Never having gone to church or Sunday School (his parents preferred jaunting in the car on Sundays) the idea of spending a whole week in such company was abhorrent. "How will I know what to say to pi-chaps like that?" So the jangling had jangled until his father having found from his 'hanging' that it was going to be quite a cheap holiday, ended the argument by booking the children in. Janet was soon won over (a school pal of hers was going); Mr. and Mrs. Brown were glad a problem had been so successfully solved. Aunt Betty was jubilant, for her kind heart ached over the irreligious way the children were brought up; and Colin? — well, he just fumed but had to submit.

"Well," Lanky mused, while waiting for the tea-bell on the Sunday afternoon, "after the first few shocks it hasn't been so bad." The house was large and comfortable; meals were excellent, and Shorty wasn't the only one who cleaned his plate with regular consistency. Lanky had found himself sharing a room with eight other boys (mostly about his own age) and one adult who was affectionately called Uncle Jock, a giant of a man with a shock of red hair. Shorty's bed was next to his own, and Lanky had sat on his bed that first Saturday evening examining his wallet and stretching every precious shilling in his mind's eye to a mile's length; for the first few hours had shown him that Newsea was a grand place. His preoccupation was suddenly disturbed by an uncanny silence which descended on the room. He looked up to find almost every boy quietly kneeling by his own bedside with a Bible laid open before him. His startled gaze met the amused glance of the only other boy who was not kneeling. He winked, rolled his eyes heavenwards, then made a motion with his hands as if playing a harp. But Colin did not laugh; he did not even think the boy funny; in fact the sight of those six kneeling boys in their quiet absorption and evident sincerity made him feel cheap, mean; worst of all — shut out. Yes, that was it. He had somehow felt it all along. He could go so far with them but inevitably something was said or done which gave him a feeling of being shut off from something they had. 'Something'; or was it 'Some One'? Lanky shook his head trying to puzzle it out.

There had been grand fun — games, rambles, everything a young person could want — and yet every girl and all the boys but himself and the one who had sneered that first night (and who was a weedy sort of chap anyway), had seemed to enjoy every moment of the morning talks given by Uncle Jock, and the evening prayers and chorus singing as well. Yes, even Janet sang away lustily, and had managed to buy or borrow a Bible from somewhere, for she had it with her that morning at the service. "Queer," Lanky mused, "perhaps religion is something like measles, and you either get it or you don't. Perhaps Janet's got it and I'll miss it." But the thought of 'missing it' brought the same shut out, empty feeling, he had felt that first night. "Think I'd better listen very hard during the service tonight and see if I can figure it all out."

"Lanky old chap, if that tea-bell doesn't ring son, I'll die!" Shorty slapped Lanky on the back with a force that denied any possibility of his being in such a dire state of health; then, as if to save his precious young life, the bell

obligingly 'clanged', and there was a 'hurrying and a scurrying' towards the dining-room.

Later that same evening, as Lanky stood, towering above Shorty, he decided to follow up his resolution to 'listen hard' by singing lustily too; but it was an unhappy business because he did not know the hymn and his rather discordant warblings caused much amusement to two small boys on the front seat. Seeing their mother's frantic efforts to stop their giggles, Lanky subsided immediately and listened to the tuneful singing of his friends. He kept his resolution right up to the commencement of the sermon, then, without realizing it, his mind went wandering off until the closing hymn brought him up with a bump. "Missed it again," he fretted, annoyed with himself, "that's just me. I'll miss everything — even heaven, I guess! 'Even heaven!' Whatever made me think that? Phew! whatever is wrong with me?" and Lanky joined his pals as they walked down the sea front determined to put heaven and religion far from his thoughts for the time being.

The boys stopped at their favourite haunt, the end of the harbour walk which jutted out into the sea. Huge waves dashed their spray high over their heads, and boomed as if in anger that their progress shorewards was stopped by the harbour wall.

Lanky leaned on the iron railing, letting the spray lash his face as he gazed down into the boiling depths of turbulent green water.

"Wouldn't have much of a chance if you fell in that," Shorty yelled above the booming of the breakers.

"Don't intend to!" Lanky grinned back at him.

"Me neither." Shorty shook the spray off his face, and turning his back, leaned on the iron rail. Some said it was Shorty's weight; others said it was criminal neglect on the part of Newsea Council, but sufficient to say there was a loud creek, the bar on which Shorty was leaning swung out from its socket, and Shorty, clutching wildly at the awful nothingness of mid-air, felt himself falling backwards.

Lanky streaked forward, grabbed one of his pal's hands and with the other held grimly to the iron support from which the bar had broken. Shorty's awful backward plunge was stopped with a jerk that almost pulled his arm from its socket. For a split second he looked up into Lanky's face; it was white as death, but grim and resolute as with a supreme effort he gave one great heave and Shorty felt his feet floundering on the wet slippery surface of the wall. Others darted forward; other hands joined Lanky's, and within a few seconds Shorty lay gasping on the wet concrete.

Later that evening Shorty heard the full story of his rescue. He was tucked up in bed with hot bottles to counteract the shock, and surrounded by bottles of mineral waters, supplied by the warm-hearted cook. "Enough to drown a fellow" as one thirsty visitor said enviously, but was quickly silenced by a look from Uncle Jock, which reminded them all how nearly their popular young friend had suffered that fate. Lanky was allowed to stay after the others had gone, and Shorty's thanks to his pal were cut short by a quick, "No pal, don't thank me!"

Shorty looked his surprise, then sensing something deeper in Lanky's words he asked, "Then whom must I thank?"

Lanky's reply was just one word: "God."

Silence followed as each boy thought his own thoughts, then Lanky spoke: "Yes, it was God. Oh, I can't understand it all yet. I was so desperate; I had only one hand and it seemed impossible that I could hold you, so I just said, 'Oh God! Please, God!' that was all, yet it happened!"

I *did* hold on, help came, and there you were — safe. Not much I did I'll admit, but it seemed that *God held me as I held you.*" Lanky paused while his pal listened joyously. "... And Shorty — God doesn't seem to have let me go." The boy touched his chest as he said quietly: "I feel it here — that's all."

Shorty stuck out a warm hand, Lanky grasped it, and the boys shook hands, sealing as it were a pact. "We'll tell Uncle Jock when he comes in. He'll help you a bit. He did me. You and me were meant to be pals. My home is near yours, so we shall see a lot of each other when we get home. We'll both be real Christians, in everything together, and well . . ." Shorty's merry laugh rang out. "I reckon that's the 'long' and 'short' of it, eh!"

Lanky leant back in his chair and sighed blissfully: "To think that I hated the thought of coming here. My! I would not have missed this week for anything!"

—*The Child in the Midst*

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Third Quarter Lesson 11 September 15, 1957

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

COMPROMISE PROPOSED AND REJECTED

Lesson Text: Ezra 4:1-16.

Golden Text: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—2 Timothy 3:12.

I. Compromise Rejected: verses 1-3.

Sooner or later every sinner will find out by experience that the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13:15), and that it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the living God (Jer. 3:19). The children of Israel could not return at once to the full favour of God and the spiritual prosperity which they had lightly esteemed before the days of their captivity. Their leaders had instituted again the prescribed forms of sacrifice and worship, and had commenced to rebuild the temple (Ezra 3), thus endeavouring to bring order out of chaos and desolation, but their progress toward settled religious life with God was beset with difficulty and opposition. It is easy to depart from God; the fleeing prophet usually finds a ship at hand to carry him away from the post of duty (Jon. 1:3). To return to the Lord is a different matter (Jon. 2:1-17). The one who would draw near to Him will find the road beset with mountains of difficulty and valleys of distress.

The faithful remnant, consisting mostly of members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Neh. 11:3, 4), were not the only inhabitants of the land. When the Assyrians deported members of the ten tribes of Israel after the capture of Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, they imported people of alien races to colonize the land (verses 9, 10; 2 Kings 17:24). These intermarried with the few Israelites remaining in the land, producing a mixed race to be known as the Samaritans. It was this mixed multitude who caused trouble to the true children of Israel (Exod. 12:37, 38; Numb. 11:4; Neh. 13:3). The natural seed always persecutes the spiritual seed (Gal. 4:29), and in the church it is those professing to be Christians but remaining unsaved who hinder its progress.

These Samaritans requested permission to join the Jews in their building project. Presumably they implied that all would worship God together when the sacred edifice should be completed. But the Jewish leaders perceived that such a union would by no means bring unity (2 Cor. 6:14-16), and would be far from desirable (2 Chron. 18:1; 19:2; 20:35-37). Although the Samaritans claimed that they worshipped Jehovah, they worshipped Him in their own way, mingling their idolatrous practices and magical rites with an outward conformity to some of the ceremonies prescribed by the law of Moses (2 Kings 17:24-41).

This subtle offer of assistance seems in reality an attempt to weaken the children of Israel by polluting the purity of their worship and thus severing their connection with

Jehovah, so that the Samaritans could control the people and the land.

Many a child of God has lost out by listening to such compromising offers on the part of nominal or worldly-minded Christians. In our day the same danger faces evangelical churches and the evangelical denominations. The modern cry is "Let us all get together. Why be so narrow?"

We should be as narrow as the Word of God (Matt. 7:13, 14). Zerubbabel and Joshua were walking in obedience to the command of God when they rejected such a plea (Neh. 2:20). Separation from all that is contrary to the Lord's Word is demanded, not conformity to the standards of men (Gen. 49:26; 1 Chron. 23:13; 2 Chron. 25:10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:17-7:1). The sane procedure, if disease germs are about, is to keep as far away from them as possible. He is a foolish man who sees what close contact he can make with evil without being contaminated (1 Cor. 15:33). Co-operation may seem like a magical password to big things, but it may be the beginning of a downfall (Exod. 23:2).

II. Opposition Encountered: verses 4-16.

The Samaritans acted like the proverbial dog in the manger. They said in effect: "You will not allow us to join you in building? Then you shall not build." They tried in every way to molest the workmen and to hinder the work. It costs to make a stand for the Lord, to let the thorny crown be placed on the brow, to take up the cross and follow the Saviour (Acts 14:22).

The Samaritans could not alter the decree of Cyrus giving the Jews permission to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-3), but they hired lawyers to frustrate the efforts of the Jews to carry it out. Legal accusations were sent to each succeeding Persian ruler, so that the progress of building was very slow. Our worst enemies are not those on the outside, but those who are with us, but not of us (Psa. 41:9; 55:12, 13; John 13:18, 19; 1 John 2:19).

Finally, a formal communication to the king of Persia was sent by three officers, presumably deputy governors of the provinces of the Persian Empire west of the Euphrates River, signed by representatives of the various alien races living in the land (verses 7-10). They accused the Jews of unlawful ambition, citing evidence of past rebellion to cast reflection upon their present character and future intentions. The build-up seemed plausible, but it was false. The Jews had neither the power nor the disposition to revolt. Past rebellions had taken place under far different circumstances (2 Kings 18:7; 24:1, 20). Moreover, the suggestion that great Persia might lose control of this small province was ridiculous, and would have been interpreted as a slur upon their power, had the authorities not been blinded by the flattery of the Jews' enemies.

To add to His own glory, the Lord sometimes allows evil to enjoy temporary success; the wicked may prosper for a time and bring his evil devices to pass (Psa. 35:30; 37:7, 35). The opposition cooled the zeal of some of the Jews (Hagg. 1:2-11), and finally caused the work to be abandoned for about 15 years (verses 23, 24). The Lord, however, inspired His prophets to bring new courage to leaders and people, so that the work, although materially hindered, was at length completed (Ezra 5:1; 6:14, 15).

The Jews were justified in refusing to sanction united worship and spiritual effort with the idolatrous Samaritans, but they failed to give an effective witness to their neighbours. The Lord desired that His people be a peculiar people to Himself, but at the same time proclaim Him among the nations (Lev. 20:24, 26; Deut. 14:2; 26:18, 19; John 4:23, 24; Ezek. 36:23). There is a world of difference between separation and isolation; we are to hate the sin, but love the sinner (Rom. 5:8; Heb. 7:26). We who remain in the world, while not of the world, are to testify to the world (John 17:15, 16; Matt. 5:14-16). The Jews isolated themselves in pride, whereas the Samaritans built a rival temple at Mount Gerizim (John 4:20), and a strong antipathy arose between the two peoples (John 4:9).

Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 9—Compromise Suggested by Pharaoh.....Exod. 8:25-32
Sept. 10—Compromise Rejected by Moses

Exod. 10:8-11, 24-27
Sept. 11—Separation Enjoined upon Israel Lev. 20:22-26
Sept. 12—Separation Enjoined upon Christians

2 Cor. 6:14-7:1
Sept. 13—Separation the Condition of Blessing.....Deut. 7:1-13
Sept. 14—Temporary Success for the Enemy.....Ezra 4:17-24
Sept. 15—Strong Measures against the Enemy Ezra 5

Week of Prayer

Jarvis Street Baptist Church invites the Gospel Witness family to join them in a week of prayer beginning Monday, September 9th, as a spiritual preparation for the fall work. Suggested topics for each evening of the week are as follows:

MONDAY – MISSIONARY INTERESTS – French Bible Mission - Jamaica - Martinique - Student Summer Fields - International Council of Christian Churches, etc.

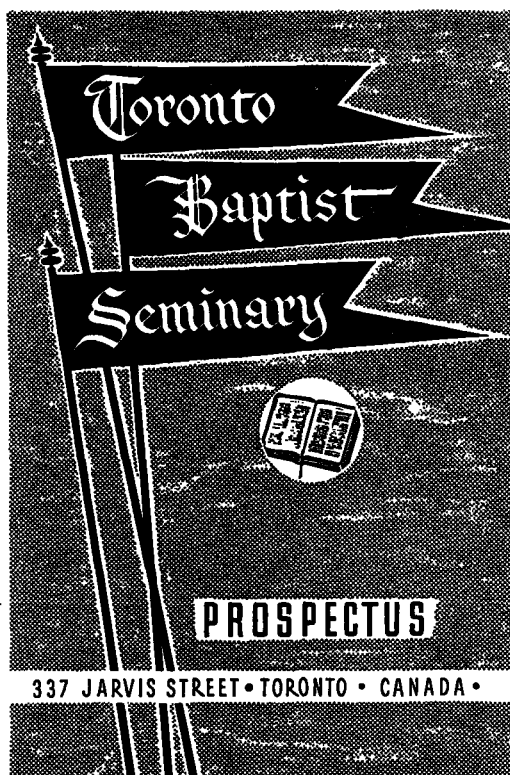
TUESDAY – SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK - Teaching of the Word - Visitation

WEDNESDAY – THE GOSPEL WITNESS AND PROTESTANT ADVOCATE
In its world-wide ministry

THURSDAY – TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

FRIDAY – EVANGELISTIC PROGRAM – Special mission conducted by Mr. James Armstrong of Ireland, November 3-17, open-air meetings, etc.

SATURDAY – RADIO MINISTRY OVER CHWO, OAKVILLE.



WANTED PRAYER HELPERS

*"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest,
that He will send forth labourers into His
Harvest."*

We invite YOU to join us in definite earnest prayer that God may send men and women of His choice to train in Toronto Baptist Seminary.

The *New Prospectus* is ready for free distribution.

Address all enquiries to:

The Registrar,
Toronto Baptist Seminary,
337 Jarvis St., Toronto, Canada