

CONTENTS 1952

Radio Messages of Pastor Robert L. Donnelly -

WONDERFUL WORD

- Jan. 6 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – THE ENTRANCE OF SIN
- Jan. 13 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – “ADAM, WHERE ART THOU?”
- Jan. 20 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – CAIN AND ABEL
- Jan. 27 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – ENOCH AND NOAH
- Feb. 3 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – REFUGE IN THE ARK
- Feb. 10 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – THE CALLING OUT OF ABRAM
- Feb. 17 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – LOT’S CHOICE
- Feb. 24 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – SODOM DESTROYED
- March 2 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – THE OFFERING UP OF ISAAC
- March 9 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – ISAAC & REBEKAH
- March 16 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – ISAAC RE-OPENS THE WELLS
- March 23 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – JACOB & ESAU
- March 30 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – JACOB
- April 6 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – THE ROAD BACK
- April 20 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – JOSEPH’S DREAM
- April 27 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – JOSEPH
- May 4 - THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – FIRST AND LAST WORDS
- May 4 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – INTRODUCTION
- May 11 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – MOTHER OF MOSES
- May 18 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – THE PREPARATION OF MOSES FOR HIS LIFE’S WORK
- May 25 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – “LET MY PEOPLE GO!”
- June 1 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – THE LAST JUDGMENT ON EGYPT
- June 8 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – ANSWER TO THE SIN-QUESTION
- June 15 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – THE GUIDING CLOUD & CROSSING THE SEA
- June 22 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – BITTER WATERS, MARAH ; RESTING PLACE, ELIM
- June 29 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – MANNA
- July 6 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – WATER FROM THE ROCK
- July 13 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – VICTORY OVER AMALEK
- July 20 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – NECESSITY OF LAW
- Aug. 3 - REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – THE TABERNACLE

CONTENTS 1952 (Continued)

Radio Messages of Pastor Robert L. Donnelly - ELIM GLAD TIDINGS

- Sept. 7 - WHY WE BELIEVE and PREACH the BIBLE – INSPIRED WORD OF GOD
- Sept. 14 - WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE SECOND-COMING OF CHRIST
- Sept. 21 - SECOND COMING OF CHRIST – *HOW?*
- Sept. 28 - SECOND COMING OF CHRIST – *WHEN?*
- Oct. 5 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus is LORD*
- Oct. 12 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *His Human Name, Jesus*
- Oct. 19 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus, the Christ*
- Oct. 26 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus, the Son of God*
- Nov. 2 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus, Great Physician, Jehovah-Rophi*
- Nov. 9 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Great Physician Heals Heart Disease*
- Nov. 16 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Great Physician Gives Spiritual Sight*
- Nov. 23 - THE LORD'S DAY
- Nov. 30 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus, the Prophet*
- Dec. 7 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus, Our Priest*
- Dec. 14 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus Is KING*
- Dec. 21 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Christ of the Past, Present and Future*
- Dec. 28 - THE PERSON and WORK of CHRIST – *Jesus, the Lamb of God*

Radio Messages of Pastor Robert L. Donnelly - MORNING DEVOTIONS

- Oct. 1 - PATTERN PRAYER – “HALLOWED BY THY NAME”
- Oct. 7 - PATTERN PRAYER – “THY KINGDOM COME”
- Oct. 15 - PATTERN PRAYER – “THY WILL BE DONE”
- Undated - PATTERN PRAYER – GOD'S WILL
- Nov. 5 - PATTERN PRAYER – “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”
- Nov. 12 - PATTERN PRAYER – “FORGIVE US OUR SINS”
- Nov. 19 - PATTERN PRAYER – “FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE”
- Dec. 3 - PATTERN PRAYER – “LEAD US”
- Dec. 10 - PATTERN PRAYER - “DELIVER US FROM EVIL”
- Dec. 17 - THE “WHY” OF BETHLEHEM
- Dec. 31 - TIME – OUR PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – The Entrance of Sin

~ Genesis chapter 3~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and spend the time we have left considering the *Gospel in Genesis* – New Testament truth, told in type and shadow by Old Testament characters, whose words and deeds have been preserved by inspiration and sent down through the ages for our learning, “*upon whom the ends of the world have come*” (1 Corinthians 10:11). We have the third chapter of Genesis before us this morning, the story of the temptation, testing, and fall of man – the introduction of man to Satan, and then to sin. It’s the story of the greatest tragedy in all history, and the explanation for all succeeding tragedies and sorrows. The events that transpire in this chapter have affected every person ever born of this family, touching as it did our first parents, Adam and Eve, before any children were born. It has, therefore, entered the very fountain and source of all humanity; all of history has been coloured and warped by the things that took place on that dark day, in the very infancy of our race.

The entire setting is very interesting, bringing hidden forces to light – spiritual realities, infamous personalities, and infernal principalities (rulers of the darkness of this world); as well as the unseen Creator who is most vitally concerned about everything concerning man, whom He made in His image.

Certain principles, which hold true throughout Scripture, are worked out in this chapter and are true to this very day. And it is concerning these principles that we will spend our time. First of all, notice that the temptation began in the form of a question: “*And he said to the woman, Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’*” (Genesis 3:1). “*And he said ...has God said?*” Every soul that ever fell entertained that thought about God. The question, “*Has God said?*” was hatched in hell! Hear the serpent say it! The answer? *God HAS said!* Yes, God *HAS* said!!

That first couple was then entirely dependent of the word of another, regarding their spiritual welfare – just as we are now. The thing to decide was, whom should they believe? Whose word would they take? Which word could they depend on? We, of course, would answer, “*God’s Word, by all means!*” But do *we* always accept the Word of God as final in all matters of faith and practice? Does the Word of God always settle the question as to whether *we* should or should not do this or that? Well, you know the answer to that question.

“*Has God said?*” is the thin edge of the wedge – it’s the prelude to outright denial and contradiction. Once the veracity of God’s Word is doubted, the overthrow of all faith in Him is certain; and when faith in God has fled, the field is open to all the hosts of Satan. This was true of Adam and Eve – it’s true of you and me. Satan has not changed his tactics of approaching the human soul by causing doubt in God’s Word. Indeed, he gains victory in no other way; for once the soul is settled with a deep, abiding faith in the Word of Jehovah, Satan is helpless to accomplish his plan.

This is why Scripture puts such a premium on faith, even going so far as to say that “*without faith it is impossible to please God.*” (Heb. 11:6). You see, to doubt someone’s word is to put a blot on his character; because someone who’s word is false can’t be trusted to be true in any other respect either. Anyone who will wilfully deceive can be guilty of any other crime; he cannot be trusted anywhere, in any way.

“*Has God said?*” questioned the serpent – the very first temptation to which man is exposed – the first test. All heaven, and all hell, wait in the background to see what the outcome will be. Some might argue that God is unfair to expose these helpless and innocent creatures to the wiles of this subtle and experienced tempter; but man has to meet him sooner or later. Man *must* tested. He’ll never be any use to God or to himself until he’s been tried. He will never discover his own weakness, or the strength of the enemy, nor the power of God, until he’s been exposed to the workings and designs of this ancient foe of God. It was not necessary that he should fall, but it *was* necessary that he be tried.

Until now, Adam and Eve had been obedient – it had never occurred to them to be otherwise; but now they had the opportunity of being obedient *by choice* – by a definite act of the will. Now they could *decide* to believe God.

Let us see how the woman reacted to this testing. (Evidently, she didn't know that she was on trial.) She entered into conversation with the tempter – she replied to him. This is a perilous thing to do, but she did it. Instead of turning away from this slanderous inference, regarding the Word of God, she was ready to debate the issue with this stranger. Having once gained a hearing, Satan came right out with a flat contradiction of the Word of the Almighty.

“Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The inference is, of course, that God was purposely keeping this couple back from something that was for their good – something they could enjoy – something from which they would profit. This is always the pattern of temptation. The method Satan used here to persuade the woman, is the same method he uses today: first, doubt the Word of God; then, doubt the sincerity of God's intentions for us. That way, the soul is speedily overcome.

“You will be like God” was the plea that prevailed in the garden of Eden. Now, this *was* God's ultimate intention for Adam and Eve, for He had said, *“Let us make man in our image”* and again, *“God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* It was right in the plan and purpose of God that they should be like Him; but the difference was in the way whereby this should be accomplished.

The enemy's method is “Grab for it! Take it! It's your right! God is trying to keep it for you, but it's up to you to stand up for whatever you want and go after it.”

God's method is, “Wait. Trust Me – I'll give it to you as soon as I see it's be best for you to have it.”

There is a lot of truth in Satan's approach; but it's truth mixed with lies. It has well been said that there is no lie so dangerous as the one that is mixed with truth. *“You will be like God, and know. . .”* –the appeal here is to intellectual pride. *“You will know good and evil. . .”* – this is certainly true, but the benefits, that they are hoping to gain by knowing good and evil, will be very disappointing. They will know evil, alright – experimentally. They will discover that it's a terrible disease – it curses and blights every good and pleasant thing. Perhaps Eve will remember this later on, when she holds Abel's head in her lap and pours her tears over the face of her dead boy. Yes, they will know good too; but the “good” will be illusive – a memory of past blessings received and past experiences enjoyed.

All these things happened long, long ago; but the principles are unchanged by the passing of the Ages. It is still true that walking in forbidden paths and tasting of forbidden fruit will teach us lessons we would be a thousand times better off never knowing. There is a knowledge gained in a life of disobedience which will bring an eternity of regret. Many a young fellow has gone out for a night of dissipation to discover what it's like, only to learn to his sorrow that *“Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”* (Galatians 6:7-8).

“So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” We have now come to the very first act of sin, as far as the human race is concerned. At any time until now, there could have been a great victory over Satan; there could have been a great experience for this couple. There was no sin in the temptation – there was no sin in looking at the tree, nor in talking about it. God had not said, “on the day ye desire it,” or “on the day ye talk about it,” or “on the day ye look upon it; but He had said, *“On the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”* Sin is the transgression of the law. It's stepping over the fence, to forbidden territory.

There may be a good deal of speculation as to what sort of a tree this was, and just what kind of fruit it bore; but as far as I can see, it doesn't make a bit of difference what the fruit was like. The main issue is not the fruit, but the obedience of man. The danger is not so much in the fruit, but in whether this man will obey God. God has great plans for this couple, but these plans can only be worked out if Adam and Eve will obey. They must be tested on the simple things of life, before meeting the more complex. If they fail here, then they will fail all along the line.

Let us look now at the three-fold desire that was kindled. First, it was *good for food* – that is, satisfying the desire of the body without regard to the moral issues involved. Then, it was *pleasant to the eyes* –

attractive as to appearance. (Many a spiteful disposition is hidden by a pretty face. Many a moral leper is walking around covered by a suit of the latest style.) Last of all, it was *desired to make one wise*. Poor thing, she didn't know that "*the fear of the LORD is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.*" (Job 28:28).

Eve didn't know, as many still don't know, that it is the highest form of wisdom to obey the omniscient One. She didn't know that the wisdom from above is "*first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy,*" but the wisdom of this world is "*earthly, sensual, and demonic.*" (James 3:16-17).

The eyes of both Adam and Eve were opened, just as Satan said they would be; but instead of beholding the wonderful things they had hoped for, they saw only their own disobedience. They were stripped of the glory that had been theirs as expressions of the glory of the Creator. Robbed of their innocence and peace of mind, they thought only of hiding from the all-seeing eyes of God.

What a tragedy! What a fall! What a disappointment! The picture seems altogether hopeless now. But, the same chapter which tells about the Fall, of man also tells how man shall rise again. The "*Seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head*" and deliver all those oppressed by him – all who will now believe the Word of God and take Christ as their Saviour.

The chapter closes with God tenderly covering these miserable sinners with the skins of animals. Here is the first picture, in a long series of illustrations in Scripture, showing how God covered man's sins with a garment made by sacrifice. In fact, the first blood ever spilled upon this earth was the blood of an "innocent," giving up its life to cover the "guilty."

This is the *Gospel in Genesis*. It's the Gospel all through the Book.

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – “*Adam, Where Art Thou?*”

~ Genesis chapter 3 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation on the *Gospel in Genesis*. Last Sunday we considered the beginning of sin – the result of willingly doubting God’s Word. If Genesis 3 teaches nothing else, it makes this fact very plain: man is not the product of his environment (nothing could have been more desirable than man’s first home the Garden of Eden); but sin can, and will ruin any environment, no matter how perfect and lovely it may be. Man makes his own environment; he is not the product of it.

God had said, “*On the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*” Satan contradicted Him by telling Eve, “*You will not surely die.*” Every tombstone in our land is a silent witness to the fact that Satan is a liar – every cemetery and funeral procession adds its voice to the same – and multiplied millions of those who once peopled the world, if they could speak, would declare with a sound that would be heard around the world, “*the soul who sins shall surely die!!*” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

Death is the most common, universal experience known to man – none are exempt; no one can evade it, nor avoid eventually participating in this tragic end. Every generation has been carried away by this king of terrors, and yet his kingdom is not filled, for he always comes back, looking for more victims to take to the land of darkness. He will be calling for you, and he will call for me, one of these days; and we will just have to drop whatever we may be doing, leave it for someone else to finish, and go. All history indicates that the old *must die*, and the young *may die* at any time. But while all this is well known by everyone, we still haven’t grown accustomed to the idea; nor have we grown any more familiar with death than those who left this world six thousand years ago. Death still comes as an alien, a foreigner, a dark and dreadful stranger in whose presence we all shrink. Yet, we all acknowledge his right to take us when he pleases.

All this, and a great deal more, can be said about death; but now, let us read in Genesis chapter 3, “*Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*” (Genesis 3:22-24).

There’s only one thing more terrible than death, and that is to live in sin forever. Nothing could be more dreadful than for sinful man to go on living and sinning, and sinning and living forever and ever. Death is unspeakable mercy, on God’s part, to end a life that is out of harmony with God, at variance with all that is of God, and in a state of rebellion against God. Death is not only the penalty for transgression, it is the *effect* of it. Sin brings death to the soul, just as surely as strychnine does to the body. Well, that will be enough on this subject of death.

We are considering the *Gospel in Genesis*; and the Gospel is *for dead men*. It’s a message for those who have been caught in the net which sin has spread. Without exception, every child of Adam has inherited the “sin-disease” – sin, which inevitably results in death.

The very first thing after the temptation and fall of man, as described in Genesis 3:8-9, is that Adam and Eve “. . . heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’”

Here is the beginning of the Gospel of the seeking God. His Sabbath rest is broken, and from here on throughout the Book, until we come to the last chapter of Revelation, God is ceaselessly active in the all-important business of restoring order in the universe and bringing man back into the Garden.

Notice, first—it’s God who takes the initiative. He doesn’t wait until man discovers his need and begins seeking for Him. The nature of sin is such that it drives the sinner farther and farther away from the place of deliverance. Unless God takes the initiative and goes out to bring man back again, there is no hope for our race. His call, “*Where are you?*” has been ringing down through the corridors of the centuries, and has

been carried to the darkest corners of the earth in our generation. The question implies man's lost condition – that he has strayed from the right road and needs to be brought back to the straight and narrow way.

This story of “the seeking God” takes many different forms throughout history – and the quest still goes on. Adam was found, of course, and his sin was confessed. Then God clothed him and sent him out to till the ground from whence he was taken. No doubt, Adam continued to have fellowship with God; but his life's work was changed from the delightful care of a perennially blooming garden, to the burdensome toil of wresting a living from a reluctant earth.

I would like to leave the story of Adam, now (his fall and restoration), and consider with you the present-day application of the question “*Where are you?*” This matter of finding the lost is so urgent, that the Son of God came from the courts of glory for the express purpose “*to seek and to save that which was lost.*” (Luke 19:10). According to the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15, everything else in the divine household was set aside while the Great Shepherd went out in search of the lost one. According to Hebrews 1:14, all the heavenly host – that innumerable company of angels – are concerned only about one paramount issue: to minister to those of Adam's race who shall be the heirs of salvation. “*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*” In other words, God has sent them all out to work for the spiritual interests of those who will be saved.

According to the wording of the Great Commission, the only mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel; which, according to the Scriptural definition, is “*the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*” (Romans 1:16). According to Romans 5:6, “*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,*” the only reason for all the horror, anguish, suffering, and death of the Lamb of God on Calvary's Cross, was to insure the recovery of the ungodly. Thus we see that seeking for sinners, finding sinners, restoring sinners, and then rejoicing over these who are restored, is the grand idea that entertains all heavenly intelligence. As far as God is concerned, it is more important that the lost person be found, than that he find life more comfortable in his lost estate. Every effort of human organization is directed towards trying to make the world a better place in which to live. All of God's effort is directed toward the making of a better man to live in the world. God concentrates on the spiritual and moral nature of man, because that is the very mainspring of human conduct. “*Where are you?*” is a question which concerns the spiritual condition, and the spiritual location of man. Once this is corrected, then social and political problems will have largely disappeared.

Let us think, now, for a few moments, of the true condition of a lost one. It is written in Isaiah 53:6 “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.*” First of all, and worst of all, the one who is lost, is lost to God – estranged from God. None of God's intentions and plans for that person can ever be carried out. All the resources of the Almighty are of no value to one who is lost to God. God's original intention, to make man in His image, is cancelled for that one, because he is lost.

Let us be reminded, here, that our primary value is to God. We might not be of much worth to anyone else, but God places a value on us that seems all out of proportion to our actual worth. The only explanation for this must be that God loves us. Isn't it wonderful, how love places extraordinary value on things?

We are worth more to God than all the world. That's why, when a man is lost, he is lost to God. When a child is lost, how interested and helpful all the neighbours are. They organize search parties and, all through the night, cover the territory where the child was last seen. They all feel the loss of the little one very keenly. But there's one among them whose sense of loss is greater than any other. Yes, it's the mother of the child – the one who gave it birth and whose very life is wrapped up in the life of this lost child.

That's how it is with God. “*Behold and see,*” is the cry of the Spirit in the Old Testament; “*is there any sorrow like My sorrow?*” (Lamentations 1:12).

Not only is this one lost to God, but he is also lost to himself. He will never know the full joy of living until he is found and brought back home. He cannot enjoy the warmth and fellowship of Father's home as long as he wanders on the dark mountains of sin. Life at best, for the one who is lost, is a very cheerless and hopeless affair – always hoping that, some way or other, things will turn out all right; but never quite sure when, nor where. He can never settle down and say, ‘*Thank God, I'm saved*’ until he has been brought back into fellowship with God.

Not only is this lost one lost to God, and lost to himself, but he is also lost to his community. His friends and neighbours are all the losers because this man is lost. He cannot be to them, nor do for them, all that he should be and could be if he were saved.

Now, just before we leave the air, let us consider the personal aspect of the question, “*Where are you?*” Where are *YOU*? This is the first question in the Old Testament concerning your location and position.

WHERE ARE YOU?

- Are you trying to hide from God, having covered yourself with the fig leaves of your own endeavour?
- Are you hiding from God, fearful that your garments of righteousness will not pass Divine inspection?
- Are you afraid of the voice of God, as Adam was?

Then listen to the Gospel from Genesis: there is nothing to fear! God is not searching for you like a policeman with a warrant for your arrest. Rather, He is searching for you as a parent for an only child who is lost; the dearest of all his earthly possessions.

He seeks you, only to clothe you properly in robes of His righteousness – to bring you back to the warmth, fellowship, and joy of Father’s house.

He seeks you as one who has lost a pearl of great price, and cannot rest until it is found and given its place in the King’s crown.

He seeks you as the Great Shepherd, whose flock is all safely sheltered in Sharon’s fold; but one is out on the hills away far off from the gates of gold.

He seeks you as one with a plan for your eternal enrichment and enjoyment, which plan can never be realized until He finds you and brings you back to Himself.

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Cain And Abel

~ Genesis chapter 4 & 5 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word, and continue our meditation on the *Gospel in Genesis*. We have the story of Cain and Abel before us this morning, and it promises to be a very interesting and profitable subject. It's the story of the first child born into this world; with all the fond hopes of a mother who had God's promise that her "Seed" would "bruise" the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15).

Genesis 4:1 tells us that when the first mother held the first baby in her arms she said, "*I have gotten a man from the LORD;*" so she called him Cain, which means "acquired" – or "acquisition." Here is the beginning of hope that never died from the hearts of God's mothers, until the virgin Mary held in her arms, in very deed and truth, a "*Man from the LORD*" – the Man child, Christ Jesus.

We cannot know what joy and dread may have filled Eve's heart, the first mother, as she looked into the face of her little one, and remembered her sin. She knew this little boy would have to share in the effects of his parents' transgression. And little Cain soon had a brother to enjoy the blessings of this first home with him. Evidently, their dwelling place was on the eastward side of the Garden of Eden – perhaps in sight of the visible presence of the LORD which guarded the way to the tree of life.

The two boys grew to manhood in this home; the one becoming a tiller of the soil, and the other a keeper of sheep. And in process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering unto the LORD of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought an offering – of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And we are told that, "*the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.*" (Genesis 4:4-5).

Here is the very first record in Scripture of a time and a place for the offering of sacrifice in worship. Here is the first instance in history, of family worship; and up to verse 5 the scene is very simple and beautiful. It is evident that these two boys had been instructed in divine worship; their parents had, no doubt, often told them of the loss of their first home because of their disobedience. Furthermore, they must have instructed them as to the proper approach to the Creator, and what would be an acceptable manner of worship. There is so much to learn in the study of this first home, both before and after sin had entered the picture, that we can't afford to pass it all by without due consideration.

This first family is very religious – where God is taken into their lives as a very necessary part of their being. Not only is God included in the daily pattern of life, but there is also a definite time set aside for worship – some period when everything else is set to one side and a special meeting with God is the order of the day. What a blessed picture this is, and what a tragedy, that its blessedness and beauty is all spoiled by the self-will of one member of the household. Civilization may have advanced a long way since these early days, we may have dropped off a great many traditions and superstitions of our forefathers, but there are some things we should hold onto with all diligence, for they are the very foundations of all true civilization and progress. Most vital of all is the family-life that revolves around the altar of prayer and family worship.

Now, let us look at these two worshippers, their offerings and their attitude; for here we will see a picture in "type" of all future worshippers, and religious ceremonies. Verse 3 tells us that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. Being a farmer, he naturally brought of the fruit of his toil. Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. Notice, now, the statement, "*the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.*"

In each case the man is mentioned before his offering, and the question naturally arises, "Is the man accepted because of his offering, or is the offering accepted because of the man?" In other words, "Is the fault in Cain, or is it in his offering?" At first sight, it might appear that the fault is altogether in the offering, and that all he needs to do is to take it and exchange it for an offering like his brother's. But then, later on in Scripture, it was required by the law of Moses to bring of certain fruits of the field as an offering of sacrifice. And since there is nothing morally wrong with the fruit of the ground, then it must be that the fault is altogether in the man. If the man is right, then his offering will be right. In other words, when man comes to God with the right attitude, both he and his offering will be accepted.

The only question then is: What is the proper attitude? And the answer is not hard to find. Abel has the right attitude. He comes in an acceptable manner, whilst his brother is rejected. Is he a better man than his brother? Not one whit. Is he not just as great a sinner as his brother? Every bit. How then can God accept one sinner and reject another?

Here is the *Gospel in Genesis*. God can only accept a sinner who acknowledges that he *IS* one – that he deserves death because he *IS* one; but believes that God will accept the death of a substitute in his place. Here, in the very infancy of our race, is a most graphic lesson on the fact that “*without the shedding of blood there is no remission,*” (Hebrews 9:22), and again “*he that covers his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesses and forsakes them shall find mercy*” (Proverbs 28:13).

Four thousand years before the Apostle John wrote those immortal words, “*If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,*” Abel led a little lamb to the place of sacrifice, offered its blood as atonement for his transgressions, exercised faith that God would accept it, and went away with a clear conscience – reconciled – justified – sanctified – and purified. (1 John 1:9).

On the other side of the altar was Cain, trying earnestly to keep up all the externals of religion, going through all the motions of worship and sacrifice, but without any answer from the throne of God. No response from the Throne-room of the King whose laws had been broken. From here on, to the end of the story of man in the book of Revelation, the human family is divided into two camps. The one, willing to follow the way of Divine instruction and revelation, taking the way of the cross – the way of sacrifice. The other, choosing the way of self – self-will – self-effort – self-esteem – and finally, self-worship.

This story of Cain and Abel is very much like the parable that Jesus told about a certain man with two sons; the one, a prodigal, and the other, a Pharisee. Again, it is very much like those two men that Jesus tells of in Luke 18, who went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. Cain is the Pharisee who refused to acknowledge his true condition. Abel is the one who prayed the Publican’s prayer, “*God be merciful to me a sinner!*”

After all, there are only two ways, the broad way that leads to destruction and the narrow way that leads to life eternal – only two classes of sinners, those who are saved by grace alone, and those who are lost through pride – only two kinds of religion, the one that trusts only in the finished work of Christ, and rests only in His sacrifice, and the other that invents its own approach to the throne of God and persecutes those who are simple enough to believe that nothing can atone for sin except Jesus’ blood.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
O precious is the flow that makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know; nothing but the blood of Jesus.

By Robert Lowry (1826-1899)

Notice, now, how the LORD reasons with Cain “*So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”*” (Genesis 4:6-7).

This reminds us of Isaiah 1:18-20 “*Come now, and let us reason together,*” says the LORD, “*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword;*” for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Even God Himself could not persuade this obstinate religionist, Cain, to abandon his foolish pride and acknowledge his transgression, to bring an acceptable sin-offering, and to join his brother Abel in a song of praise for forgiveness.

Evidently, there are some people so stubborn that even God Himself cannot induce them to repent. There will be those who are lost even though the hand of God has rested upon their shoulder, and the voice of God with a tender appeal has called, saying, “*My son, give me your heart.*” Such is the mystery of iniquity that men will be weak enough to fall, and then strong enough to argue that the fall was upward, and they have no intention of coming back down again.

In Scripture, Cain stands as a “type” of all future rebellion against God’s way of Salvation. He is the

first “type” of the Antichrist, and the father of all who have religion without repentance, salvation without atonement, worship without sacrifice. They have a form of power and belief, without obedience. This is where so-called modernism had its origin; where the first seeds of rebellion against God’s way of salvation were sown in the minds of men.

Let us read now in verse 8 and find the result of this false religion. “*And Cain talked with Abel his brother.*” They had a discussion regarding the proper approach to the throne of God, and evidently Abel won the argument, for it is said that “*Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*”

Thus, the first quarrel, in the first family, was on religious grounds. The first death was a violent one, the first person to die of Adam’s race was murdered by his own brother, and the first human blood ever to stain the soil was shed by one who refused to bring an offering of blood.

Here, in the book of Genesis, is a clear indication that only death can settle the sin-question. Only the blood of the Lamb can prevent men from shedding each other’s blood.

Anyone who thinks it doesn’t matter what men believe, as long as they are sincere, ought to read the 4th chapter of Genesis.

Let all those who consider the doctrine of salvation by the Blood of Christ a cruel religion, read the 4th chapter of Genesis; and see how cruel men can be who will not take the way of the cross.

Then, let all those who are wondering how to make a proper approach to God read the 4th chapter of Genesis *and* Hebrews 12:24, and see that we may come to “*Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*”

There is a place and a way to meet God which is always acceptable to the Majesty in the heavens. “*There I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat. . .*” (Exodus 25:22). That’s the word that God gave to Moses. And although the Old Testament tabernacle has passed away, and the mercy seat made with hands is no more to be found, there is a place where a righteous God can meet with sinful man, forgive all his sin, blot out all his transgressions, declare him to be righteous, adopt him into His family, and make him an heir of God and joint heir with Christ.

That place is the Cross, where the Lamb of God was offered – once and for all, to take away sin. Let us all come there again today.

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Enoch and Noah

~ Genesis chapters 5 & 6 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and read again the *Gospel in Genesis*. Last Sunday we read the story of Cain and Abel, and learned that in the very infancy of our race, two different families were established – the one with a religion that ignored the necessity of repentance and the blood atonement, despising the God-appointed way of approach to the Throne of Grace –and the other, accepting with sincere humility the “*Lamb of God*” idea, and offering the sacrifice of God’s choice. Abel lost his life because of his faith, just as thousands, yes, even tens of thousands have suffered since, at the hands of those who think they have found a better way.

Two thousand years are covered very briefly in the 5th chapter of Genesis, in which the generations of Adam’s race are recorded only as “living” and “dying.” One very startling exception is mentioned in verse 24, where we read, “*And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*” Thus, Enoch became an early “type” of the Church, which is destined to be “translated.” Two thousand years of ever-increasing wickedness brings us to the 6th chapter, which opens with God’s warnings of impending doom, and closes with God’s remedy for judgment.

Of all Old Testament writings, none are so pregnant with meaning, and so applicable to our time, as is the story of Noah – the ark he built, and the flood that followed. Jesus said, “*But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away. . .*” (Matthew 24:37-39).

Just about two thousand years after Abel offered the lamb on the altar of sacrifice, Noah entered into the ark, and was carried away to a new world, cleansed by the judgment of water. Now, nearly two thousand years have gone by since the Lamb of God was offered on Golgotha’s hill – 1,952 years of ever-increasing wickedness.

Once again, we are hearing God’s warnings of coming Judgment. Once again, we are directed to take shelter in God’s Ark, before the storm breaks. There is much to indicate that the Church is soon to be carried away before God deals with the world of the ungodly – not with water this time, but with fire.

Let us, then, come to this inspired Record with hearts made solemn and serious, because of the fearful consequences of sin, and the certainty of impending doom. Not only will we see the necessity and the imminence of the coming storm, with all the sorrow and suffering it will bring to the multiplied millions of earth’s inhabitants; but in the very chapter that tells of God’s judgment for sin, we will read of God’s mercy for sinners.

So it is, throughout the Book – side by side, with the warnings, are instructions for safety. God’s justice requires a penalty for transgressions; but His love for the offender contrives a way of escape. The early civilization evidently was a very wonderful and impressive affair. No doubt, art and science, agriculture, and manufacture were all very highly developed; but God was not in the least impressed with all their splendid accomplishments. God deals with men according to moral and spiritual standards, and cares little for all our boasted progress in material and earthly things.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, a prophet of God, lifted up his voice to the men of his generation and said, “*Behold, the LORD comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all their harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him*” (Jude 14-15).

Evidently, his voice was drowned out by the shouts of the revellers crying, “On with the dance – let joy be unconfined!” Then one day Enoch “*was not, for God took him.*” Perhaps the pleasure-mad crowd, whose only thoughts were of satisfying their insatiable lusts, hardly missed him. Certainly, the message Enoch had given to his people was not taken very seriously by the majority – even as God’s prophets are scarcely given a hearing in this enlightened day. However, Enoch did more good than he supposed; for his words were passed down to his posterity, until his great-grandson, Noah, was led to know God, and believe His Word. Noah’s ear was opened to divine revelation; and the LORD of heaven and earth made

known to him, the fact of coming retribution. Genesis 6:5 tells us that “*God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*”

We need to be reminded often, that “*all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account*” (Hebrews 4:13). How startled we would be if someone should suddenly tell us the very thoughts of our heart. How embarrassed we would be if all our imagination was suddenly displayed on a screen for everyone to see. God knows it all! He understands our thoughts afar off; there is not a word on our lips, but lo, He can write down what we are about to say. (See Psalm 139)

“*And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years*” (Genesis 6:3). One hundred and twenty years’ probation, and if there be no improvement, the tree must be cut down. In those days, God made public how long the door of mercy would remain open. At that time, 120 years was less than one quarter of the average life span – not very long, but long enough to repent and turn to God.

Just here, let me say that in our day the average life span is much shorter, and God no longer advises how much time is left to prepare for eternity. All we can know is that “*NOW is the accepted time; NOW is the day of salvation*” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

“*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,*” is a warning that needs to be often repeated. At the same time, we ought to be reminded that God’s Spirit is certainly striving with men in these the closing hours of the Dispensation. Never before, in all the annals of history, has there been such intensive and extensive world-coverage of the Gospel message. Hundreds of thousands of people, in the darker corners of the earth, are receiving the Gospel message – by the printed page – by powerful radio stations – and from the lips of those who have spent months of patient language study just to be able to transmit the story of redeeming grace to them for whom Christ died. Never before has the world system been so near to complete and universal collapse; and certainly, we have never been nearer that Day, spoken of by the prophets as “*that great and dreadful day of the LORD.*”

God allowed 120 years of grace, according to Genesis, during which Noah worked and preached. If we turn back the pages of recent Church history, we find that several great spiritual awakenings, in various parts of the world, have occurred during the past 120 years. And, no doubt, today, many hundreds of people throughout our continent (and in Europe, Asia, Africa, India, and the Islands of the sea) will be directed to the only place of safety, the Ark of the Christian Gospel – the LORD Jesus Christ.

Notice the 8th verse of Genesis 6, in particular, “*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*” Here is the first mention of one of the greatest words in any language. This is a word which has brought hope to the hopeless, and life to the dying. It reaches to the lowest of men, and lifts them to the highest privilege and position in all the universe.

As early as in the 6th chapter of Genesis, we are taught that if men are to be saved from their sins, and from its effects, it must be by grace. If we could ever catch the full significance of this little word of five letters, we would never be the same again. No dictionary definition can ever fully analyse the content of this mighty message called “*GRACE.*” It changes darkness to light, despair to hope, and destruction to salvation. It is generally considered to be a New Testament word; but it took all the Old Testament to prepare for the revelation of God’s *grace*.

We try to explain “*grace*” by saying that it is God’s unmerited favour; but that’s a very weak attempt to describe so boundless a truth. It’s like calling the Atlantic Ocean a large body of water. The statement is true, but it conveys no idea of the vast extent and depth of that mighty ocean. But even though we cannot fully define the word, nor altogether explain its content, we *can* know something of its power and value. We can know that no situation is too utterly hopeless for the Grace of God to change. No national or international turmoil is too dark and foreboding, for the grace of God to come by and help. “*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*” Blessed discovery! To find grace, is to find God’s favour.

Once grace is found, protection and deliverance are certain. Because Noah found Grace in the eyes of the LORD, it is written “*Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.*” (Genesis 6:9).

Here, once again, we have the *Gospel in Genesis*. It’s the same here as it is throughout the Book – a

Gospel of Grace. Through God's Grace, Noah was declared to be just. Later on, in the biography of this man, we learn that he was a man who followed the way of Abel – that he found the proper approach to God, by way of the sacrificial altar. Noah worshipped God in God's appointed way, and found grace in the eyes of the LORD. God's unmerited, unmeasured, unlimited favour poured out on this man and his family, in the very midst of the most wicked, immoral, and drunken civilization. While neighbours, relatives, and fellow-citizens all around him were indulging in every form of vice, crime and wickedness, here was one man, with his family, who walked with God.

"The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." (Genesis 6:11). In the interest of unborn generations, something would have to be done to terminate the ever-increasing tide of iniquity. To spare those who would come into this cesspool of moral corruption, God must needs cleanse the earth, and punish the transgressors. But, Grace would contrive a way to save rebellious man; Grace planned an ark whereby man could go through the judgment and still be safe. Noah's ark was made of wood, and so becomes an early "type" of the cross of the LORD Jesus Christ; *"... by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world"* (Galatians 6:14).

Next Sunday, the LORD willing, we will consider the ark of safety in detail. But for many, and perhaps even for some who are listening to this broadcast today, next Sunday will never come. And so, just as we leave the air, I want to tell you again that there is a place of safety and security – *YES*, even a place of peace and quietness.

An Ark has been provided for you, wherein you may meet the coming Judgment and still be saved – still be safe. The storm is coming – there isn't the slightest shadow of doubt about it! Even the scientists of our day are beginning to believe the Word of God – many concede that an upheaval of such magnitude could occur in our civilization at any time. *God would be our only help*, but *God can*, and *God will!*

There are those who, on the very brink of impending doom, are finding grace in the eyes of the LORD. They are coming to Him through Jesus Christ, and receiving great assurances. *"... For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."* (2 Timothy 1:12).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Refuge in the Ark

~ Genesis chapter 6 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and continue our meditation on the *Gospel in Genesis*. We are still in the 6th chapter of Genesis – the story of Noah’s deliverance by God’s appointed way. This is one of the clearest pictures of New Testament Salvation found in Genesis. According to 1 Peter 3:19-20, the Spirit of Christ preached to the people of that generation through Noah, all during the time while the ark was being prepared; but only a few, that is eight persons, were saved from drowning.

There may be many ways God could have chosen, whereby He could appeal to the hearts and minds of those who had been made in His image; but Scripture declares His Way: *“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”* (1 Corinthians 1:21). Not only was Noah a preacher of righteousness, but he believed the Gospel that he preached.

The Bible says he was moved with fear. *“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”* (Hebrews 11:7).

Altogether too many people in our day seem to think that fear has no place in the Christian Gospel – that appeals of love should be the only method used to persuade men to forsake the way of sin. The facts of the case are, however, that it *IS* the love of God which warns men of coming judgment – it *IS* the love of God which constrains the Gospel preacher to do all in his power to alarm and awaken neighbours and friends to the certainty of fearful retribution sure to follow the chosen path of transgression. Not only so, but it is also true that not many ever were saved, or ever will be, until and unless they realize that they are lost. In Noah’s day, as now, fear of the future is the principle factor which drives men to Christ. Then, once they are in Him, they learn that there is nothing to fear.

Now, let us consider the ark, and examine it closely; for the Gospel in Genesis is never more clearly shown than here. First of all, the ark is a perfect picture of *Christ, the believer’s refuge*.

Like the ark, prepared beforehand when there was not a cloud in the sky, and nothing to indicate imminent danger; so Christ is offered to men and women in their daily walk of life, when all around is peaceful and quiet – with plenty of time to ponder the offer of protection and the advantages of God’s way of life, (as compared to taking a chance of getting by some other way).

Not only is Christ offered to men now, before the storm breaks, but the Bible says He was *“foreordained before the foundation of the world,”* to save the world *“by the sacrifice of Himself.”* (See Hebrews 9:26 & 1 Peter 1:20) *“Make yourself an ark,”* God said to Noah, *“and cover it inside and outside with pitch.”* We are told that the very same word, translated *“pitch”* in this account, is translated *“atonement”* in Leviticus 17:11 *“. . . atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”* This is what makes the ark judgment-proof. This is what makes the believer in Christ so safe. Like the ark of Noah’s day – covered with, and made secure by pitch, the believer’s refuge today is made safe by the atonement. As we have so often pointed out, this is not a method of *escaping judgment*, but a way to *go through it and still live*. The ark will not be carried away from the storm; instead, it will feel the full fury of it; but everyone inside it will be safe. The full weight of God’s judgment for sin has already fallen on Christ Jesus. *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The word *“atonement”* means, primarily, *“to cover”* – and that, in a protective sense. This explains the note of triumph in Romans 5:11, where we read, *“and not only so, but we also joy in God through our LORD Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”* – by whom we have received the covering – the shelter – judgment-proof protection, which is safe *“though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea”* (Psalm 46). This ark must be covered within and without with pitch. External evidence, and internal experience are all dependant on the atonement. This is the very heart and core of the Gospel.

Once again, let me take you to Leviticus 17:11 where we read, *“for it is the blood that make an*

atonement for the soul.” Here is a sure test to determine the genuineness of the Gospel which is preached, and the safety of the way offered – look for the Blood of Christ. If it isn’t there, or if it is covered by other things that are made to seem more important, then by all means turn away. It isn’t safe. It won’t stand the test when the world is on fire and the elements melt with fervent heat. It won’t stand the test when God rises up to “*shake the earth terribly*” (Isaiah 2:19). It won’t stand the test when the books are opened at the judgment of the Great White Throne. This is the reason Paul wrote to the Church at Galatia and said, “*If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed*” (Galatians 1:8); for there is no other way than the Way of the Cross — there is no other safety than that which is found under the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Look for the Blood, my listener today – in your experience – in your religion – in the ark of safety wherein you rest. It may be, that is why you tuned in to the Wonderful Word Broadcast today, to learn that safety is certain only in the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ. “*...by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*” (Galatians 6:14). You will still have time to abandon your false hope and your unsafe ark and make for the Christ of the Cross today the door is still open.

Notice, now, verse 16 “*You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above.*” There is to be light in this ark, and that light must come from above. Moreover, since this window is to be placed in the top of the ark, then the only way those inside could see out would be to look up. Amen! No matter how dark and fearful were the surroundings, the up-look was always reassuring.

God is still on the throne – He always remembers His own,
Though trials may press us, and burdens distress us
He never will leave us alone.

When you can’t see your way through, just remember, God doesn’t intend you to; He wants you to look up, and trust Him. He can see you through. He knows the way He will direct your life. He knows the path best for you to take. Trust Him. He’ll see you through.

This brings us to the next great fact about this ark. There are no instructions for rudder, sail, or steering-wheel. This floating house, with all its precious cargo upon whom the future of the world depends, is going to be entirely at the mercy of the elements. Or, so it seems. But that is only *seeming*. Actually, it is going to be cradled in the arms of the Almighty, and any wind that ever blows will speed them on their way.

Life is like that for the Christian. Once you enter into the Ark of Safety, you hand over the controls to the Master of ocean, and earth, and sky. The responsibility for your safety then is His, not yours. On the other hand, if you still insist on running your own affairs, He will let you; but you will surely come to grief.

Notice that Noah’s ark is to have three stories – three elevations. I take it that Noah and his family could choose which floor they would live on. At least, there’s nothing said as to where in the great building they should make their home. But I think I know where they would choose, don’t you? Of course, it would be the topmost story. That’s where the window was – that’s where the light came from heaven.

I wouldn’t say that all things in this account are “types” of the Christian experience; but there is certainly a very close parallel between God’s way with Noah and God’s way with His children now. In any case, I’m sure you will agree that all Christians do not live on the same level. Some never rise much above the entrance; but stay right near the place where they came in. As the little boy said, when his mother asked him why he fell out of bed so often, “I guess I sleep too near the place where I get in.” Some Christians certainly do. Others again, climb to the second floor and spend the rest of their days just half way up and half way down. They never seem to be able to make up their minds which way they want to go on; but they never seem to resolve to take the stairs that lead to the upper room.

Thanks be to God, there is an “upper room experience.” It may take a little effort to ascend; but it’s worth it a thousand times over. Some may ask, “But how can I climb those stairs that lead to a higher level?” The rule is very simple: first you must believe that there *is* a higher plane. This will not be hard, if you read the Acts of the Apostles, and then the Epistles.

You will note that the Spirit-filled life is the normal life for the Christian. Anything less comes short of

divine requirement and divine provision. The New Testament makes it so clear that there is a definite experience subsequent to conversion – an experience that transforms and endues – an experience that equips and sustains. It's the "upper room experience" repeated in our day and age.

To believe, then, that there is an upper room is the first prerequisite. And then to decide where it is you want to live by the grace of God. On your knees, you will rise to claim the promise of the Father and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now, before we leave the ark, let us notice that an entire family is sheltered in this ark – Noah the father, his wife, their three sons, and their three daughters-in-law. This is without doubt one of the loveliest sights this side of heaven – to see a family all safe in the Ark – and that by choice; each one enjoying the fulness of God's blessing and God's favour. Again, I say, there is nothing better this side of heaven than to find an entire family, in the midst of universal corruption and wickedness, all serving Christ – all filled with the Spirit – all living in the upper room – all safe when the flood tide of judgment breaks.

Just seven days after everything was in readiness, after Noah and his family had entered in, the flood came. Fountains of the great deep were broken up, the windows of heaven were opened, and for forty days and forty nights a mighty tide of water prevailed upon the face of the earth. All mankind perished, except those who were in the ark. The very same water, which destroyed their neighbours and friends, lifted up the great building in which they had taken shelter and carried them away. The higher the waters of judgment rose, the higher rose the ark.

Finally, when the earth was thoroughly cleansed, the waters began to assuage. The ark came to rest on the top of Mount Ararat, which means literally, "holy ground." Then God said, "All right, Noah, come on out with your family and all you have saved." Out they walked. And, in "type," they have landed on resurrection soil. The Church has come to rest on the mountains of God, with judgment forever past, "*new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*" (2 Peter 3:13).

Amen and Amen! The ark is all ready – the door is still open. Hear the call of the Spirit, "Come! Come, today!"

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – The Calling Out of Abram

~ Genesis chapter 12 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and read the Gospel story again in the *Book of Genesis*. The 11th chapter of Genesis summarises the story of Noah's descendants from the Flood to the Tower of Babel. Briefly, the main lesson taught is that no amount of water can ever wash away sin; and though the ark saved the race from extermination, it was only a "type" or "shadow" of a future deliverance which alone can and will take away sin. No ordinance or religious ritual – *nothing* that is material or earthly – can ever take away sin. We must say, however, that visible ordinances did provide a way whereby God could go on with a guilty sinner and cover his transgressions, until, in the "*fullness of the time . . . God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*" (Galatians 4:4-5).

The principal evidence of man's continued rebellion against God is best described by one word: *Pride*. God said to Noah's family, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Their answer was, "*Let us make us a city, and a tower, and a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.*" Nothing can be more harmful, or destructive in the spiritual and moral sense, than for men to congregate together in large cities. It may be true that science and manufacture, art and culture may thrive in the great metropolis; but the wickedness that flourishes, and the crime that breeds in its moral cesspools, far outweigh the benefits they bring.

From the 11th chapter of Genesis, until we come to the 19th chapter of Revelation, man is continually building cities. These cities, in turn, are inevitably destroyed by God's judgments. Unregenerate man has gathered together in great nations, under mighty leaders, with invincible armies. History records the breaking-up and scattering to the four winds of humanity's boasted accomplishments. However, it will never be quite safe for all the people of this world to be united in a common cause, until the Man Christ Jesus sets up His Kingdom, and rules all nations with His rod of iron.

The 12th chapter of Genesis marks one of the most important changes in all Scripture. It is the hinge on which the door of revelation (to all of Adam's race) swings from. It deals with the calling out of one man, and the starting over again with a New Dispensation – a New Covenant, based upon entirely new promises. It's the story of Abram, afterwards called Abraham. We may form some idea of the importance of this man, when we notice that God tells the whole story of creation in one chapter, and takes fourteen chapters to tell the story of Abraham. All the rest of the Bible tells of what happened to Abraham's family; and, through this family, to all the world.

In these days of anti-Semitism, we need to be reminded that the clearest revelation of God ever given, was to and through the descendants of Abraham. Every prophet, from Abraham to John the Baptist, came from the children of Israel – raising their voices to turn men from their wickedness, to escape the judgments of God. They all came from Israel. Every promise in Scripture for the good of all mankind comes through this persecuted nation. The One who is called the Desire of all Nations – the Root and Offspring of David – the Bright and Morning Star, our LORD Jesus Christ, was of the seed of Abraham. From the 12th chapter of Genesis, on through the entire Book, God delights to be known as the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

In other words, He is the God of the individual. If Genesis teaches nothing else, and we gain no other lesson from this inspired record, we see the value of the individual to God, and through God to the whole world. This is a very evident and very precious truth. God started the race with one man and one woman; He saved the race by the ark through one man; and now that a new start must be made, and a new revelation given, God will call one man (Abraham) out from his kindred and from his people, and declare that from his seed all families of the earth shall be blessed. We know of course that the Seed in question is none other than Jesus, the Son of the virgin Mary – the Christ of God.

Governments estimate their strength by the number of their subjects; but God's cause triumphs through individuals. The Bible story is the inspired account of what individuals have accomplished by the power of God. Church History follows the same pattern. Names like *MARTIN LUTHER, JOHN HUSS, JOHN*

WESLEY, WILLIAM BOOTH, WILLIAM CAREY, ROBERT MOFFAT, FINNEY, SPURGEON, MOODY, (and we could name many others), have become synonymous with mighty spiritual awakenings that changed the entire course of history and the whole face of society. When we lose sight of the individual, we lose sight of the greatest potential that God has in this world.

Even though many nations nominally acknowledge Him as LORD, never yet has an *entire* nation made a complete surrender to the will of God. As a matter of fact, very seldom has an *entire* town or village turned to God without exception. But, more often than we know, a nation has been spared, and its greatness increased, because some “one” or some “few” individuals turned to God with all their heart, and put their lives in the hands of the Almighty. God wonderfully used them to turn back the forces of evil that would have destroyed their people and blight the entire human race.

Another wonderful thing about this story of God’s dealings with the individual is, that in each case there was nothing very extraordinary about the person. Nothing is ever said about their personality, superior intelligence, or unusual ability. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures go so far as to say that they were men of like passions such as we are – all made from the same lump of clay – all cast in the same mould of human nature – all subject to the same weaknesses, the same infirmities, the same frailties – all afflicted with the same fears, the same doubts, the same difficulties that you and I have to contend with. The questions, then, naturally arise, “How did these ordinary people become so extraordinary? How did they, who were so weak, become so strong? How could someone, raised in obscurity, achieve such world-wide fame? And how could one, who was himself fearful, inspire so many thousands to courage and fearlessness? How could one, who was himself tempted, help so many gain the victory over temptation?”

There is only one answer and explanation: they had a personal experience and an individual relationship with Almighty God – they were on speaking terms with, and followers of the Omniscient One who has all power in heaven and in earth. God delights in changing the ordinary, common, everyday sort of person into the most extraordinary, outstanding personality. Someone has well said, “The commonest bush, ablaze with God, becomes a miracle of glory.”

Moses, who had position, influence, and wealth, turned his back on it all by faith; refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, “*choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*” (see Hebrews 11).

The call of Abraham is another classic example of God’s way with men. Abram dwelt first in the Ur of the Chaldees – his people were all idolaters, what we would call heathen, or pagan. As far as we know, Abram’s earliest contact with religion was to see his father Terah bowing down to a god of wood or stone. But somehow, we don’t know how, God began to talk to this young man, and reveal Himself to him. Somehow Abram got acquainted with the one true and living God. In fact, they got so intimate that God said to Abram, “*Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.*” (Genesis 12:1).

This is the *Gospel in Genesis*. It is God calling to those who live in darkness – in the region of the shadow of death – and saying to them, “Come out, and I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.”

This man Abram was born in superstition, cradled in ignorance in a community where idolatry, with all its attendant evils, blinded the people to the true nature of God. Nothing about his environment was conducive to spiritual enlightenment. There was nothing favourable in his circumstance, to help him find the way. The only thing he had in his favour was his capacity to hear and know the voice of God.

Jesus said in John 7:17, “*If any man wills to do His will, he shall know.*” If anyone really wants to know and do the will of God, then God in some way will reveal Himself to that person.

“*Now the LORD had said unto Abram*” – notice the past tense. God had been dealing with Abram – speaking to him, persuading him for some time, before he rose up to follow the voice of God. We shouldn’t think that Abram moved right out the very first time he heard the voice of God. He did that later, after they got better acquainted; but in the early stages of his experience, he was just like you and I. It took a good while before God could win him over to a life of obedience. But isn’t it wonderful how patient God is with us? and how mercifully He deals with us? how gently He strives with us? until at last

we can hold out no longer; but with a glad and final surrender we rise up and say, "I will follow You, wherever You lead; take my hand."

Do you consider that you are too small,
Too weak, or feeble thus to serve at all?
O limit not His power, His wondrous grace,
Whose wisdom infinite did choose your place.
He takes the weak things to confound the wise,
The foolish things, the things which men despise,
With which to do His most effective deeds –
With which to satisfy men's deepest needs.

Then let Him take you, as He only can –
To show some aspect of His love to man;
Which not another in His universe,
Composed of all the saints with lives diverse,
Is qualified to show as you can show,
And through your circumstance lead men to know
Some glint of glory, grace, or love divine,
Which He could never show, except through yours.

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Lot’s Choice

~ Genesis chapter 15 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word, and read the Gospel story in the *Book of Genesis*. Last Sunday we read of the call of Abraham, and found it to be a pattern of God’s call in all ages. This morning we want to take up the story of Lot, Abraham’s nephew, the son of Abraham’s brother. Lot was in the same family, with the same privileges and opportunities, sharing the journey from Ur of the Chaldees to the Land of Canaan; and yet, with all this, he came to a tragic end. It’s a study in contrast and a study in character. The choices a man makes, reveal his motives; and his motives reveal his character.

Let us read Genesis 13:5 *“Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.”* Here we have the picture of a man enjoying the benefits and blessings of God because he is of the same family and related to the man whom God had called. His good fortune was not so much the result of his own industry and foresight, as it was that divine providence had given him such a godly man for an uncle.

Whatever men may think or say about the Christian Way, everyone can plainly see the benefits and advantages of association in business and social affairs with a man of strong moral convictions – whose word is his bond– who would never try to take advantage of a situation for his own profit. To belong to a family that knows God is certainly a very real asset in any age, and especially in times like these. However, there is one thing still better, and that is to be an *active* member in that family, in worship, service and prayer. Sooner or later it will become evident whether a person has a real definite experience of his own or is just hanging on to religion through family connections. Are *you* trusting in your godly father or mother, or in your spouse, to lead the way – and hoping thereby to get safely through?

Let us read the story of Lot again – Genesis 13:7 *“And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.”* Here is a verse that could keep us for quite a while –and still, we would only have *begun* to explore its full significance. It’s one of the first peace conferences in recorded history; and, as such, can teach our modern peace negotiators some very sound and practical principles. Perhaps it’s too much to expect men of the world to follow this pattern for a settlement of world problems; but we have a right to expect the Church to follow the example set by men of the Bible – whose lives bear the testimony of Divine approval. This one verse is enough to bring an end to all internal strife which so often paralyzes spiritual progress, and brings reproach to the cause of Christ.

Notice, first of all, the latter part of verse 7, *“The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.”* This, in itself, is reason enough why they must preserve the peace. What will those pagans think and say, if these two, who profess to be serving such a wonderful God, think more of their cattle than they do of each other. If there were no other incentive for peace in the Church, this should be enough. By all means, let us have peace among ourselves, *for the sake of our testimony!*

But that is not all . . . in the later part of verse 8 is a still more compelling argument. *“For,”* said Abram, *“we are brethren”* . . . we belong to the same family, we are one by blood relationship, your interests are mine, and my interests are yours . . . *“Is not the whole land before us?”* In other words, *‘Surely there is room enough in this great land for both of us and all our cattle.’*

The old saying, *“It takes two to quarrel, but only one to end it”* is demonstrated in this lesson on peace-making. As far as Abram is concerned, nothing will be allowed to come between him and his nephew. He will make any concession in the interest of peace, as long as no moral principle is violated. Peace is better than grazing land, better than flocks and herds. Indeed, what good are “things” if we can’t have peace along with them? This lesson is taught in the very first Book of the Bible, but in spite of all our advances since those long-ago days, we still haven’t mastered the first principles of the art of living together.

“Take your choice,” said Abram. *“If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.”* Here is the first test of Lot’s character. Until now he has been following

along with Abram, but now he has an opportunity to choose for himself, which section of the country he will have.

Bear in mind – all this land actually belonged to Abram – God had given it to him and “to his seed,” but not to all his relatives. Abram could have said to his nephew, *‘You had better pack up and go back home. There is no room for you here.’* Instead, he gave him first choice as to where he would live. Someone has said that one of the best things about having rights is, that we can give them up for the sake of another. But now, Lot is facing his first test as to character. How will he choose? What will be the guiding principle to decide his course? Before we answer, let us ask another question: What would *you* do? What would *I* do? Let us watch Lot, and see the land with him; let us listen while he weighs the advantages of going either to the right or to the left.

“And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD” (vs.10). There is no question here, as to where the best land was. Anyone could see that the plain of Jordan was the ideal place for cattle. Should he choose the plain, or the mountains? Only Lot can make the choice; just as you and I often have to decide for ourselves. The choice will be determined by what we most want to do – what we are most concerned about. If it’s the accumulation of flocks and herds, the gathering together of the perishing things of time, then of course we will choose the plain – choose for personal advantage and temporal gain. But, if we want to advance in things that matter most, things that will outlive cows and camels, sheep and goats, we will think first of how we can best serve our brother – or our neighbour; keeping in mind that if we choose the best for temporal gain, then someone else (who is just as much entitled to the ‘best’ as you are) must have second best.

It may seem clever to grab the greenest fields and the most fertile plain, whenever we have first choice; but it is just as true nowadays, as it was in Genesis, that *“He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it”* ... *“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matthew 10:39; 16:25; Luke 9:24; 17:33; John 12:25); and *“The first shall be last and the last first”* Matthew 19:30.

Abram was much older than Lot, and the rightful owner of all the land. If Lot had been the man he should have been – the kind of man we like to read about – the kind of man we like to do business with, he would have chosen so that the very best of all the land of Canaan would be left for his generous and kind-hearted uncle. This is a character study. We are reading about things that happen in everyday life all *around* us – and very often *within* us.

Before we hurry on to the next scene, let me say, *watch your choices* – examine your motives, and if there is any tendency to put Self first, nail it to the cross! *“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”* (Romans 15:2-3).

Now, let us visit Lot after he had moved down to the Jordan. *“And Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD”* (Genesis 13:12-13).

Lots’ first test was one of choice, and this one is ‘choice of association.’ His first failure was his first step toward Sodom. It was much easier to take the second step. He pitched his tent toward Sodom. Whether he knew it or not, he was on his way down, and on his way out. It might have been to his temporal advantage to cultivate the friendship of the ungodly and wicked community; but he would live to see the day when every temporal and material gain was swept away. And though he himself was saved, it was *“as by fire.”* – *“If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”* (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Next Sunday, the LORD willing, we will consider the last picture in this tragedy. But before we leave the air this morning, I want to emphasize again and again the peril and folly of choosing only for temporal gain. Lot is one of the earliest “types” of professing Christians who share all the privileges and benefits of the Gospel – who by virtue of godly relatives, share in the good things of the Gospel; and yet they think more of earthly possessions and temporal advantages than they do of eternal treasures. No greater inconsistency could ever be shown than for a Christian to be a materialist; and yet, you and I know that

the Church is blighted with thousands of them – and they are not all confined to the pews either. Even the sacred pulpit is sometimes filled by one who is more concerned about his salary, than about the souls of men; by one who thinks more of gaining social prestige than spiritual excellence; one who would not hesitate to choose a bigger and a richer church, should the opportunity be given.

Again, I say:

Watch your choices – they are the true evidences of character. And then,

Watch where you pitch your tent – it may be safe enough to dwell in Jordan’s valley, but only if your tent is set away from Sodom. It may be legitimate to be in possession of rich and fertile fields, they can be a real source of blessing and supply to the cause of Christ; but only if you pitch your tent away from Sodom. If you don’t, the Sodomites will get it all; or God’s judgments will fall and sweep it all away.

God’s men in Scripture have ever been men of the mountains, “*looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” – pitching their tents high above the men of the plain – occupying a spiritual altitude high above the men of this world – and living at a moral level above those “*whose god is their belly, whose glory is their shame – who mind earthly things*” (Philippians 3:19).

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the LORD Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:20-21).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Sodom Destroyed

~ Genesis chapter 19 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditations. Last Sunday we looked at the character of Lot, the nephew of Abram. Time ran out on us before we could come to the end of the story, so let us go back to the 19th chapter of Genesis for the last scene in this great tragedy. Lot is now living in Sodom, and apparently has been there for some time. He has a place of influence and authority, for he is sitting in the gate – a place reserved for the judges and officers of the local government. His uncle Abram is still living back in the hills, and hasn't so much as built himself a house. According to the world's standards, the old gentleman is too much of a dreamer to ever make a mark in world affairs. No doubt, Lot had often complimented himself on his wise and practical choice in moving down to the plain of Jordan with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as a ready market for his cattle. However, it's too early to judge the success or failure of any man's life, until we come to the last chapter and learn how the story finally ends. We have the last chapter before us this morning, and it's just filled with Gospel truth and New Testament principles.

First of all, we have a most dramatic picture of the closing days of this Dispensation. Jesus said, *“As it was in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”* (Luke 17:28-30).

The chapter in Genesis opens like this: *“Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening . . .”* The sun is setting and darkness will soon cover the city with its sable mantle – all the forces and powers of wickedness will come forth to fulfil their evil desires. And today, *our* golden “day of opportunity” is fast drawing to a close. We have many reasons to believe that this “day of Grace” will soon be past, and *“darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the people”* (Isaiah 60:2).

Lot is a “type” of multitudes of people who have sacrificed their fellowship and communion with God for material gain. They've exchanged their inheritance of spiritual power for the flimsy, fickle popularity and friendship of the world. It's a sad Old Testament version of the Laodicean Church – rich and increased with this world's goods; but entirely barren of the riches which are of great price in the sight of God.

We are soon to read of God's judgment on this evil city, but before we do, let us read of God's Mercy; for His Mercy always precedes His Judgments. *“Two angels came to Sodom in the evening . . .”* – two heavenly visitors have appeared to investigate spiritual conditions, and to save any who will be saved before the fire falls. Sodom must be destroyed, but not all her inhabitants. The certain doom of the world-system is settled, as far as God is concerned; but before it crumbles and falls under the mighty judgments of the Almighty, God has sent His messengers to try and persuade all who will hear to *“Get up, and get out of this place, before it be too late!!”* Two angels came to Sodom as the sun was going down.

I would like to suggest that, in our generation, two heavenly visitors have also appeared in our cities, as well as in many towns and villages. They have all the aspects of divine authority, and their message is the same wherever they are found – *“Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy this city, this system, this world organization.”* If you have never seen or heard of them, it would be to your advantage to investigate. Their names are *“The Word of God”* and *“The Spirit of God.”*

They are always together, for they are dependent on each other – the one supplements the other – the one is the complement of the other. If the Word of God has come to your community, rest assured, the ever-blessed Spirit of God is in company with it. Never in all history has the Word of God visited so many cities, towns, and villages. Never before has it been read in so many languages, by so many people. Never before have so many people been able to hear the message sent from heaven, as can the people of this generation by means of radio and the printed page. Not only so, but there are indications that the Spirit of God is accompanying this widespread dissemination of the Word. In a very active way, He is convincing and convicting sinners of the error of their ways, and alarming the merely religious professors to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith.

As for Sodom, it requires no argument to show that its moral conditions were little worse than those prevailing in the majority of our towns and cities today. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, but their sins live on – their licentiousness, lewdness, and immorality have found their way into hearts and homes throughout our land – and other lands. We are threatened by a complete collapse of all that is holy, pure, virtuous, chaste, and honourable.

Notice what Lot did . . . He rose up to meet these heavenly visitors and urged them to come into his house and stay. This is the wisest thing the poor man has done since he decided to leave Ur of the Chaldees and travel with his uncle Abram. If he had not done this, he would have been destroyed with all the rest of his neighbours and friends.

May I say just here, that it's not enough to hear the Word of God – it's not enough to feel the gentle tug of the Spirit of God at the heart strings; we must rise up and bring these heavenly guests into our house, and into our heart. *"Your Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You"* (Psalm 119:11); and again, *"I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts . . . and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."* (Hebrews 8:10-12). Christianity has to do with the heart. It's in the spirit and not in the letter, where Christ does His saving work.

We'll have to hurry along through this chapter, but let us read beginning at verse 12, *"Then the men said to Lot, 'Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.' So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, 'Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!' But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking."*

So often, we see this same tragedy enacted by ambitious parents. They drag their children into all the moral corruption of Sodom, to gain social advantage, and then live to see the day when their children will laugh at their old-fashioned religion, mock at their old-fashioned moral standards, and make a joke out of the "Judgment Day" to come, calling it a "primitive fear." In their mad race for prominence and place, Lot and his wife exposed their children to all the evils of that evil civilization. I don't know who their daughters married, but since Lot had such a place of importance, it's more than likely that his daughters married well. Socially and financially, the wedding day may have been a very grand and wonderful affair. But once again, it's how the story *ENDS* that counts most. Lot's sons-in-law mocked at him for his appeal – he had entirely lost his spiritual influence and authority. In fact, it would seem he did not even have the respect of these young fellows.

"Have you anyone else here?" asked the angels. And this is the question that is still being asked of you – and You – and YOU. Is there anyone near you by the ties of nature, to whom you still have the time to go, to try and persuade them to turn from the ways of sin and death? Is there anyone whom you could persuade to heed the warning of the two messengers, and to separate themselves from this untoward generation? Jesus said, *"As is was in the days of Lot . . ."*

Until now we have been looking at the leading characters in the city of Sodom – the angels, Lot, and his sons-in-law. But there is another person in this great drama. He is unseen, and doesn't seem to have a very prominent part; but, actually, he is of greater value to Lot's welfare than we can know. It is his uncle Abraham, back in the hills. God had made known to Abraham what His intentions were, regarding Sodom and Gomorrah; and while the angels went to perform their mission, Abraham stood before the LORD in intercession. Read about him in the previous chapter.

Here is the *Gospel in Genesis*. Heavenly visitors, persuading men to flee from the wrath to come. Some people mocking at the very thought of judgment; others pleading with their relatives to escape for their lives; and then this hidden mystery of God's saints interceding and supplicating the Throne of Grace, if by any means some might be saved.

Sodom may have its princes of industry, and its great moguls of commerce; it may have its luxurious hotels and apartments, its amusement palaces, night clubs and drinking parlours. But none of these will save anyone, when God rises up to judge sinful men. Abraham, back in the hills, is worth more to God and to the world than all the men in Sodom combined, including Lot.

Listen, and I'll tell you again: Men and women who know how to pray are worth more to God and to the world than all the governments, all the armies, all the munitions of warfare, all the educational institutions, all the art, and all the culture the world can ever produce. If people of this generation are to be saved, it will be brought about by those who know their God. The last days are written about in the book of Daniel, "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." (11:32).

Now let us read Genesis 19:16, "*And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.*" Lot is still reluctant to leave all the savings of a lifetime, but he can't take them with him. He came into Sodom a very wealthy man, but all his wealth will not save him now. He made the mistake which thousands and millions are making these days – they are gathering possessions which they will not be able to take with them.

Read James chapter 5, where the writer anticipates the last days "*Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*"

Abraham was a very wealthy man, too; but, besides his cattle, flocks and herds, he had the riches of faith – of fellowship with God – spiritual treasures that would still abide, after the earth crumbled into dust, and the sun burned itself out. The angels took Lot, his wife, and their daughters out of Sodom; but they couldn't take Sodom out of his wife. She looked back so longingly at the wretched rotten thing. Therefore, God left her within sight of its destruction, as a pillar of salt.

Just as we leave the air, let me ask once again: have these two angels – the *Word of God* and the *Spirit of God*, come to your town or community? Have you invited them into your home? And are you prepared to follow them out of the city of destruction?

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – The Offering Up of Isaac

~ Genesis chapter 22 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and continue our search for the *Gospel in Genesis* – the book of beginnings. Our text for today is from Genesis 22, and there is far more here than we can ever tell in twelve minutes. It's the inspired account of the offering up of Isaac, the son of promise. Abraham and Sarah had waited twenty-five years for the answer to their prayer – each passing year seemed to make the prospect more and more unlikely. The very laws of nature made their having a son, at so late a season in life, highly improbable and, finally, impossible. But with God all things are possible – the laws of nature are God's own laws; He is able to suspend them, or introduce a higher law, whenever it suits His purpose. God is not held in bondage by the laws of He created – He is sovereign over them all – they all obey His will. And so, the law of "faith in God" makes Abraham and Sarah, in this instance, independent of the law of nature. That's how it is with the law of faith, even in this enlightened day. We cannot limit God, or confine Him to certain boundaries, and say "Beyond this He cannot go." No man has ever yet seen all that God can and will do for someone whose heart is fully surrendered to Him.

Well, at any rate, when Abraham was about 100 years old, and his wife Sarah was 90, God gave them a son. They called his name Isaac, which means "*laughter*." He is called the "*son of promise*." Isaac becomes one of the early types of Christ Jesus, who also was born contrary to the laws of nature – the only true Son of the Father, and as we shall see.

"*Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him: 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'*" Here is the greatest test Abraham has yet had to face. Ever since he heard the call of God in Ur of the Chaldees, he had been giving up things in answer to that call. He gave up friends and relatives, and his homeland, to go out to an unknown country. He gave up the best of the grazing land in favour of his nephew Lot. When Isaac was born, he was told to give up Ishmael and his mother Hagar. Now, when Isaac is 25 years old, he is asked to give him up!

That's how it is with the Christian way. That's how it is with the life of faith. As Job of old cried out in the day of his bereavement, "*The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*" If only we could know it, if only we could see it – this "*taking away*" is just as great an act of mercy and kindness, on God's part, as any act of giving is. Anything He gives, is given by His grace; and when He sees best to take it away, it is grace in subtraction – as the other had been grace in addition. You remember Jesus said, "*Any branch in me that bears fruit, He purges it (or prunes it), that it might bring forth more fruit.*" (John 15:2).

And so, father and son start the three-day journey toward mount Moriah. Here we have a picture in "type" of the Father and Son on that age-long journey to Calvary. That journey began, says the Bible, "*before the foundation of the world.*" (1 Peter 1:20).

To trace it through the Old Testament in "shadow" and in "type" is one of the most inspiring and interesting of all lines of truth. Just now, however, we see only Abraham, Isaac and the servants – they are representative figures, as well as literal and personal. Abraham is the father of the faithful. He was a man of faith who dared to believe that to obey God was the one and only way of faith. He dared to believe that whatever God asked him to give up was for the best for all concerned; and though all his hopes for an earthly posterity were wrapped up in Isaac, he was ready to give him back to the One who gave him to them in the first place. "*GOD FIRST*" was the motto of his life. And he lived to see the day when his faith was abundantly justified. Abraham's name ranks very high in God's record of Old Testament worthies.

Isaac is the perfect "type" of youth – obedient to the will of God even though it means giving up all that life holds dear – obedient even to death. But there is "resurrection from the dead" which is a thousand times better than the old life could ever have been. Let us join Abraham and Isaac as they travel on, because, in a sense, the Heavenly Father calls every one of us to go to Mount Moriah – to the place of offering up our lives to God. We will learn some very precious, wonderful truths as we go with them.

Let us read verse 4, *“Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’”* Notice: God had said, *“Go up and sacrifice;”* Abraham said, *“We go to worship.”* The place of sacrifice is, for Abraham, the place of worship. Abraham laid the wood, which they had brought for the fire, upon Isaac his son. Evidently, the servants had carried it until now. Wood is ever a “type” of the cross, and the young man is made to carry it.

To some shallow minds, it is unthinkable that youth should be required to take up the cross and go to the place of sacrifice. Let us keep in mind that Isaac means laughter. Youth is the time for pleasure – for enjoyment. Let us also keep in mind that Isaac is the only heir to all the riches of a very wealthy father. Life for him couldn’t have been more attractive. Everything that goes to make life worthwhile is his by inheritance. But now, his back turned to it all, he is on his way to the place of sacrifice.

Isaac said unto Abraham, *“Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”* Here we have one of the most profound and significant questions in all the Old Testament. *“Where is the lamb?”* The answer is equally profound and certainly inspired, *“My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.”* So they went, both of them together. Many centuries later, John the Baptist cried out to the crowd gathered by the river Jordan, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29). In Abraham’s day, too, it was a statement of faith – *“My son, God will provide for Himself the Lamb.”*

That settled the question for Isaac, *“so the two of them went together,”* higher up the mountain, the wood becoming more and more of a burden to this young man. This is a picture of God’s perfect will being carried out without hesitation. Such perfect obedience is seldom seen, even in the Bible.

There’s one other instance equally perfect; the obedience of Jesus Christ to the will of the Father – obedience even to death. *“For though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”* (Hebrews 5:8).

Now, let us think of God’s call to other young people to take up the cross; for there’s a cross for everyone, and there’s a cross for me.

The life of Isaac is a perfect pattern to follow; but, to our shame, few of us follow as willingly as he did, or obey so wholeheartedly. I think the reason why Isaac ascended Mount Moriah so readily was because of the confidence he had in his father – he trusted his father to do what was best. Now, if this young man could trust his earthly father so implicitly, how much more ought we to trust our Heavenly Father, no matter where He leads us? The fact is, however, that very often there are months, and sometimes years, between the time the Father calls us to the place of sacrifice, to the place of surrender, and the time we are finally willing to move out and go. Indeed, I have known too many who, in their early years, were definitely called to give up all and follow Christ; and who have never yet answered that call. In fact, they seem farther away from God today than they ever were. Some will say *“But youth is the time for pleasure, for laughter, for fun – I can’t give it all up so early in life for the serious things of religion.”*

Listen! If you want to have that “laughter” preserved – if you want perennial joy – if you want to really enjoy life, even down to old age; then the first step is to surrender your life to Christ. I have known too many young people, and there may be some listening to this program, who though they are still young, feel that they can never be really happy again. They are already discovering that the *“way of transgressors is hard”* (Proverbs 13:15), and *“whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption”* (Galatians 6:8). I have seen the hard, cynical faces of youth on the streets of our city; who appear to have tasted of the wine of earthly, fleshly and temporal indulgence. They have found out the truth of that old proverb: *“At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.”* (Proverbs 23:32). They have lost the fresh wholesome laughter of youth; and in its place, is a sophisticated sneer. Life has already soured for them, and unless they find Christ, it will never be sweetened for them again.

Let us come back to Isaac and his father . . . They have arrived at the place of sacrifice; the father builds the altar and lays the wood upon it. Then he ties up Isaac his son, who meekly submits to the whole arrangement, though he is big enough and old enough to prevent his father from even touching him.

(Isaac didn't have to do this, but he surrendered willingly.) The father lays his son upon the wood (the cross), and it looks like the end has come. It looks as though all his hopes and ambitions will never be realized. It *IS* the end, in one sense; but it's the sort of an end which marks a new beginning.

The father is prepared to carry out the instructions of his Father God in detail. But it is enough! This is all God asks. God accepts the will for the deed. An angel calls out from heaven and stops the knife. "*And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh – the LORD will Provide.*" (Gen. 22:13-14). Isaac is saved – a substitute is found who dies in his place – the promise of his father is fulfilled, God *has* provided a lamb for Himself.

But what happened to the cross which the young man carried up the mountain? It's on fire! The wood that once was on his back is now ablaze – the fire consumes the sacrifice which is taking Isaac's place, and it has continued to burn even unto this day. The cross is no longer a symbol of servitude, it's a symbol of freedom. It once was an instrument of death; but Christ has made of it an instrument of life, "*and that more abundantly.*" (John 10:10).

Let us watch these two, now, as they descend from the mount of sacrifice – father and son. They are closer together now than ever before. As far as Abraham is concerned, his son is alive from the dead – he is now not only a "child of promise" but a "child of the resurrection."

It is a blessed picture of Redemption – it's a true picture of the experience of everyone who goes up Mount Calvary, and gives up his life on the cross. The cross bursts into flame and they return from the dead to walk in newness of life. Are their pleasures all gone? No, they have only begun; for they have found that "*In His presence there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore.*" (Psalm 16:11).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Isaac & Rebekah

~ Genesis chapter 24 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and once again read the *Gospel story in Genesis*. Last Sunday we had the account of the offering-up of Isaac; and we can hardly leave the story of Isaac without reading of another incident in his life which is filled with spiritual truth and New Testament experience. So, if you will turn with me to Genesis 24, we will go through it with you, gathering the highlights and applying them to our time and to our lives.

Isaac is now about 40 years of age, still unmarried. Since the promised “Seed” who is to bless the earth must come through Isaac, his father is naturally quite concerned about the situation. One day Abraham called one of his trusted and faithful servants and required of him, under oath, that he would not take a wife for his son Isaac from the daughters of Canaan; but rather go back to the country from where he had come and take a bride for Isaac from there. The entire account gives an insight into the customs of that time and that land. More than that, it lets us know, again, that the matter of choosing a life-companion is a very serious matter – especially for the child of God. Just anybody won’t do, to share life’s journey and to bring other eternity-bound lives into the world.

We could very profitably spend our time on this one phase of truth, so plainly taught throughout the Bible. “Daughters of Canaan” may be alright for the “sons of Canaan,” in fact it’s all they deserve; but for God’s children they will never do. Canaanites were renowned for their idolatry and immorality; in fact, one of the reasons why God gave this land to Abraham and to his seed was to drive out or destroy these wicked people who were polluting it. That is why Abraham would send his servant back to Mesopotamia for this important mission.

I would like to read several very important verses from Genesis 24. Abraham said to his servant, *“You shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac. And the servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?”* Notice the answer: *“But Abraham said to him, “Beware... (and in my Bible it’s spelled with a capital B) “... Beware that you do not take my son back there. The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there.”* Then we read in verse 10, *“Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, for all his master’s goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.”*

Now let us think of the spiritual and “typical” value of this inspired story. There is no doubt that Isaac is one of the early “types” of our LORD Jesus Christ. He was obedient unto death, but raised again by the power of God – all His Father’s riches are His by inheritance – His home is in heaven, but there must be found for Him, in a far-off country, those who will be willing to come to him (that great company, described in Scripture as the “Church,” the “Bride of Christ”). We read in the Book of Acts 15:14 *“how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.”*

To take out of them a people for His name! The sending of the servant to look after this matter is “typical” of the Holy Spirit who was sent from the Father to plead the cause of His Son in this far-off country, earth. Think of the gifts and treasures He brought as proof of both the kind and quantity of heaven’s priceless jewels. Just look at the early Church in all the glory of the Spirit’s endowment. Spiritual gifts – spiritual graces – spiritual virtues – adorned each of her members until, as Jesus said it would be, her light was like that of a city set on a hill that could not be hid. So impressive was the Spirit’s appeal, and so persuasive His ministry, that in the very first day, the Spirit having come with this special ministry, 3,000 souls answered the call, and became members of this chosen company. A little later the number became 5,000, right in the city of Jerusalem. And before that generation had passed away, most of the known world had been reached with the Gospel of Redeeming Grace.

The Holy Spirit, Servant of Deity, who is Himself God, has won countless multitudes through the

passing years. He still calls on homes and hearts; for the number is not yet made up; there is yet room and time to answer the call and follow the servant to the dwelling place of the King's Son.

Someone has likened Abrahams's camels, on which his treasures were laden, to Gospel preachers, It's not a very flattering comparison, when one thinks of the appearance of camels; and yet, a very wonderful one, if we think of the ministry of those camels – carrying gifts which, when received, will enrich lives with things only heaven can afford.

Now let us consider the personal aspect of this great drama. Arriving at the city where Nahor, Abraham's brother lived, the servant stopped at the well and made his camels kneel down. Then he prayed for guidance, asking God to prosper his journey. How concerned he is, that his master's son would have the wife of God's choosing! He decided on this simple test: if the young lady whom he should ask for a drink, would say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also,' that would be the one he would ask to go with him back to his master's son. The Bible says that before he had done speaking, behold, Rebekah, Isaac's cousin, came out to draw water. He asked her for a drink, and she quickly said, 'Drink, and I will water your camels as well.' She won a place of honour in the history of the great family of Israel through this simple act of hospitality. Few of us realize the importance of little things in life – what far-reaching effects may be wrought by a simple act of kindness, or by a thoughtless deed of carelessness. Life is mostly made up of little things. Great events happen only once or twice in a lifetime, and they do not "make" or "break" us – they only reveal the material we are made of.

Let us read now in verse 22, *"So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold."* Thus, the ears that had heard the plea for water, and the hands that had laboured faithfully in service, are now adorned with precious jewels. So it will be in that great Day, when service for Christ will be recognized and rewarded before all the wondering universe.

After the servant had found out who the young lady was, that she was of the same family as Abraham, he bowed his head and worshipped the LORD, saying, *"Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master."* Now notice these words, *"And I, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."*

And I being on the way, the LORD led me . . . Here is a very profitable lesson on guidance. So many of us want to be led of the LORD and want to know the way that we should take. We should learn from Abraham's servant that God guides those who ¹*commit their way to Him* and ²*then start out*. This servant did not stay at home praying until he knew every step of the journey that he must take. His master had told him to go to the country of his kindred. He took the path of obedience to *do what he knew*, and *God led him in things he did not know*. God gives guidance to those who are already in motion – those who are doing what they know should be done. Just as a car must be in motion before you can steer it, so God leads those who are in the way. *"And I, being on the way, the LORD led me . . ."*

After Rebekah had learned the identity of this stranger, she was so excited that she ran back home and told her folks at home of her experience. And who was at the gate of their town? None other than her brother Laban. Laban ran out to the well and said to the servant, *"Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels."* They then went to the house, looked after the beasts of burden, and sat down to the table. But the servant refused to eat until he had told them his mission.

When he had finished, both Laban and his father Bethuel, answered, *"The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. . . And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother."*

We'll just stop here a moment and consider the fact that the entire household benefits when the Holy Spirit, the Servant of God, calls. Rebekah is a "type" of the Church; and her people, a "type" of the world. Everywhere we can see the benefits that have come to our world, as a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The world has enjoyed much of the fruit of the Spirit, and every community is the better for having in their midst a "called-out Assembly" – a Church ready to go to meet the Bridegroom.

Let us read now in verse 58 *“And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, ‘Will you go with this man?’”* The family could not and would not decide for her, any more than your family can decide for you whether you will follow the leading and guiding of the Spirit of God. The servant had clearly and simply told his purpose in coming, the gifts and treasures he brought were the credentials of his office, he had told the family of the wealth and prosperity of his master; but in the final analysis it was up to Rebekah, whether she would go or not. When the question was presented, *“Will you go with this man?”* all the world waits her reply. Will she count the cost and accept, or will she reluctantly say “No, I cannot go now, perhaps some other time when you come this way I will consider it”? Will she do as so many do in this enlightened day, and turn a deaf ear to the servant’s question and go on about her private plans and pursuits? Or will she as others do, say “No, I have no intention of giving up my friends, my pleasures, my plans, to follow to a far-off land.”

“Will you go with this Man?” is the question that I would leave with you today. But the “Man,” the “Servant” who has come to your town, to your village, to your home, is none other than the blessed Holy Spirit, whom God has sent to call out a people for His name. This is the *Gospel in Genesis*. It is God’s call and God’s invitation, *“Will you go with this Man?”*

Rebekah said, *“I will go”* and they sent her away with this blessing and this prophecy, *“Our sister, may you become the mother of the mother of thousands of ten-thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them.”* Rebekah became the mother of thousands of millions of people in Israel. A nation, destined to be the leading nation of the world.

But those who are called by the Spirit of God in this Dispensation, are destined to be *heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ*.

It is written, *“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”* (Revelation 21:7).

Will you go with this Man?

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Isaac Re-Opens the Wells

~ Genesis chapter 26 ~

Shall we turn, now, to the Wonderful Word and meditate on those truths which are wrapped up in the Book of Genesis – the *Gospel in Genesis*, worked out in the experiences of men and women who lived in the very early days of history. The record of their lives has been preserved by inspiration; so that we, in the very end of the Dispensation of man, might be instructed in the ways of the LORD. We have one more lesson from the life of Isaac, before we take up the story of his two boys. Our text: is Genesis 26:17-25 *“Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.”*

All through the Bible, the “well” is associated with the blessing of God – a constant “type” of the Spirit of God. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, *“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”* (John 4:13-14). Evidently, the woman believed on Him and went away with a “well of water” springing up within her soul.

To be the owner of a well, in the time of Isaac, was to be the possessor of real wealth; and one of the most desperate and contemptible things an enemy could do was to ruin a good well. Let us look, then, at this story of the well-digger, as an inspired account with both literal and spiritual interpretations. Abraham had dug these wells long before Isaac was even born; they were the result of his industry and foresight.

I have read somewhere that “God has never called a lazy man.” The more I read the Scriptures, the more I’m persuaded that it must be true. It may be that a lazy man can be saved; but he will be of little use, either to the Church or to the world. Furthermore, in my observations, laziness is a universal, crowning sin of our age. Modern mechanics have lifted the burden of toil from the shoulders of many millions of earth’s weary workers; but there are still many things that can never be accomplished without effort and industry.

This is especially true when it comes to the things of the Spirit. No invention of man will ever take the place of personal initiative and active participation in all that is required for spiritual development. Whenever you come to a well of water, you ought to remember that it is not there by chance. Two main workers were responsible for it coming into being: *the first* one is God who, when working out the engineering problems of earth, decided to run subterranean rivers and streams at varying depths below the surface; *the second*, someone who found out what God had done, and decided to dig for the water.

So it is in the realm of spiritual things: God has seen fit to direct the streams of spiritual life, victory and power, beneath the surface of things in the material world. These streams have gone to every part of the world. Under every one’s house flows a river of living water; below the surface of every church are streams to satisfy all the desires of thirsting souls who come for reviving; in every desert place are secret springs, just waiting to be tapped and brought to the surface. God the Father has seen to it that there would always be a supply, adequate to the need, even to earth’s remotest bounds. The great pity of it is, however, that multiplied millions do not know anything about God’s supply; and other millions, who do know, will not be bothered to dig. Many have heard of the wells that father and grandfather drank from; but for them Christian experience is second-hand. They are living only on the historical facts of the Gospel, plus the traditions of their church. They have never heard the voice of Jesus say, “If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.”

Notice now in verse 18, *“And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham.”* The Philistines, here, are a type of the wise men of this world – those who don’t want to drink of the wells of salvation themselves, and they do all in their power to prevent others from drinking. They are the philosophers who reason, without any good reason, that the Bible is not to be relied upon as the very Word of God. They fill the wells of the supernatural with arguments that such things don’t ever happen in

this enlightened day. They rule out the idea of a “*personal God, interested in every individual,*” by calling Him a great “first cause” that has long since ceased to intervene, or interfere in any of man’s affairs.

The Old Testament Philistines are types of New Testament agnostics who have filled the well of a positive knowledge of God through the Spirit, with finely spun speculations about improbabilities. They are not content to say “We don’t know,” but, lest they should ever find out, they say, “Nobody knows.” What a cruel, wicked, and malicious thing it is, to go around filling wells that have brought blessing to countless thousands. What a tragedy that there are so many infidel professors in our universities, who seem to feel that their chief mission as an educator is to fill the wells of “*faith in God and love for God’s Word*” with all the rubbish of secularism, materialism, and speculation.

Not content with living a dry, parched, desert sort of a life themselves, they seem bent on reducing every one of their students to the barren wastes of intellectualism. They would take all the wonder out of living, all the incentive out of working, and all the hope out of dying. They would rob Heaven of its gold, kill all the angelic host with the sword of unbelief, dispose of all the hosts of darkness by simply shutting their eyes, push God off the throne of the universe, and crown Reason king of all.

But we can read the *Gospel in Genesis* and rejoice. Isaac went to work and re-opened Abraham’s wells, to the confusion and consternation of the Philistines. Isaac is ever a “type” of the LORD Jesus Christ – the only true Son of the Father. When He appeared on earth to minister to the needs of earth’s thirsty daughters and famishing sons, He found the wells of Salvation completely stopped. Ritual, ceremony, tradition, and superstition had been built around, and poured into the inspired Word of God which had been given of old by holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In those days religion was much like it is now, a cloak to be worn on convenient occasions, and used as a weapon to oppress the poor. The interpretation of the divine oracles was held to be the exclusive right of an unscrupulous priest-craft. Jesus called the Scribes and Pharisees “hypocrites” and “whited sepulchres” which, indeed, look beautiful from the outside, but within are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Thanks be to God, the “Heavenly Isaac” came and unstopped the wells again. He cleared out all the accumulated rubbish of the centuries, and brought to many the pure sparkling stream of life, which flows eternally from the everlasting Throne.

- He opened the well of *Inspiration*, and referred to the Scriptures as the very Word of God, claiming equal authority for His own words.
- He opened the well of *Divine Healing*, and the multitudes came to Him to be healed of their infirmities.
- He opened the well of *Prayer* as a personal act of communion with the Almighty. His disciples came to Him and said, “*LORD, teach us to pray.*”
- He opened the well of *Personal Sanctification*, and said to His disciples, “*Now you are clean through the Word that I have spoken to you.*”
- He opened the well of faith in a personal literal *Resurrection*, and taught both Pharisees and Sadducees that “*God is not a God of the dead, but of the living*”; and for every idle word that men should speak, they would give account thereof on the Day of Judgment.
- He opened the well of *Joy* to a downcast and oppressed people; for He said, “*Blessed (or happy) are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*”
- He opened a well called *Peace*, from whence all who will may delight themselves in its abundance.
- He opened the well of *Revelation*, and unveiled the future before the wondering eyes of His followers, when they came to show Him the stones in the building of the temple. He said unto them, “*Nation shall rise against nation*”; “*there shall be famines, pestilence and fearful sights.*” He said “*There shall arise false christs and false prophets, deceiving if it were possible the very elect.*” And He also said, “*For as the lightning shines from the east to the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man.*” But most of all, and best of all,
- He opened the well of *Salvation* personally experienced, and told His disciples to rejoice “*because their names were written in heaven.*”

The years are long, since Jesus opened these wells. They have often been closed and opened again, since He walked and talked with men. But Isaac is also a “type” of the Church, whose business it is to

clear out these wells and keep them pure and unadulterated uncontaminated by any of the “Philistines” rubbish. It is the Church’s business, I say, to perpetuate the earthly ministry of Jesus, and direct men everywhere to the wells of Salvation; for the water there, is called the Water of Life.

The past generation has seen some of these wells opened; wells, closed since the end of the Apostolic Age. Men and women who read about them in the sacred Scriptures, went to work and, through prayer & fasting, waiting on God, and searching their own hearts, and were enabled by His Grace, to break through to the stream of Truth – and taste God’s mighty power to meet their need. I’m thinking of:

- *MARTIN LUTHER* – how by the help of God he opened the well of *Justification by Faith alone*;
- *JOHN WESLEY* – how he cleared the well of *Personal Sanctification*;
- *A. B. SIMPSON* – how he discovered the well of *Divine Healing*. Then, in rapid succession,
- followed the opening of the wells of personal, imminent *Second Coming of Jesus Christ* to take away His Church,
- and of the Spirit’s Power – that personal experience called in Scripture the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost* – the Spirit-filled life.

These wells are all open today; they have been opened for a good many years, and many hundreds have come and been supremely, blissfully, and gloriously satisfied.

I don’t know how it is in your community, whether these wells have been opened yet or not; but I do know this, that if you want to bad enough, you can start digging right where you are – just as you are – and just as sure as God is in heaven, as sure as that the Bible is true, you will find the water is there.

It’s not as deep as you think, for it is written, “*You shall seek me, and shall find me: when you shall seek me with all your heart.*” (Jeremiah 29:13).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Jacob & Esau

~ Genesis chapter 25 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. The *Gospel in Genesis* is the theme we have been following for some time, and the truths we have found there, I trust, have been both interesting and profitable. We have spent our time for two Sundays on the story of Isaac, and this morning we want to consider with you the inspired account of Isaac's two boys, Jacob and Esau. We may think of them, first of all, as "third generation Christians," with the unmerited favour of being born into a family where, from earliest memories, they had joined in the worship of the one true and living God. The first lessons they ever learned were instructions as to *God's Law* and *God's Way*. We would naturally conclude that, in such a happy environment, they'd both be very much alike – both have a deep and sincere desire to serve the LORD who had conferred so much of heaven's blessings on their lives. Unfortunately, human nature is still human nature, no matter the circumstances of birth. It is quite evident, both from this Genesis account and from all subsequent history, that spirituality is not transmitted from one generation to the next. Often times children born in the most favourable conditions, with every opportunity for spiritual development, still turn away from the truth and choose the perverseness of their own way.

The first indication we have of the difference between Jacob and Esau is found in Genesis 25:27-34. I'll read just a part of it for you. "*Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, 'Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.' Therefore his name was called Edom ('red'). But Jacob said, 'Sell me your birthright as of this day.' And Esau said, 'Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?' Then Jacob said, 'Swear to me as of this day.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*"

Earlier, we read from Hebrews 12, how, by this one act of self-indulgence, Esau sold out all his spiritual inheritance both for time and eternity. In Hebrews 12:16 he is called "*a profane person who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.*" There is something pitiful and tragic about the biography of these two boys; but the tragedy is multiplied at least a million times, in the lives of uncounted and unknown multitudes, whose outlook on life – whose attitude toward spiritual things, is just as short-sighted and shallow as that of Esau.

Let's look at the story again; and as we do, let us ask the Spirit of God to open our eyes to the spiritual issues involved. First of all, what is wrapped up in the birth-right? What are the benefits provided and bestowed upon one so favoured with this gracious privilege? In the days of Genesis, the one who held the birth-right *held the promise of the coming "Serpent-Bruiser."* He would have a right to expect that the Emancipator – the "Earth-Blessor" – the world's "Redeemer" would come of his seed. (As far as men of that generation knew, the Messiah could appear at any time; and He could be one of Esau's sons.) Then again, the firstborn son would be the *tribal priest*; for until the law of Moses, the family head was priest to the tribe – supervisor all the religious activity. Think of it – God-appointed representative – mediator between God and man – appointed to instruct and guide his family in the way of righteousness. And finally, the holder of the birth-right was thereby *possessor of all the land* of Canaan.

It seems hardly possible that any thinking man would part with all this, and more, for a moment or two of fleshly indulgence. We may censure Jacob for taking an unfair advantage of his own brother when he was so hungry (indeed, the entire life of Jacob leaves much to be desired); but in spite of all his shortcomings, he had a real appreciation for spiritual things. He had faith in the promises of God – in the Word of God. Esau said "What profit shall this birth-right do me? I'm just ready to die." In other words, anything that did not have an immediate temporal value was of no value at all to him. His philosophy was, "If I can't eat it, I'll sell it. If it does not minister to appetite of my body, then it's no use." Again, I say, how pitiful and tragic! As though the only things that count in life are those that can be tasted or handled, or on which the eyes can feast. Esau has altogether too many disciples today, who believe in and practice his theory. Altogether too many, I say, whose only thought and desire is for the present temporal advantage, even at the expense of the eternal and spiritual.

Some years ago, in fact shortly after I had taken Christ as my Saviour, and was making some effort to follow Him, I testified to another young man about the Christian way. Apparently, he was not much impressed, and began to ask me whether I still indulged in certain pleasures and amusements – specifically, did I no longer smoke, dance, play cards, drink beer, and so on? When my answer was “No” to all those, he finally said, “Well, I’d rather be dead than to live that kind of a life.” He didn’t wait for me to tell him that as long as he lived that kind of a life he *was* dead, and knew nothing at all about the real joy of living.

Notice now, that it was not by virtue of anything that Esau did that put him in line for the birth-right. It was by an act of Divine Providence that he was the firstborn. But while he did nothing to merit this privilege, a little later in life he had to decide whether he would keep it or sell it. By an act of God, he fell heir to untold benefits and blessings which by an act of self-will he bartered for a mess of pottage.

The principles in this case are true to the life of every person who listens to the Gospel message in this Dispensation of Grace. It is not by virtue of anything you or I have done that we were born in a land where we could hear the glorious Gospel – the Gospel of the Son of God who assures us that through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our LORD Jesus Christ, we have fallen heir to all the riches and treasures of heaven’s storehouse. By the simple act of believing the Word of God, meeting the conditions required in the last will and testament of the Saviour of men, we are made priests of God; with a clear title to property in the new heavens – that heavenly Canaan beyond the skies. This is the *Gospel in Genesis*. And it is now, as it was then. Some are quick to buy up the opportunity, others are just as quick to sell out their priceless heritage for the fleeting, fickle, flighty, flimsy, foolish things of Time.

This is the main reason for this broadcast. In fact, as I see it, it is the chief purpose for all preaching, and the principal end of all Christian service – to persuade men everywhere to make their choices on the basis of the most lasting values; choosing spiritual values which will endure when all the enticing, alluring things of time have crumbled and passed away.

It is the business of all Gospel preachers to warn men everywhere about the danger and damage of allowing bodily appetites to decide the course of action. Only animals allow the body and its desires to reign supreme. Only men without faith sell out to fleshly gratification and part with those treasures for which no amount of temporal pleasure will ever compensate. You just can’t afford to lose God-given privileges and opportunities for a moment of sensual satisfaction. It will never pay, to exchange the exalted honour of being God’s chosen vessel for the doubtful distinction of being a good sport. The mess of pottage may look appealing at the moment; but before you give in, look away beyond the skies and hear the voice of Jesus – “*To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*” (Revelation 2:7).

Don’t forget that God knows you are hungry – that you just *must* have something that will satisfy. He knows, too, that the mess of pottage will never meet the need, nor answer the craving of the human heart. God also knows that, just at the point when you are weakest, there will be a Jacob ready to do business and take from you your most priceless possession. Just hold steady for a moment or so. Count the cost. Weigh the whole matter in the balance of spiritual and moral values. If you do, your decision will surely be that of the martyrs of old who said, “*Though I die for Christ, I cannot forsake Him.*”

Remember how it was with Jesus when he was tempted forty days in the wilderness. When those days were finished, says the Bible, angels came and ministered unto Him. Amen.

So it is, even today, as we are encompassed by so great a cloud of witnesses, with angelic hosts ready to fly to our protection and supply our nourishment. Hold on, I say! Hold on a little longer, and a “special messenger” will be sent with such a dish of heaven’s dainties as will cause your heart to leap for joy.

As I read this story again, I see Jacob in a new light. We all recognize him as a schemer – as a twister; his very name means “Supplanter.” But for all that, he was not very different from any of us.

However, in this story I see a very desirable quality and characteristic. Jacob was willing to part with a savoury meal that he had cooked for himself, to gain something for which he would have to wait years before ever receiving its benefits. Jacob could possibly have been almost as hungry as Esau, and he had the means of satisfying that hunger right in his hands; but he gave it up for the sake of more permanent

values. The body is made the servant of the soul – the appetite must wait awhile, when opportunity for spiritual treasures are presented.

These two boys, Esau and Jacob, represent the struggle of which Paul speaks in Galatians 5:17 *“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”* Every one of us is called on to choose and decide what we will do with our inheritance; whether to sell out for present and immediate satisfaction, or buy up every spiritual advantage no matter what it costs of this world’s pleasure and joys.

And remember *“...Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears”* (Hebrews 12:16-17).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Jacob

~ Genesis chapter 28 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and gather from its pages a message of life and peace – the *Gospel in Genesis*. Last Sunday's study in contrast, the story of Jacob and Esau, will of necessity have to be followed by the inspired record of the life of Jacob. Someone said to *D. L. MOODY*, "I don't understand why that God hated Esau." To which *MOODY* replied, "It's just as great a mystery to me why He loved Jacob." I suppose it will always remain a mystery, why some find the straight and narrow way of life, while others, multitudes of them, take the broad way that leads to destruction. However, there are some things very, very clear regarding God's choice, and if these are carefully observed and followed, the obscure and difficult things will not trouble us in the least.

In the study of the lives of these Old Testament men, we often need to be reminded that God deals with them on the basis of Old Testament light, and the Old Testament Covenant. It is never safe, nor proper, to judge Old Testament conduct in the light of New Testament truth. And it is equally damaging to judge New Testament conduct in the light of Old Testament teaching. Jacob must be considered in the light of the Dispensation in which he lived, and the light he had; not by what we would do in our day and age. Genesis 27 tells the story of Rebekah and her son Jacob conspiring to trick poor old Isaac into blessing the younger instead of the older. We'll pass over that incident, and try to return to it later on.

This morning, we want to consider the highlights of chapter 28 – Jacob's escape from the anger of Esau, and his experience in the wilderness. The first fact, so evident in this account, is that there are two ways of getting out of a wrong situation. The first and best way is to acknowledge the wrong, ask for pardon and make restitution. The second is to do as Jacob did – run away; try to escape the inevitable penalty. Verse 10 says, "*and Jacob went out from Beer-Sheba, (that is, the well of the Covenant – the well of the Promise), and went toward Haran.*" So many men have gone out and away from the well of God's Promises – away from the place of God's Covenant.

Jacob will have troubles and trials, sorrows and disappointments; but the lesson that stands out so clearly is that though he certainly has stepped out of the centre of God's will – has certainly blundered and bungled things very badly, yet he is still the object of divine care and providence. He will know the sorrows and loneliness of a strange land, and the hardship and danger of making his own way in life when, instead, he could have had all the joys and riches of Father's house. What he has sown he must reap. But God has not forsaken him.

We may think of Jacob as the Prodigal of the Old Testament. Though he does not squander his substance in riotous living, he does go into a far country and spends many hard years away from Father's house. His first night away from home was one of the most notable of all his varied experiences.

"So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was setup on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: 'I AM the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" (Genesis 28:11-14).

Here is the Abrahamic Covenant renewed to Jacob; not because of his outstanding character, but because he had earlier shown that he believed God. *For "without faith it is impossible to please Him"* (Hebrews 11:6). His character will be developed later, as he walks with God; but character without God will never merit God's blessing. Jacob has inherited the promises God gave to Abraham; but many years of hardship will be his lot, until he is ready to come back to the land of his fathers.

Now let us go back to his dream, and consider, first, its literal value to Jacob, and then its spiritual value to us all. First of all, Jacob must have had a hard day, because the place where he now rests is about 48 miles from Beer-Sheba – no small journey for someone on foot and, no doubt, carrying some

provisions. He is tired, worried, and probably a little fearful as to the future.

Jacob knew a great deal about God from his father Isaac but there is little to show that he really knew God in a personal sense. God will have to take the initiative and reveal Himself to Jacob. Since he holds the promise contained in the birth-right, he must have opportunity to know the One who first gave the promise.

As he lies down to rest, Jacob has no idea that God is so near; nor does he know that God has been watching over him and is acquainted with all his ways. He does not realize how close heaven is to earth, nor how vitally interested all the heavenly host are. As his eyes close on the earthly scene, and he drifts away to sleep, God opens his eyes to heavenly things, and speaks right from heaven, giving this promise, *“Behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you, until I have done what I have spoken to you. Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I did not know it. ... This is none other than the House of God, and this the gate of heaven”* (Gen. 28:15-17). Jacob then made a promise to the God of heaven that, if indeed God would be with him and keep him so that he would come back again to Father’s house, then he would serve Him indeed, and would give one-tenth of all he possessed to the LORD. Jacob has had an experience with God, and he will never be the same again. He will still have to go on with his plans, for fear of Esau; but he now has a Partner who has promised to share life’s experiences with him and bring him safely through.

Those were far off and ancient days, when God came down and met with men and dealt with them in love and mercy; though they had very little light as to His Person and Nature.

Now, let us find the Gospel in this sacred story, so filled with spiritual meaning. First of all, Jacob is a “type” of all the family of Adam trying to escape the consequences of their sin – making a wilderness journey in hope that some way or other things will turn out alright. They can’t go back, and the future is not very hopeful. But though the world has forgotten God, God has not forgotten the world. He knows our frame – He remembers that we are dust (Psalm 103). And just at the point when night seems darkest and the way most uncertain, God comes on the scene with a new revelation of Himself.

This “ladder scene” of Jacob’s is a preview of a ladder that was later to be set up on earth to reach to heaven. You will remember that Jesus said to Nathaniel after that he found him under the fig tree, *“Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man”* (John 1:51). Later on, Jesus said, *“I am the Way, no man comes to the Father but by me.”* (John 14:6). Jacob’s dream was real; but it would be centuries before it would be fully realized. There has always been communication between heaven and earth – angelic hosts have always taken an active interest in the affairs of men – the world has often been visited by these messengers of light, who bring God’s message to weary troubled care-worn man. But from the time Adam went out from the Garden of Eden, until the Coming of Christ, the way into the presence of God had not yet been made manifest. The ladder had not yet been set up whereby *“whosoever will may come”* and be saved. This ladder of Jacob’s dream is one more of the many “types” of Christ which abound in the Book of Genesis.

Notice: it is set up on earth, but its top reaches to heaven. Christ is the only man who ever walked this earthly sod whose character and nature was absolutely untouched by sin. Though He lived on earth He carried with Him the atmosphere of heaven. Heaven and earth meet together only in the Man Christ Jesus. He is the embodiment of all that heaven requires, and all that heaven gives. He is God’s only begotten Son, and the only sinless Son of Adam.

The two standards of the ladder represent His perfect humanity, and eternal Deity. The one is just as necessary as the other – just as complete as the other. There never could have been a way for man to come into the presence of God, except if God became man. Jesus said to Nathaniel, *“Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man.”* In other words, from henceforth divine revelation will come through the Son of man. *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things”* (Hebrews 1).

Someone may say, but what about the steps on this ladder, what are they? They may well be the promises of God, for all the promises of God are “Yea” and “Amen” in and through Christ Jesus. He is

the minister for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. Christ was, and is, the Son of promise, and the One in whom all the promises of God are extended to "*whosoever will.*"

Then again, the only way anyone of us can ascend to the heavenlies, is by the promises of God. We climb the heights not by human effort, not by moral achievements, not by good behaviour, but by the promises of God.

Good behaviour is the result of climbing the ladder, but it's not the ladder. Righteousness comes through the promises of God, but righteousness is not the ladder.

We haven't time to enumerate all the thousands of promises that God has given to invite men to the skies, but I would say, the first one is a *promise of a new heart* to the penitent sinner. And the last one is the *promise of a glorified body* to the translated saint. In between these two are thousands of others to cover every possible circumstance and emergency – every disposition – every age and race. None are more important than the first one, and none could be more glorious than the last. A new heart for the sinner, and a new body for the saint.

The ladder is still standing, let us ascend.

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – The Road Back

~ Genesis chapter 32 ~

Let us turn now to the Wonderful Word and continue our meditation on the *Gospel in Genesis*. Last Sunday we considered the story of Jacob's dream at Bethel, where he saw the ladder set up on earth whose top reached to heaven.

Our lesson this morning begins just 20 years after, and once again Jacob is in flight. This time he's fleeing from his Uncle Laban. He had worked for his Uncle for twenty years, during which time he had had to struggle with the elements of nature and the deceitfulness of Laban. However, God had indeed been with him, just as He had promised, and now the time had come when he must return to the land of his inheritance; face Esau, his wronged brother, and try to come to some peaceable understanding. The prospect is none too hopeful, and Jacob is plainly worried about the outcome.

Let us read Genesis 32:1 *"So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, 'This is God's camp.' And he called the name of that place Mahanaim."* The way back is a difficult, and often a dangerous one; but God has sent a special escort to see him safely through.

Before we go any farther, let us stop here for a few moments and consider the road back. We cannot say that it was God's will that Jacob should ever have to spend so long a time in a strange land; it was all the result of his own doing. But we can be very sure that it *is* God's will for him to return.

It's always God's will for those who stray to come back again. Some wait 20 years, some longer than that. Some never do come back, though their heart must often long for the fellowship they once enjoyed in Father's house. No one can ever be really happy, living outside the will of God, and most certainly anyone who has known the joys of living in the land of Canaan – that is, the spiritual Canaan – can ever be fully satisfied in a foreign land.

There is a spiritual land which we will call "the will of God" – where the blessings of God are rich and free – where the *"peace of God that passes all understanding"* keeps the heart and mind by Christ Jesus. It is the "Land of Promise," the rightful inheritance of all who have entered the family of God by the new birth. What a pity it is that so few continue to live there all their days! But what a blessed thing it is that they can come back, no matter how far they have strayed, and no matter how difficult the way (and I think it is always a difficult one.)

So great is the interest and concern of the heavenly host, that a special battalion of angels is dispatched from the glory world to give the victory in every test. As we mentioned last Sunday, the story of Jacob is the story of the entire human race. While everyone of us has gone astray, and everyone has turned to his own way, yet not everyone has turned back to the road from whence we came. But the *Gospel in Genesis* shows the way – it shows the problems to be met, and the way to meet them. You can be sure of one thing: help from heaven will be certain. And, if heaven helps, then who can successfully hinder?

Well, let's go back to Jacob and see how he is getting along. Reading now in chapter 32 verse 3: *"Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom... Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.' So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed."* The problem he had run away from twenty years before has now multiplied four hundred times. He had wronged Esau, and now Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men!

There is little doubt, as I read the story, but that Esau intends mischief. Here is a classic example of the New Testament verse: *"Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."* It is the way of a seed to multiply itself – *"some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."* It never pays to put off making things right. Sooner or later we must meet the wrongs we have done and face the consequences.

There is no wrong by anyone committed but will recoil;
It's sure return, with double ill repeated, no skill can foil.
As the mists that ascend to heaven descend again in rain,
So on the head of him who e're hath evil given, it falls again.

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, and as we read in verse 9, Jacob prayed a very simple and humble prayer. It's wonderful what fear will do at times – wonderful, the good that comes when wholesome, justifiable fear grips the heart. Prayer is Jacob's only weapon now. And, thanks be to God, it is all he needs.

Blessed be the fear, the adversity, the trouble, that drives men to pray. There is always hope for the worst of men, when it can be said of them, "*Behold, he is praying.*" After prayer comes action. Yes, he trusts God to do His part, but now he, also, must do his part.

Quickly, Jacob prepares a present – 550 animals in all. This is going to cost Jacob something, but he is willing to pay the price. The birth-right only cost him a mess of pottage, at first; but eventually it cost him twenty years' hard labour, plus 550 head of livestock. He could have had it all for free, if he had been willing to wait for God's time, and receive it in God's way. It may cost something to wait on God, but it costs a lot more to take things into our own hands. However, cost what it may, Jacob did not hesitate to pay in full. The rest of the story of Jacob meeting Esau reads like a storybook; but none-the-less, it is true to life – true to Jacob's experience, and in some respects true to the life of everyone who "takes the road back."

After the present was sent on ahead by the hands of faithful servants, Jacob took his family over the Brook Jabbok. He had done all he could, to meet the coming crisis; night had fallen, but still he couldn't sleep. So he went back alone, over the brook – evidently to spend the night waiting on God. Then follows one of the most dramatic and stirring incidents ever recorded of man. The Scripture says: ". . . *and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day*" (vs. 24). The whole experience is shrouded in mystery; but learning from the reference to it by later writers, we know it had profound significance both to Jacob and to his posterity. Hosea 12:4 says: "*Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from Him.*"

Twenty years before, Jacob had seen a vision – God had spoken to him; but now God sent a personal representative to deal with Jacob personally. ". . . *and a Man wrestled with him . . .*" This is wonderful to me. That the One who has power, to wither at a glance the mightiest man who ever lived, should condescend to strive with a man as weak as Jacob! Yes, as weak as you, or I – and that not to defeat us, but only to conquer within us that which always did and always will defeat us; namely, our self-will . . .

This is holy ground – we must tread softly. God is here personally, striving with one of His self-willed children. Jacob had defeated Esau 20 years earlier, and now *he* must be overcome, before he meets the brother he wronged. This is the *Gospel in Genesis*. It's the Good News! If we take "the road back," God will prepare us for every crisis we meet along the way. Many battles will have to be fought and won; but the greatest battle of all is our struggle with God. Once a complete and full surrender to Him is effected, there will be no doubt as to the outcome of later conflicts. As the hymn writer says:

Fear Him, ye saints, and ye will then have nothing else to fear;
You make His service your delight – He'll make your wants His care.

It was "Self-will" that got Jacob into all his trouble; and "Self" will continue to be a problem, unless something is done about it. That's how it is with every one of us: our greatest enemy is not our brother — not our fellow man – not the difficult, trying circumstances that surround us; the greatest enemy, I say, is not around us, nor before us – the enemy is within us.

Jesus said, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily . . .*" (Luke 9:23). Later on, in the Book, we learn that this can only be accomplished by the power of the indwelling Spirit. In the last analysis, only God can conquer Self. And even then, you must be willing to let Him do it. It's too bad that so many of us do as Jacob did – we wait until we get into "wits end corner" before we give God a chance. But it's wonderful to me that God is willing to wait until we are ready.

"*When He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.' But he said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!'"* (Genesis 32:25, 26).

“I will not let You go unless You bless me!” This is prayer that delights the heart of God. This is importunate prayer – prayer that takes hold and will not let go until the victory is won; “. . . *this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith*” (1 John 5:4). It is the nature of faith to cling to the hand of the Almighty until the need is abundantly supplied. *“I will not let You go,”* said Jacob, “unless You bless me.” Only with the blessing of God on his life, is he ready to meet his brother Esau.

There is something about the blessing of the LORD that makes us rich and adds no sorrow with it (Proverbs 10:22). It’s the blessing of the LORD that enables one to take the path of obedience unafraid. There is something wonderful about the blessing of the LORD, something that strengthens the soul, that fits us for any eventuality. As far as I am concerned, I wouldn’t want to face the problems of a single day without the blessing of the LORD. And there is no experience in life when we need His blessing more, than when we are to meet an offended brother.

Notice the blessing which the angel gives to Jacob. *“And He said unto him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob.”* This is a confession as well as an answer, for the name “Jacob” means “supplanter – imposter – twister.” (In Scripture, names always have to do with character.) *“And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel: for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’”* Think of it! Changing from a Twister to a Prince – from an Imposter to a Child of the King. This is the *Gospel in Genesis!*

God has been doing miracles like this all down through history. He is doing them today. The angel left Jacob as the sun began to rise. Jacob was lame now, and in no physical condition to stand against his brother; but whereas he was physically weak, he now stood spiritually strong. Spiritual strength is always better than physical strength. *“Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men . . . And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.”*

What a meeting! What a difference to what it might have been. What a change had been wrought in Esau’s mind as he hurried along to meet his brother Jacob. Somehow God had brought about a blessed reconciliation. First, He changed Jacob, and conquered his will; then Jacob was ready to meet any situation.

Somehow, I believe that God is striving with someone who is listening to this broadcast today. There are problems that you will have to meet, a little further down the road, and you’re not ready to face them. Give in to Christ this morning! Then you will find yourself to be *“more than conqueror through Him who loved us”* (Romans 8:37).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Joseph’s Dream

~ Genesis chapter 34 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation on the *Gospel in Genesis*. The life of Jacob is filled with many interesting and instructional experiences; I believe they are “*written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*” (1 Corinthians 10:11)

Our last lesson had to do with Jacob, and his “road back” – back to the land of promise, the land of his birth-right – back to Bethel where he had first heard from heaven, and where he had made his vow. It is sad to note that he did not go all the way back to Bethel; but camped for a while at Shechem, where his daughter Dinah and his sons Simeon and Levi got badly entangled with the men of that place. This chapter of Genesis has a great many lessons for us all, but it should serve as a special warning to all who are tempted to stop for a while on the road back. However, Jacob finally did return to Bethel, and we will take up the story again in chapter 37.

Now, we have the story of Joseph – the second youngest of Jacob’s children. Joseph is 17 years old when we are introduced to him. Of all the Old Testament characters, none is such a complete picture of Christ and the Gospel as this young man. We will not have time to cover each event of Joseph’s life in detail; but rather, we will summarize it in the light of the Gospel.

Being a typical young teenager, Joseph had problems – and he handled them as any teenager would have. Youth *is* the time to dream; and like every young person, Joseph had a dream – his own particular dream. It was a God-given dream, and the interpretation of it belonged to him.

I want to tell you, my young listener, this morning, there is nothing wrong with dreaming, providing your dreams are God-given. God has His own way of letting young people know what He wants them to do, and what He wants them to be. His directions don’t always come in a night-dream; but again, I say, God has His own way of making His will known to young people – to those who want to know God’s will for their lives. Age 17 is not too soon to experience the strange, yet wonderful moving of the Spirit of God in heart and mind. It’s not too young to know the joy of communion with the Almighty. More young people are won to Christ, or lost to Him, during their early teenage years than at any other period.

This young fellow, Joseph, had a dream; and saw himself, in the dream as a 30-year-old, in a place of authority, with other members of his own family bowing down before him. In this dream, he saw something of God’s plan for his life. Of all the ambitions and desires which fire the heart and mind of a young teenager, nothing could be more interesting and encouraging, than for him to see what God has in mind for his life. It’s not likely that this discovery will come to everyone just like it did to Joseph; but you can be very sure of this: God *does* want you to know something of His will for your life. And once you know God’s will, nothing else matters – nothing else is of any consequence.

Some young person might say, well, I wouldn’t mind God having His way and will in my life, if it were to bring me to prominence and influence, as in Joseph’s case. Listen, while I tell you that it’s the will of God for you to hold a place of prominence, even greater than Joseph’s. Joseph was made ruler over the land of Egypt, and shared Pharaoh’s throne; but God’s plan is for you to share the throne with the LORD Jesus Christ. His plans are not for you to rule a small nation of Egyptians for a few short years, as Joseph did; but that you share in the administration of His Everlasting Kingdom. It is written “*Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever*” (Daniel 12:3).

Well, as I said, youth is the time for dreaming – it’s the time for a look into the future. However, you don’t need a dream to tell you that the type of adult you become depends largely on choices you make now, as a teen. You are making yourself now, by your attitudes – toward life – toward others – toward God – toward His Word – toward His Church. The habits you form in these happy younger years will finally harden into a fixed course of life; and, to a large extent, determine your eternal destiny.

Notice, now, that this young fellow, Joseph, is the particular object of his father’s affection, *and*, the particular object of his brothers’ hatred – they despised and envied him because of his dreams.

These brothers of his were much like the worldly-minded, cynical earth-bound men of this world.

They are men who have missed God's best for their lives, and seem bent on turning younger men into the same path as they have taken – a path leading to covetousness, envy, and hatred. Sour-minded fellows like this are found in every community. Their chief delight seems to be in dragging others, especially young people, down to their low level of ideals. God have mercy on these older men who interfere with God's plan in the life of young teenagers; who try to get them to indulge in all the filthy habits that have ruined their own lives.

Joseph's older brothers allowed their unreasoning hatred so to poison their minds, that one day, when he went down to see how they were getting along with the cattle, they caught him, soaked his coat in the blood of an innocent kid of the goats, and sent word to their father that this blood-soaked coat was all they found of their younger brother. Then they sold Joseph as a slave to Midianite merchants. "Now we'll see what will become of his dreams," said they.

This could well have been the end of Joseph and his dreams, except for one thing – and this the most important of all. The LORD of heaven and earth was in those dreams of Joseph. The brothers were trying to interfere with God's plan. But, only Joseph could have interfered with God's plan for his life. And the only one who can spoil God's plan for your life is you yourself; because God is sovereign in all things.

Listen while I tell you again: If you really want God's will done in your life, no man or devil can ever prevent it from coming to pass. In fact, as we shall see in the life of Joseph, the very things that these brothers did to keep Joseph's dream from being fulfilled, only served as the means whereby it would the more certainly come to pass.

Someone has well said: "*If you are facing in the right direction, then it doesn't matter how hard they kick you, it will just speed you on your way.*" The poet puts it this way:

O set your sail to the heavenly gale;
and then, no matter what winds prevail,
No reef can wreck you, no calm delay;
no mist shall hinder, no storm shall stay,
Though far you wander and long you roam
through salt sea-sprays and o'er white sea-foam,
No wind can blow, but shall speed you home.

Let us read further about Joseph "*Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand.*" (Genesis 39:1-3).

This is the *Gospel in Genesis*. It's the inspired story of how *God Is Able*, sufficient for a teenager, and teenage problems – of how He makes adversity, become prosperity – of how He turns disappointment into "His appointment."

"*The LORD was with Joseph!*" This indicates that Joseph was with the LORD. He had a happy consciousness of God's presence – that Divine presence which lightens every sorrow, and tints every cloud with the rainbow of His promise. When the LORD is with a young fellow of 17, there are great hopes for him when he gets to be 30.

The test of adversity having been successfully met, how will Joseph stand the test of prosperity? He is in charge of all the goods of Potiphar, his wealthy master; and exposed to all the wiles and allurements of his master's wife. The morals of Egypt were not much better than they are in our land today. Temptation stalks the streets and homes of country and city to encompass the ruin of teenagers of either sex. As far as I can see from past history and present experience, there is only one real protection against these allurements – only one barricade for the soul – only one refuge from the power of this seductive snare. Briefly stated, it is this: "*The LORD was with Joseph.*" There is nothing like the presence of Jesus to keep young people in these days, when moral standards fall ever lower with each passing year. The presence of the spotless Lamb of God is the soul's best antidote for the poisonous, iniquitous, suggestive, and defiling temptations which abound everywhere. Joseph was put into prison because of his stand for righteousness; because he had convictions of what was right and wrong, and his convictions were not for sale.

Joseph, falsely charged and imprisoned (how awful, were the charge true!). For more than two years the prison was his only home, and other prisoners his only friends. But listen again, while I read *“But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.”* (Genesis 39:21). The very same LORD, who had given Joseph the dream, is staying by him in prison; and will stay until such a time as will best suit His purpose to fulfil the dream. Once the LORD gives a promise He will never leave you, and will never cease working for you until it comes to pass.

Joseph has a clear conscience, plus the presence of the LORD. Who would exchange these for any pleasure sin could afford? Prison with Christ is better than a palace without Him. Not only does Joseph have a clear conscience, plus the presence of the LORD; but also, he still has his dream – ideals – and his hopes.

Time has gone for us again, but before we leave the air let me remind our teenage listeners that God wants to drop into your heart, some thoughts about His plan for your life – something of His desires for you, a little farther down the road.

Don’t be afraid to do a little dreaming, but let your dreams be visions of life at 30 with God as your Guide, with His Word as the lamp for your feet and light for your path. And then, having settled it, that your life belongs to Him who gave His life for you, trust Him to see you through.

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – Joseph

~ Genesis chapter 41 ~

Let us turn now to the Wonderful Word, and read again the *Gospel* story in the *Book of Genesis*. Last Sunday we were introduced to Joseph, one of Jacob's younger sons. As a young fellow of 17, he had problems that in some respects are like the problems of all teenagers; and like all teenagers whose faith is anchored in the Rock of Ages, he was kept clean and pure in the midst of trials and temptation. And, as we shall see this morning, he was eventually delivered and became more than conqueror through Him that loved him. (Rom. 8:37). The New Testament promise that, "*all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28), had not yet been written; but it was just as true in Joseph's day as in the days of the Apostle Paul. In fact, it would seem that many New Testament promises were given because of Old Testament experience; and Old Testament experiences are written to illustrate New Testament promises.

The life of Joseph is one of the best examples in all Scripture of the doctrine of *the sovereignty of God* – a doctrine which, to my mind, is one of the sweetest and most comforting of all the great truths in the Bible. To have faith in a God who is absolute Master of every circumstance, who because of His infinite wisdom and foreknowledge is able so to plan, that every event in the world, every deed of man, yes even every work of Satan, will serve only to further His desires and fulfil His purposes – to have faith in such a God, I say, is most restful and most encouraging.

The story of Joseph teaches us that success is not the result of favourable circumstances. Rather, it is the result of a proper attitude toward circumstances; and especially a proper attitude toward the God of all circumstances. Men of character are not made by the soft and easy process of following the line of least resistance. They are shaped and formed by endurance in the pressures of difficult circumstances, under the mighty hand of God.

Well, let us look again at this young man, Joseph. Our text for today is in Genesis 41, and since it's too long to read, we'll just refer to the highlights. Two years or more have gone by, since Joseph was falsely accused and confined to this Egyptian prison. No doubt, he was the happiest one in that disagreeable place, because the LORD was with him. Joseph was put in charge of two royal prisoners – both very high-ranking officers in Pharaoh's court; the one being chief butler, and the other, chief baker. Each of these men dreamed a very strange dream, which Joseph was able to interpret for them – and things happened just as Joseph foretold. Then, after two full years, Pharaoh the king of Egypt, also had a very strange dream. No one in all his realm could explain it for him. Suddenly his chief butler remembered Joseph in the prison, and recommended him to the king. So, Joseph was called. Scripture says that "*he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.*" Joseph quickly explained the dream. God was trying to show Pharaoh that there were to be seven years of great plenty, and then seven years of famine through all the land of Egypt. Moreover, suggested Joseph, plans should be made to conserve as much food as possible during the seven plenteous years, so that there might be a store to draw from when the famine came.

This is a truly remarkable insight into the nature and character of this young man, Joseph. It would have been natural for him to be resentful and revengeful against the government that had so unjustly imprisoned him for more than two years. He could have told Pharaoh that the coming seven years of famine were probably the judgement of God on this nation because of their wickedness. Instead of that, Joseph appears to be sincerely concerned about the welfare of this pagan land; and he testifies to the king that God is also concerned about them, and wants to help them prepare for the coming hardship.

Before we go any further in this character study, let us recognize the *Gospel in Genesis* here. Joseph is one of the most complete "types" of Christ in all the Old Testament. Dearly loved by his father, but rejected by his brothers, he is cast into a pit (which speaks of the grave). Drawn up from there (a picture of the Resurrection), he goes to the pagan Gentiles and is the means of their preservation.

Remember that the Gentiles had as much to do with the sufferings of Christ as did the Jews. He was scourged by Gentile soldiers, tried by a Gentile judge, and though innocent, was condemned to be crucified. He was nailed to the cross by Gentile soldiers, was pierced by a Gentile's spear, and a guard of

Gentiles kept His tomb. After His resurrection, however, He told His Jewish disciples that they must testify of Him to *every* creature. “*You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8). (*It is interesting, too, to notice that the early disciples all testified to the coming of a period of great tribulation, which we believe will last about seven years.*)

This is the Gospel message in the experience of Joseph. Though he had suffered so much at the hands of unreasoning, and unreasonable men, yet there is nothing vindictive nor revengeful about his attitude. Still he would say, as did Jesus, “*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*” And then, this wonderful truth is still deeper – that man’s worst act in putting to death the Son of God has ensured a Redeemer for the entire race, who will preserve all those who follow His plan.

Just by the way, God’s plan is for us to take advantage of these “plenteous years” (and they are many more than seven) – years of Grace – years of mercy – years when the Spirit of God is so graciously moving on the hearts of men. We are living now in those plenteous years. An abundance of spiritual sustenance can be found in this land of ours – within reach of most people. The means of grace abound everywhere. The last few years, in particular, have been a very fruitful time, with spiritual awakenings occurring in many parts of our land. We ought to buy up these golden opportunities. We ought to gather to ourselves every blessing, and every experience with God – everything that is possible, while still we may. For we can be very sure of this, conditions will not always be as favourable for spiritual supplies, as they are in these favoured days.

Just as Joseph faithfully told of the coming famine, so Gospel preachers, up and down our land, are raising their voices, warning this pagan land of the coming days of sorrow: “. . . *Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation*” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Before we leave this part of the sacred story, let us think of the personal application of the lesson. You see, if Joseph had lost out with God during these years of trial, he would have missed the opportunity of a lifetime. If he had not been in constant communion with God, and kept his personal experience with God right up to date; if he had allowed himself to get sour because the butler and baker so quickly forgot him after they got out of prison; then he would not have been able to interpret the dreams for Pharaoh’s servants. Some people do (allow themselves to “get sour”), you know; if they are not immediately repaid for a kindness shown. Or if, as time goes on, and there seems to be no improving of their lot. They give up in despair and say, “What’s the use? Some people get all the breaks, while here I am shut up in the prison house of circumstance from which there seems to be no escape.”

There may be someone listening to this program who is almost to the point of giving up, and is concluding that “God has forgotten His promise – the dreams He gave me in youth must have been only dreams, with no hope of ever being fulfilled.” Just listen while I tell you again – *Hold steady – Keep your experience with God up-to-date – Keep in touch with Heaven, and Heaven will keep in touch with you. God still has a plan for your life, and no one can interfere with it, except you.*

All over this land of ours are those who have missed God’s best for their lives, because they didn’t keep in touch with God. They were not ready to move out of the prison of their disagreeable circumstance and serve their oppressors in a gracious, kindly way. They’re not ready to take advantage of the circumstance, when God arranges the setting. Nothing is more certain than this: God has a plan and a place for us, but we’ll never find it if we don’t keep in constant communication with the Throne in the skies.

Well, as you all know, Joseph was chosen to administer the food conservation plan which he himself had suggested. “From a prison to a throne” is the last chapter in his life story. His dream came true. Those very brothers, who sold him to the Ishmaelites to make sure his dream would never be realized, are now bowing down before him, never thinking that they are doing the very thing that they tried to prevent in so brutal a way. The scene closes with all Joseph’s family safely sheltered and provided for, with the best of all the land of Egypt.

This is a wonderful picture of the Day that is to be, when Israel in their distress and sufferings will “*look on Him whom they pierced,*” and, as the prophet Zachariah says, “*they will mourn for Him as one mourns for a firstborn.*” (Zechariah 12:10).

The story of Joseph’s exaltation is a preview of that glorious Day, which we believe is not far off,

when our LORD Jesus Christ shall come forth to preserve Israel in that *“hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”*

- Revelation 3:9-11 *“Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown”*
- Luke 21:35 *“For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth”*
- Daniel 12:1 *“At that time Michael shall stand up – the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.”*

But just as we leave the air, we want you to think of the *personal aspect* of the *Gospel in Genesis*. What about *your* future? Have you ever thought of what and where you will be, thirty years from now? or ten years? or even one year? God has a plan and a place for you. It may not be a place of political or social importance; but it will be a place of power. For it is written *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”* (John 1:12).

Jesus said to His disciples, that since they had followed Him in His humiliation, they would one day share in His glory. *“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”* (Revelation 2:10).

The inspired Apostle Paul said, just before he was executed and left this world, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”* (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS – First and Last Words

~ Genesis chapters 1:1 and 50:26 ~

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. For some time now we have been considering the *Gospel in Genesis*. All the great doctrines of Scripture have their roots deep in the book of Genesis. It is the seed-plot of the Bible, the book of origins. The very first verse is at once the most majestic and the most challenging introduction ever conceived . . . *“In the beginning God . . .”*; and the very last words in the book, *“. . . in a coffin in Egypt,”* are filled with both tragedy and hope.

Let us join the first and last verses together, and consider their spiritual significance just for a moment: *“In the beginning God . . . in a coffin in Egypt.”*

Here is the great tragedy – death entered God’s perfect creation. For over 1,600 years of human history, after creation, death had carried off multiplied millions of Adam’s race – the wicked as well as the righteous, the young and the old, men of renown and men of lowly station. Death reigned supreme over them all, with the exception of Enoch, the seventh from Adam.

Joseph is the last person in the book of Genesis to surrender to the claims of death. Though he had risen to a place of great power, in what was then the greatest empire in the world, he had no authority over Death – the king of terrors.

However, the picture is not as gloomy and foreboding as it may seem on the surface. *“In a coffin in Egypt”* is a statement filled with the assurance of faith. Death may have conquered for the time being, but Joseph went to sleep with a peaceful heart, because he believed in a coming Resurrection Day. He knew that God would visit the children of Abraham and restore them to the land of promise.

“Don’t bury me in Egypt,” he ordered, *“but carry my bones up with you to the country where I was born.”* The Scripture says that they embalmed him, and he was put *“in a coffin in Egypt.”* His body was preserved, just as ancient Egyptian kings were embalmed, and so, in type, he became an early picture of the LORD Jesus Christ – whose body saw no corruption, who rose on the third day, becoming the first-fruits of them that slept.

Joseph, as a child of God, is not going to stay in Egypt (which is always a “type” of this world). *“God will surely visit you,”* he said, *“and you shall carry up my bones from here.”*

And so, the very last message of the Gospel in the Book of Genesis is this: though we die in “Egypt,” we shall not always stay here; for God will surely visit us and take us out of this world. This promise is to all those who have gone to sleep with this precious assurance in their heart: *“I am a child of God, and there is a country, called a heavenly country, where God is not ashamed to be called our God, for He has prepared a city for us.”*

Believer, your friends and relatives may put your body in a coffin; but if you are one of Abraham’s family, through faith in Abraham’s greater Son, our LORD Jesus Christ, then you can give your loved ones every assurance before you go that you won’t stay in the grave:

“For the LORD Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Amen. God bless you, everyone.

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Introduction

2 Corinthians 6:17 – *“Come out from among them, and be separate, says the LORD”*

Let us move right on, now, into the Book of Exodus – the Book of the “going out” of the children of Israel. *This is the Old Testament book of Redemption*, and as such, tells the story, in “type,” of God’s message and method of deliverance.

The fundamental idea running through this great drama of the past is that God’s people must be free – at any cost. That *“no man can serve two masters”* (Matthew 6:24), is never more clearly shown than in this Book of Exodus. Furthermore, it clearly teaches this great Scriptural fact that, in order for God’s people to be free, they must *COME OUT!* They cannot be free in enemy territory; they must move out, and move over into God’s country – spiritually speaking. This has nothing to do with geography, it’s a spiritual location called *“outside the gate, outside the camp”* in Hebrews 13:12-13. Exodus is the Old Testament demonstration of that great verse in 2 Corinthians: *“Wherefore, come out from among them, and be separate, says the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”* (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

The first four chapters in Exodus tell how God prepared a deliverer for His people. If they are to be set free, there must be someone to lead them. First of all, someone must convince them that they *can* be free; and then teach them the method whereby this shall be accomplished.

Here again, is a principle of God’s dealing with the human race, followed all through the Book. God uses men to lead men. He will use human agents in this great work of Redemption. Perhaps angels could do the work, and would be glad to; but this business is committed to men. *“Labourers together with God”* is an inspired remark of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 3:9), and the Book of Exodus tells the story of one of God’s great workmen – Moses. No doubt, the biography of Moses, the story of his accomplishments, is one of the most thrilling in all literature. God Himself testified that Moses was the one man among all the prophets to whom He would speak face to face, and not in visions or dreams. *MRS. ALEXANDER* was not far wrong when she wrote of him in her poem, *The Burial of Moses*:

This was the bravest warrior that ever buckled sword;
This the most gifted poet that ever breathed a word;
And never earth’s philosopher traced with his golden pen
On the deathless page truths half so sage as he wrote down for men.

The birth of Moses is in itself a remarkable story, and we may refer to some of the details next Sunday, it being Mothers’ Day. That was a very dark and trying time for Israel. A good many years had gone by, since Joseph had been put in his coffin in Egypt. The good work he had done in preserving Egypt from starvation was all forgotten; and a new king had risen to power, *“who did not know Joseph.”* The children of Israel had multiplied, and were now regarded as a serious problem, in case of war.

Here in Exodus we find the first record of racial discrimination, and oppression of the minority. We may think that anti-Semitism is rather a modern plague, but here is the account of its beginning. And it was then, as it is now, prompted by jealousy and fear. This account in Exodus serves as a warning to all succeeding generations that they should leave the children of Israel alone; for the promise that God made to Abraham still holds good, *“Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!”* (Genesis 27:29; Numbers 24:9). Men may forget God’s Word, or they may not believe it, but God remembers it. And He will bring it to pass.

As we begin reading in Exodus, we see that the people of Israel are beginning to feel the oppression of their Egyptian neighbours. While God did not ordain that such should be the case, He will certainly use it to the very best advantage. Israel must on no account be allowed to settle down in this pagan land. They don’t belong in Egypt; for their’s is the Land of Canaan.

Persecution is certainly a very disagreeable thing: *“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it”* (Hebrews 12:11).

If Israel had gone on enjoying the favours of Egypt, they would have soon come to an end as a nation:

there would have been no Moses – there would have been no Old Testament – there could have been no New Testament.

Here again, in the very first chapter of this book, is a lesson for us to learn: Often God has to allow oppression, affliction, persecution, just to keep us from settling down. Whenever the people of God find “Egypt” to be a comfortable place in which to dwell, there will be no further progress – there will be no diligent seeking after God – no longing and looking for a better country. Moses would never have been able to persuade this people to leave this land had it not been that they were so abused and oppressed. You will always find a strong and active Church where, to be Christian, you take your very life in your hands. Some of the best Christians I have known have come from homes where the rest of the family opposed and ridiculed the Christian Way. Lack of persecution could be one reason why there’s so little advancement, so little progress in the Church today. It’s too easy to be a Christian – in most communities, it costs so little that its value is not appreciated. But the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more Israel multiplied and grew – read it in Exodus 1:12.

Persecution is like cultivating the soil around the tree – it’s like pruning away the useless leaves and branches. It strips away all the formalities, all the trivialities. Not only so, but when God’s people are oppressed, great leaders are born. For instance – it was in the dark days of wicked king Ahab, that Elijah appeared – it was during the time of spiritual darkness and ignorance that John the Baptist came on the scene – and when Jesus was born, Israel was in a pitiable condition. That’s how it’s been through all Church history.

Well, in just such a time, Moses was born. As we go through the book of Exodus together, we want to spend some time in the study of this man of God. But for the few moments we have left this morning, we will summarize the highlights of his experience.

- Moses was under the sentence of death at birth; as is every son and daughter born of Adam’s race.
- When he was only three months old, his parents saw that they couldn’t hide him any longer, so they took him down to the river Nile, to the place of death.
- But before they place him in the water, they put their faith to work and build an ark, a tiny water-proof vessel. They put their precious bundle of life into it and left him; not to the ark, but to the God of the ark. His chances for survival from a human viewpoint were very poor, but from a Divine point of view, there was no “chance” about it at all.
- Moses was just as safe as if he were cradled in the arms of Almighty God. Pharaoh’s daughter came down to the river just at the right time; the baby cried in just the right way; Moses’ sister Miriam said just the right words; Moses is taken to Pharaoh’s court with his own mother as the paid nurse. The little boy, who would some 80 years later lead all his people out from under the heel of the oppressor, was being nurtured, educated, and trained for the place of leadership by the very ones who would be the first to face the challenge of God’s power versus the power of Egypt.

In Hebrews 11 we read three things about Moses, at age 40 – he “*refused*,” he “*chose*,” and he “*forsook*.”

- He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, renouncing all the social and political advantages that this relationship bring him (verse 24).
- He chose to suffer affliction, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (verse 25).
- He forsook Egypt (verse 27).

All this seems so utterly unreasonable, until we look at the other side of the ledger. For “*he endured as seeing Him who is invisible*” (Hebrews 11:27). He had caught a glimpse of eternal realities, eternal glories, before which all the glory, all the pomp and pride, all the show at Pharaoh’s palace faded away into nothingness. To be identified with Christ and share His reproaches was greater riches, to Moses, than all the treasures of Egypt.

Thousands of years later, Peter, James and John saw Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, conversing with his glorified LORD. I’m sure Moses would then have said that it had been worth it all — and a thousand times more!

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Mother of Moses

Hebrews 11:23 – *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.”*

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. We have passed quickly through the story of the *Gospel in Genesis*, and come now to *Redemption in Exodus*. It is a thrilling, historically correct drama; and it is spiritually alive – filled with “types and shadows” of things which in the New Testament become “substance and essence.”

This being Mother’s Day, it will be most appropriate to spend a little while considering the mother of Moses; who, under God, was able to preserve and protect her little son from the death-decree of Pharaoh, and produce a deliverer who was to become one of the outstanding figures of all history. The poem, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle Rules the World* had not yet been written; but perhaps the story of Moses provided the inspiration for it. In any case, it is very evident that Moses’ mother had much to do with the forming of his life – a life that was to change the destiny of a nation, and alter the whole course of history.

To begin at the beginning, we notice that this Israeli woman married well – her husband was a man of faith from the family of Levi. Someone asked a minister, “When is the best time to start training a child?” and he replied, “Several years before the child is born.” Mothers can only be at their best, and can only do their best work for their children, when they have God-fearing husbands who will stand with them in prayer, and share the spiritual responsibilities of the household. The modern idea that “religion is for women” is proving to be completely wrong; for there is no other phase of life where team-work is so necessary, as in field of moral and spiritual things.

Well, the mother of Moses married a man of *“like precious faith.”* There was no division on the question of religion here. We read in Hebrews 11:23: *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.”* Evidently, they talked the matter over, and said, “Let’s commit this little life to God who gave it, and trust Him to save it – there is nothing else we can do.” What a blessing – to be born into a home where father and mother have a deep, abiding faith in Almighty God – where parents commit their children to His tender care in the midst of all the dangers and pitfalls that are set for their feet.

Here, let’s remember that Moses wasn’t the only child ever born into hostility, into a place where deliberate plans are laid to exterminate the people of God. Egypt is not the only country where children were born under the penalty and fear of death. It is a tremendous responsibility, to bring lives, destined for eternity, into this world – a perilous place for God’s children. Pharaoh is a “type” of the god of this world, who has carefully-laid plans to ensnare the young and lead them off to ruin. For, it is much easier to spoil a generation in childhood, than after maturity. By the same rule, it’s much easier to save a generation in childhood – but it’s up to the parents to lead the way. It is the mothers and fathers who will have to get to work and build an *ark of prayer and faith* to protect their little ones from the perils of sin’s dark waters.

Once again, let me say this: mothers need God-fearing, God-honouring husbands – and husbands need God-fearing, God-honouring wives. If such is the happy state of the home, there is great hope for the children. Not everyone will turn out to be a leader of world renown; but everyone will have opportunities to know God and His Word, and His way. Everyone will have the priceless heritage of a home where prayer is the daily privilege, and God is a personal Friend. Children who are sent out into the world without these essentials, are being denied the basic necessities of life, no matter what other luxuries, pleasures, or privileges they may enjoy. The Egypt of Exodus was a very cruel, and idolatrous land; but, there were God-fearing mothers living in that country. May it be said of today’s generation, when *our* history is written – “There were God-fearing mothers in those days . . .”

Now, let us notice God’s Providence in caring for this three-month old baby. Little Moses is lying among the reeds by the river’s brink, in his little ark made of bulrushes. Miriam, his sister, is keeping watch. That is all she can do. I suppose mother is at home in prayer. A royal procession comes down from the palace – it is Pharaoh’s daughter with her ladies-in-waiting. She is the first to see the ark and commands that it be brought to her. Let us read now in Exodus 2:6-8 *“And when she had opened it, she*

saw the child: and behold the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, 'This is one of the Hebrew's children.' Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go.' So the maiden went and called the child's mother.' Surely,

God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm.

The Psalmist said, *"Surely, the wrath of man shall praise You"* (Psalm 76:10); and again, *"He turns the way of the wicked upside down"* (Psalm 146:9). Oftentimes we pray and expect God to do some very startling and spectacular thing to bring it to pass; but more often than we know, God uses the ordinary things of everyday life to work out His great eternal plan. He used the daily visit of the Egyptian princess – the natural affection of Moses' sister – the ordinary crying of a little baby, to find a place in this hostile land for Moses to be reared in safety and security; where he could have the care and instruction of a godly mother whose heart is full of praise and gratitude to the God of all grace, mercy, and comfort.

Before we leave this part of the story, let me emphasize again the value of prayer and committal. There came a time in the experience of this Hebrew mother, when there was just nothing else she could do. And there will be a time in the experience of every mother, when she can do no more, but pray and trust. It may seem futile — it may seem hopeless — there may not be a ray of light or a single encouraging sign in all life's dark horizon; but never mind! Pray on! God sees more than you or I.

Say not, my soul, 'From whence can God relieve my care?' –
Remember that Omnipotence hath servants everywhere.
His help is always sure – His method seldom guessed.
Delay will make our pleasure pure, surprise will give it zest.

“. . . So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, 'Because I drew him out of the water.'" (Exodus 2:8-10).

Now let us look at that little sentence in verse 9 *"...Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages."* Not many mothers, I suppose, ever received wages for caring for their own baby; but this one did. And by all accounts she did a very good and thorough work. No doubt, she realized that she would not have this boy in her care very long; so she went right to work and built another ark for him. This second ark, however, was not made of reeds and mud. Rather, it was built with prayer and instruction in the ways of God. We must keep in mind that the children of Israel had no Bible at that time – no book of Genesis – no clear revelation as to the plan and purpose of the Almighty for their lives. But somehow or other the story of Abraham's call from Ur of Chaldees; of his giving up the gods of his fathers and going out, not knowing where, and finally settling in the land of Canaan – some way, I say, the history of God's dealing with their forefathers had come to them. And though they were living in a pagan land where gods of every kind were made and worshipped, this mother knew the one true and living God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. And she was not slack in teaching and training her children to love and serve Him. (Later, God revealed Himself to her son Moses in a very remarkable way.)

Let us take this lesson to our own hearts on this Mothers' Day, and be reminded – that boy or girl, playing out in the yard, or helping in the kitchen, will not be with you very long. You will soon have to give them up. You will have to say goodbye to them; and they will go out on their own before you expect them to. They'll have to live in this pagan world, where every community has its own god – gods of pleasure, lust, drink, gambling, and even work. In any case, it is highly improbable that they will find themselves in a community where everyone serves the LORD, and everyone honours His name. Hear the voice of God saying to your heart, *"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages."* I don't know what salary Moses' mother received; but, however large or small, it must have seemed as nothing, compared to the satisfaction, in later years, of seeing her son take so important a place in the deliverance of her people from the bondage of Egypt.

"Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." There is still a need, a great and crying need for sons and daughters to be raised for the LORD. There are still hundreds and thousands

of people held captive in a bondage worse by far than Israel ever knew. There are towns, villages, and rural areas without a single Gospel witness – not a voice to cry in the wilderness and show the people God’s way.

“*Take this child away and nurse it for me,*” said Pharaoh’s daughter. I wonder if it has ever occurred to you mothers that you are raising your children for someone else? They will not always be your own possession to do with as you will. Some other authority will claim them, when they are a little older. The government may claim them to fill the ranks of the armed forces, to fight the nation’s battles. Industry may claim them to run the mighty machines of manufacture. Commerce may claim them to fill some part in the business world. Education may claim them to train and prepare other young lives for their place in the world. Aviation may claim them to guide those great metal birds through space. You are raising your children to fill some place in the world of things.

In the final analysis, the only thing that matters, is this – Are you raising them for the LORD? or for the devil? – Are you raising them for this world only? or for that world that is to come? – Is it your chief ambition that they should have their name written on the headlines of tomorrow’s papers? or is it your greatest and foremost thought that they have their names written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life? Your children may well be leaders in the world of tomorrow; but the important thing to consider is this: which way will they lead? – upward, to paths of righteousness and purity? or, downward to paths of wickedness and vice?

“*Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.*” You will be repaid either in joy and satisfaction, or sorrow and heartache.

Let me ask you again – For whom are you raising your children?

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The Hand That Rocks The Cradle

Blessings on the hand of women!
Angels guard its strength and grace.
In the palace, cottage, hovel,
Oh, no matter where the place;
Would that never storms assailed it,
Rainbows ever gently curled,
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

Infancy’s the tender fountain,
Power may with beauty flow,
Mothers first to guide the streamlets,
From them souls unresting grow –
Grow on for the good or evil,
Sunshine streamed or evil hurled,
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

Woman, how divine your mission,
Here upon our natal sod;
Keep – oh, keep the young heart open
Always in the breath of God!
All true trophies of the ages
Are from mother-love imperaled.
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

Blessings on the hand of women!
Fathers, sons, and daughters cry,
And the sacred song is mingled
With the worship in the sky –
Mingles where o tempest darkens,
Rainbows evermore are hurled;
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

(by William Ross Wallace – 1819-1881)

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Preparation of Moses For Life's Work

2 Corinthians 6:2 – *“Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.”*

Let us turn now to the Wonderful Word, and read the story of *Redemption in Exodus*. Last Sunday we took up the story of Moses' mother, and discovered (though it is no secret) that, no doubt, she had more to do with the making of this man, and contributed more to the national life of Israel, than any other person in that numerous family. I suppose the moral of the story is that the greatest contribution women can make to the welfare of the state is to raise God-fearing, God-honouring sons. As we continue in our study, we'll find that Moses is the central figure of the Book of Exodus. Under God, he is the one responsible for the deliverance of his people from Egyptian bondage – and, responsible for their preservation during the wilderness journey.

Moses is one more of the many “types” of Christ in the Old Testament. Just here, let us be reminded that no one person could ever adequately set forth in “type” all the perfections of Him who is the sum total of all human perfection, plus all the fulness of deity. It takes all the outstanding characters of the Old Testament, from Adam to John the Baptist, to show forth the varied ministry, and versatile ability, of Jesus the Son of God. We are told in 1 Peter 1:11 that it was the Spirit of Christ within these men of old time that made them what they were, and gave them the extraordinary ability to accomplish the will of God in their generation.

In that respect, there is no difference between Old and New Testament times, for it is still true that *“without Him we can do nothing”* (John 15:5), and again, *“we can do all things through Christ that strengthens us”* (Philippians 4:13). The only difference is, that in Old Testament times only certain individuals were chosen for this blessed privilege; but in this day and age, all racial barriers have been removed – all restrictions taken away; the promise is to *“whosoever will”* (Revelation 22:17). Anyone, anywhere may receive the Spirit of Christ, and show forth His likeness in the experience and circumstance where God has placed them. There is only one condition, and that involves two steps of the will: *repent and believe – repentance toward God and faith toward our LORD Jesus Christ.*

Our time today will be all taken up with considering the preparation of Moses for his life's work. God always prepares a man for the work which He wants him to do; though, oftentimes the school He puts him into is not one the man would choose. God always plants us in the soil of circumstance where we will ripen best, and be best fitted for the work He wants us to do. As for Moses, nothing much is heard of him for the first forty years of his life. We are told in Acts 7:22 that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

It is true that *“not many mighty – not many noble”* are called (1 Cor. 1:26); but it is also true that those who answer the call, are wonderfully used of God. No doubt, one reason why not more people are used of God, is that they are not within calling distance; their attainments, accomplishments and possessions have dulled their spiritual senses so that they cannot hear the voice of the Spirit. However, Moses was “mighty” and “noble” and he proves the exception to the rule. Though he was a member of a despised, persecuted race, he had advantages which others of his family did not have – and he made the very most of them. He had an inner conviction that some time, and in some way, God would use him for the good of his people. He wanted to be ready when the time came. Much could be said along this line; but time is too short; we will observe only that in everyone's life there is a time for preparation, and how that time is used will in a very large measure determine the effectiveness and usefulness of that person's life.

Let us read now in Exodus 2:11-15 *“Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, ‘Why are you striking your companion?’ Then he said, ‘Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ So Moses*

feared and said, 'Surely this thing is known!' When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian . . . "

Here is a man of 40 years of age, ready (so he thinks) to undertake a very necessary work – a work that he somehow feels he is called to do; but the time is not yet. *"He supposed,"* says the Bible, *"that Israel would have understood how that God by his hand would set them free"*; but they understood not. There is a time to do God's work, and there is a way to do it, and no other time, no other way will ever do. Israel is not yet ready to leave the land of their adoption, and Moses is not yet ready to be their leader.

I suppose of all the lessons that God's people have to learn, the most trying of all is to learn to await God's time. Any kind of activity is better than just waiting. I have read somewhere that the thing that soldiers dread most in the front lines is that period of waiting for the command to "go over the top." Many a battle has been lost because of a premature attack. The success of "D-Day" in the last Great War was only accomplished by months of careful preparation. God's men must learn not only *how* to fight, but also *when* to fight. You see, God Himself must wait until circumstances and conditions best suit His purpose.

In this particular case, Israel was not yet ready to exchange the certainty of their daily bread for the uncertain adventure of the journey to Canaan. They were still too comfortable with all their abuse, to follow Moses, God's appointed leader. As far as God's perfect will was concerned, He would have had them back in Canaan long before this; but the people weren't ready. That's how it is with Redemption in our day. As far as God is concerned, this is the Day of Salvation – this is the Acceptable Time; but so many thousands of the children of Adam are too well satisfied with life under the torment of sin, to be willing to answer the Gospel Call and follow God's leaders to a life of victory and freedom. And so, God must wait until some tragedy, some affliction, some great sorrow falls – until last the penitent sinner, destitute and bankrupt, is ready to say *"What must I do to be saved?"*

Israel was not yet ready to come out and claim their inheritance; and similarly, neither had the time yet come to drive out the Canaanites. Four hundred years before, God had told Abraham that his seed would be afflicted in a land that was not theirs, and not until the fourth generation would they gain their freedom, *"For,"* said He, *"the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete"* (Genesis 15:16). The Amorite has to be considered as well as the Israelite – they have had nearly four hundred years of probation, but God will not cut them off until there is no further hope of a change in their behaviour.

Here is a very early picture, in "type," of the deliverance of the people of God from this world, from all its sin and sorrow. Though it is true that we often long for our deliverance from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, as the inspire Apostle said, *"We ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our bodies"* (Romans 8:23), and we oftentimes end our prayers with the last prayer in the Bible, *"Even so come LORD Jesus"* (Revelation 22:20), still He tarries – the time is not yet ripe – there are a few more still to be gathered in, and many yet who have never heard. *"The cup of the Amorite is not yet full."*

God is waiting; not through indifference, but He waits to be gracious. As the Apostle Peter said, *"The long-suffering of our LORD is Salvation"* – *"He is not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). But the day of the LORD will come as a *"thief in the night"* (1 Thessalonians 5:2 & 2 Peter 3:10). There will come a time when God will say, "It is enough." Our heavenly Moses, who was taken, not out of the water, but out of the grave, out of the pit, will come – *"He that shall come will come, and will not tarry"* (Hebrews 10:37). Amen. *"Even so, Come, LORD Jesus."*

The point we are trying to make clear is that God waits on man. What marvellous condescension! But, wait He does – and so, must *we* wait. Well, Moses' misguided effort failed miserably. Instead of becoming a deliverer, he became a fugitive from justice. For forty years, he led the quiet and, I suppose, monotonous life of a shepherd. Perhaps he often thought that his life was wasted – that he might as well content himself with life in the Egyptian court and let his people Israel get along as best they could. Forty years is a long time to be set aside with little contact with the outside world of politics and government. It may have seemed like wasted time, but it wasn't. Waiting for God's time is never wasted time. Those forty years were not lost years for Moses. He was simply transferred to another "college" – not to unlearn the

lessons of the previous years, but to add to his understanding. In the desert, he learned great spiritual truths, which he could not have learned in the hustle and bustle of an Egyptian Palace.

Once he moved out in God's will to take the leadership of a nation, he would have a very busy life. There would be things to learn, and he would have to know them for certain, even if it took forty years of solitude. Moses knew God before he went into exile; but he knew Him much better when he came out of exile. Forty years is a long time to spend in a desert; but it would still be too short to learn all the joys of fellowship with God.

One day Moses was with the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, a long way back in the hills. As he looked at the beauty and glory of God's creation, suddenly a desert bush burst into flame. After watching it for a few moments (and, I suppose, trying to understand how it got on fire), he noticed that the bush still remained a bush; every branch, every twig, every leaf was still intact. It burned but it was not consumed. Moses said, *"I will draw near now and see this great sight."* And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, He called to him out of the bush. For Moses, this was a new revelation – a fresh discovery of the reality, the glory and majesty of God; the God of whom his mother had told him eighty years before. The outcome of this meeting was that Moses headed back to Egypt to do the work he attempted, but failed at, forty years earlier. Israel had not listened to him then, but now they would.

Now, just as we leave the air, do *you* remember how, years and years ago, a greater than Moses tried to persuade *you* to leave the bondage of sin, and move over into Canaan? But you wouldn't go. Life was too pleasant then. But now the pressure has become more than you can bear.

Listen while I tell you – Jesus is calling you again today, He still wants you to be free. *"Behold, NOW is the accepted time, NOW is the day of Salvation."* (2 Corinthians 6:2).

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – “*Let My People Go!*”

1 Timothy 1:15 – “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*”

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. We are following the theme, *Redemption in Exodus*, and so far, we have been considering the manner and method of God’s preparation of Moses, the deliverer. Moses is the human agent whom God has chosen to accomplish this great work; and, as we said last Sunday, in many ways he is a “type” of Christ our Redeemer.

Moses was one of the very race that needed redemption; even as Christ was “*born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*”; “*in all points tempted as we are...*” – tasting to the full the bitter lot of those born in bondage, and yet clothed with all the power of heaven’s government to set the captive souls at liberty. (Gal. 4:4-5; Heb. 4:15)

The first point we want to make clear this morning is that these people to whom Moses was sent were not in Egypt by choice – they had been born there. They had never known that blessed life of freedom in the land of promise. Their forefathers had forfeited the land of Canaan when they assayed to settle in the land of Egypt. This is fundamental and foundational to the whole story and plan of Redemption. Men may be sinners by choice; but they are also aliens by birth. We are all, every one of us, born in slavery – born in “Egypt.” We are not to blame for our condition; but we are to blame if we do not admit our condition, or refuse to take God’s way and remedy for our condition.

The Scripture says that “*Christ Jesus came to this world to save sinners*” (1 Timothy 1:15). There is everything to indicate that He came to the right place alright, sinners were all around Him – the towns and cities were filled with them – the streets and highways thronged with them. He came to the right place, and at the right time; but many did not appreciate His visit when He told them what His mission was. They did not accept the fact that they were the slaves of sin. Moses, though, had no difficulty persuading the children of Israel that they were all slaves; Pharaoh’s taskmasters took every opportunity to impress on them the fact that they were the property of the Egyptians.

This brings us to the second fact in the story of Redemption: it is hard to live in Egypt – spiritually speaking, that is. The old proverb which says “*the way of the transgressor is hard*” is not merely a proverb, it is true (Proverbs 13:15). The dominion of sin and Satan is hard and cruel. It may cost a great deal to be a Christian; but it costs much more not to be one. Even from a strictly financial point of view, the cost of serving sin, with all the exacting demands from pleasure and passion, is greater by far than what the average Christian spends on the upkeep and progress of the Church of Jesus Christ. Sin not only robs the pocketbook, and reduces the Saturday pay-check to a mere fragment of its original size; but it also takes its toll of strength from the body. It takes peace from the heart and mind. It destroys virtue and blights character. It’s hard to live in Egypt, I say, and we ought to be eternally grateful to God that He has sent a Deliverer into this world – an Emancipator – a Redeemer.

Notice, please: Moses came from a forty-year sojourn in the wilderness with a message of power, with the demonstration of that power; and Jesus came from a forty-day period of testing in the wilderness. Luke’s Gospel tells us that Jesus “*returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.*” (Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:14)

Let us read, now, in Exodus 4:29-31 & 5:1. “*And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. And afterwards Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Let My people go.”*”

Then follow eight chapters, which record one of the mightiest conflicts that the world has ever known – a conflict still raging in the spiritual realm to this very day – and in this very land in which we live.

In Exodus, it is Jehovah versus Pharaoh – and the contest is to settle the question, “Who really owns this people?”. The LORD said, “*Let My people go,*” and Pharaoh replied, “*Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I don’t know the LORD, neither will I let Israel go,*” And so the conflict

begins; *and*, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. God's judgment on the land of Egypt is at once one of the most tragic and yet the most triumphant of all the stories of history. And it is a story in "type" of that greater and more universal conflict, the story of the Redemption of the entire human race from the bondage of sin and the devil.

We only have time to consider the highlights of this great drama, and much will have to be left unsaid. The things we *do* mention, are only that we might persuade men everywhere that "*NOW is the accepted time, NOW is the day of salvation*" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Notice the authority of God's messengers. They came to the people with the revelation of God's plan for that day – not with a theory to explain away their bondage — not with a philosophy that denied their slavery – not with a teaching of submission to their bondage; but with, "*Thus says the LORD, let My people go!*" Their authority was, "*Thus says the LORD*"; and the signs and wonders which followed were their credentials. They preached the Word of the LORD for that day and age, and God vindicated His Word by fulfilling it before their very eyes. Jesus said, "*These signs will follow them that believe*" (Mark 16:17).

There is a very striking similarity and parallel between the ministry of Moses and that of Jesus and His disciples. Moses did the work for Israel in the physical and political realm, whereas Jesus and His disciples worked in the spiritual realm; but oftentimes the two are so closely related that it's hard to tell where the one leaves off and the other begins. The various plagues and pestilences that fell on Egypt were all in the world of nature; but they all had spiritual causes – and spiritual powers were responsible for their coming to that land.

It's high time we all learned this lesson that all nature is in sympathy with, and responsive to the commands of her Creator. The ancients were not as ignorant or superstitious as we might suppose they were, when they attributed all atmospheric disturbances and unusual dispositions of nature to the workings of Deity. Natural laws are all Divine laws in nature, and when God's laws are broken, whether natural or spiritual, trouble always follows. Nature rises up in protest against the rebelliousness of man. It is still true that "*righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Proverbs 14:34).

All through this book of Exodus, in fact all through the Bible, we see nature working in perfect harmony with her Creator – on some occasions, doing some very unusual things which we call "miracles" – whereas, if we only realized it, all the workings of nature are miracles, and can only be accounted for by acknowledging God in their forces and workings.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart must not be passed by, for this seems to be a source of difficulty to a great many people. On the surface, it looks as though God actually made up Pharaoh's mind, and caused him to resist the very plan which God was trying to bring to pass. But just a little thought on the matter will show that this could never be.

In the first place, a kingdom divided against itself will surely fall. God could not be working through Moses to deliver Israel, and at the same time be working through Pharaoh to prevent their deliverance. God is never divided against Himself. Nor is He the author of confusion.

How then does He harden Pharaoh's heart as the Scripture says He does? Well, the answer is, just in the same way He hardens your heart when He faces you with an issue, and you have to decide. Men's hearts are hardened when they are exposed to the clear and certain Word of God, if they decide against it. God forces men to make a decision, but He does not compel them what to decide. It is written, "*To whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness.*" (Romans 6:16). The same sun that will melt wax will harden clay, but the fault is not with the sun. Pharaoh almost decided once or twice to let the people go, but as soon as his trouble was over, he changed his mind again – until finally he had crossed the deadline of the soul. He had resisted the Word of God until his heart became too hard to ever respond to its message.

It's a dangerous thing to play around with the Word of God – to agree with it one day, and the next day oppose it. Most people who do this end up as Pharaoh did – beyond redemption. It is interesting to notice the suggestions of compromise that Pharaoh made. Pharaoh said, "*Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.*" (Exodus 8:25) In other words, "Go ahead, worship your God as you please, but do it right here.

You don't have to leave Egypt in order to worship God." This is a very insidious argument, and has a great many who teach it even in these days. "Be a Christian, if you want to be, but stay right where you are. Still keep up your ungodly associations and relationships. Keep right on with your worldly pleasures, habits, and conversation." This is rather a clever proposal, for Pharaoh knew, as any thinking person should know, that this kind of religion would never change anyone, nor set any prisoner free.

The next compromise is found in verse 28 – Pharaoh said, *"I will let you go, that you might sacrifice to your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away."* How many people there are who seem to think that there is a danger of going too far in this business of serving the LORD. Even though, to date, the world has never yet seen anyone who has gone too far. We have all seen those who didn't go far enough. We have seen those who went too far in serving the god of this world, but no one as yet has ever gone too far in serving the LORD. The history of the Church tells the story of some who have gone a long way, and the further they went, the greater blessing they were to the world, and the greater enjoyment they found in Christian service. There is certainly far more danger in not going far enough in the LORD's service, than there is in going too far.

Finally, the third compromise is found Exodus chapter 10. Pharaoh said, *"Go if you wish, but don't take your family or your possessions."* The answer Moses gave, is the answer that every person ought to give to this unholy suggestion: *"We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters with our flocks and with our herds will we go."* All they were and all they owned must be set free. When they went out of Egypt, all their possessions went with them. This is the story of Redemption in Exodus. It's the message of today for your heart. Come on out of "Egypt!" Go as far away from there as God wants you to go; and bring all you have with you.

Above all, don't harden your heart against the Word of God!

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – The Last Judgment on Egypt

Hebrews 10:28-29 – *“Anyone who rejected Moses’ law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the Blood of the Covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”*

Let us turn now to the Wonderful Word and read the story of *Redemption in Exodus*. The first four chapters of Exodus have to do with the *preparation of the deliverer*; then, chapters 5 to 11, the *contest with Pharaoh* during which time the LORD sent ten judgments, and performed twelve mighty miracles to try to convince this pagan monarch that he was dealing with the Almighty God, the One who holds all the forces of nature in His power. In these chapters, we see nature work together for the deliverance of God’s people, at God’s bidding – insects, frogs, flies, hail, lightning, the river Nile, and even the sun in the sky – all witnessing that the gods of those idol-worshippers were powerless to help. Today’s meditation is from chapter 12 – the *last judgment on Egypt*. It’s the story of the *Passover Lamb*, the instituting of the *Passover Feast*; and, at last, the deliverance of Israel from the cruel bondage of Egypt. Not only is this account historically correct, and wonderfully inspiring, as an indication of what God will do to get His people free; but it is so *rich in spiritual “types” and “shadows” of future things*, that we can well afford to go slowly, carefully and prayerfully, as we search this ancient record for truth as it applies to us.

The first and overall picture for us to see is the lengths to which God will go to fulfil His promises. Remember, He had promised Abraham that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan; and if all the forces of nature must be used to bring it that promise to pass, God will use them. Then, of course, we see the deeper spiritual fact, that God will stop at nothing, in order to free His people from the bondage of sin and Satan. *“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* (Romans 8:32).

Let us come, then, to Exodus 12:1-13 *“Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ‘This month shall be the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.’”* The experience these slaves of Egypt are about to enter will be for them the beginning of life as a free nation – it will be their New Year’s Day, marking the beginning of a new life. They have come to the crossroads of history, and the events which mark this occasion are rich with truth for us all. *“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night. . . . For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.’”*

This will either be Egypt’s final opportunity or final judgment – depending on their attitude to God’s final warning. Here is the story of Redemption, and the details of this account are *“written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Corinthians 10:1).

First of all, notice that their preservation and protection must come about through *obedience to God’s way*. It was not left to them to decide how they should prepare for the coming destruction; for if it had, there would have been as many different ways as there were people. There is to be but one method, one way of escape, and that way, though very simple, is very important. Every detail must be carefully observed. It is to be a national deliverance, but every individual must do his part; deliverance, not by their leaders observing some ceremonial ritual, but by the participation of every family in every home.

We, in this “enlightened” day, need to learn these simple lessons. God can still save a nation – preserve a nation; but it must come about by every individual taking *God’s way*, and obeying *God’s Word*. No amount of diligence or effort on the part of our leaders, whether in the Church or in the State, will ever

turn away God's wrath from a Christ-rejecting world. Every family, every person in that household must heed the Word of God.

In the book of Exodus, we read that the lamb was the central figure of their salvation. This is fundamental all through Scripture – whether it be deliverance from Egypt in Moses' day, or deliverance from sin's bondage in our day; it must all depend on, and spring from the Lamb. In Moses' day, they had but the "type" and "shadow," but in our day, we have the substance. In Moses' day, they had a lamb through which God would pass over their home and protect them from the destroying angel; but in our day, we have the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). From the days of Cain and Abel to the last book of the Bible, God's way has always been *the way of the Lamb*.

Notice, too, it is to be a lamb without blemish; not just any lamb, but it must be one without spot or blemish. These are God's instructions, not those of Moses. No doubt, lambs ("type") would be very plentiful among the sheep of Israel; but when it comes to Jesus, the Lamb of God ("anti-type") there *is* no other. He is the only One of whom it could it ever be said, He "*committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth*" (1 Peter 2:22).

Then, in the Exodus account, after the Passover lamb was found it had to be kept for four days, to give opportunity for any defect to be discovered. After that, it had to be slain. Here is another step in the great drama of the ages. It was one thing to find the lamb without blemish, but another thing for it to have redeeming value. There is no value in having found it, until it is slain. And so, the lamb of Exodus 12 must die. Only through its death will the people be redeemed. You will remember that Jesus said, "*What shall I say? Father save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour.*" Then again, "*For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give His life a ransom for many.*" (John 12:27; Mark 10:45).

Not only so, but the blood of the slain lamb *must be applied by the householder*; otherwise the lamb has died in vain. How this truth needs to be emphasized these days, when the history of the death of the Lamb of God has been published by tongue and pen all over the Western world. The Easter Season is religiously celebrated by countless thousands of well-meaning people; but they have never yet applied the Blood to the door of their heart. As far as they are concerned, Christ died only to give them a holiday – to furnish the ground for pageantry and ceremony. It seems they have never heard the facts of the case, which are these: that the death of Christ was a substitutional one, a vicarious one, that He died in our place. His death must be accepted, must be relied on as the only ground of salvation. His Blood must be applied by faith, otherwise sin can never be taken away.

I'm quite aware of the fact that there are many religious professors, yes, many teachers of religion who argue that the Blood of Christ has no more value to our salvation than the blood of an ox or goat. However, the fact of the matter is, God's Word declares that we are "*not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold.*" In other words, we are not saved by subscribing generously to charity, nor by investing heavily in the mortgage on the church building. But we are redeemed "*with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*" (1 Peter 1:18-21).

It is written again, "*You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*" It is written again, "*Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the Blood of the Covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*" And then, one of the greatest verses in the Bible, "*If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*" Once again let me say, Calvary is all wasted for you *unless the Blood is applied.* (Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 10:28-29; 1 John 1:7).

Notice, now, that this plague which is to strike the land of Egypt will affect the entire nation. Even Israel will not be exempt from it. It will take the firstborn from *every* family. Until now the land of Goshen, where Israel lived, had been free from the judgments that came on the Egyptians; but now they are to be included in the Divine proclamation. They will not escape because of family connections, or

because they happened to be born of the seed of Abraham. All national or racial distinction is now lost sight of. To be safe, they must have the lamb – and it must be slain – its blood must be applied – and they must stay in their house until the morning.

Isn't it a tragedy, that in spite of the clear-cut statement of Scripture which includes everyone as being under the sentence of death – *“all have sinned”* – there are still so many thousands of people who will tell you that their family has been Christian for centuries; in fact, some of them even have had grandparents who were ministers. As though that would carry some weight with the Judge of all the earth who has so clearly declared *“There is none righteous, no not one.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”*

(Romans 3:10, 23; Psalm 14:1-4; Isaiah 53:6).

Isn't it strange that so many will protest against the way of the cross, which is so sure; rather taking the way of their own human endeavour, which is already under the curse of God? Here is another side of this blessed truth, in which we all rejoice: If Israel was not saved because of their racial standing, then neither were the Egyptians lost because of theirs. Every Egyptian household could have had the very same protection as did the most orthodox Hebrew family. And, as I read the story, it seems evident that many of the Egyptians heeded the counsel of the man of God, and took shelter under the blood.

Let all those who think it unfair, that good people should be lost, remember this – that the worst of people can be saved. If only good people can be saved, then whatever would happen to the rest of us? The death angel went out over the land of Egypt that night, and every house that did not have the sign of the cross, the blood of the lamb, lost their firstborn.

Just as we leave the air, let me remind you again that the death angel will come to your house one of these days, and if the Blood of Christ has not been applied to your heart's door, you will know the eternal sorrow of those who are forever separated from God and from His holy heaven. For only the blood-washed enter there.

You cannot be saved because of your family connections, and you need never be lost because you're not what you ought to be.

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Answer to the Sin-Question

1 Peter 1:18-19 – *“You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

Now, let us turn to the Wonderful Word, and continue our journey with Israel in the great experience of *Redemption* from the land of Egypt. Last Sunday we had the story of the *PASSOVER LAMB*, and the instituting of the *PASSOVER FEAST*. It is one of the most important, and sacred of all Jewish festivals, originating nearly 3,500 years ago. It is the oldest religious ceremony on record, and is observed by millions of Hebrews each year, in memory of this night of deliverance. Out of this Passover Feast has come to us the LORD’s Supper, which hundreds of millions of Christians and professing Christians commemorate more often than any other event of history. Christmas and Easter are observed only once a year; but thousands of churches have the LORD’s Supper every Sunday morning, thus emphasising its importance and significance. No other fact of history has been given such world-wide prominence as the story of Redemption. The reality and substance of the “type” of Redemption, shown in the Book of Exodus, is seen later in the New Testament.

The word *Redemption* literally means, “buying back, paying the full price.” In days of slavery, when men and women and boys and girls were bought and sold like cattle, the only way a slave could obtain freedom would be to raise enough money to pay the price of his purchase. And since a slave had no means whatever of earning wages, the prospect of ever being able to free himself were practically nil. So this is where the Redeemer comes in. A Redeemer is someone who voluntarily pays the price to obtain another person’s freedom.

Israel’s last night in Egypt was marked by the *Passover Feast*. It was the lamb who paid the price; because the sentence was death – and only by death can the people be set free. For some reason or other, we have come to look on blood with abhorrence, with nausea and fear; but the Bible looks on blood with reverence, solemnity and appreciation, realizing that it is the most marvellous, sacred and wonderful of all substances known to man. It is a scientific fact, as well as religious, that *“life is in the blood”* (Lev. 17:11). The inspired Apostle tells us that we *“are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold”* – these two metals have become symbols of value to most people in the world today. They have become the standard of value for many nations, but their actual worth to society is very little, except for ornaments and trinkets. God’s standard of value is ever based upon the blood. He will accept none of your silver or your gold in settlement of the sin-question; nor will He accept your own blood as satisfaction for a broken law. We cannot buy our way out of the slave-market of sin with anything that is corruptible; for sin has eternal detriment – it has eternal consequences. *“Not with corruptible things such as silver and gold,”* said the Apostle Peter, *“but with the precious Blood of Christ.”* (1 Peter 1:18). That is the purchase price, and it has eternal value, as far as God is concerned.

Before we go any further in this study of *Redemption in Exodus*, let us compare and then contrast Israel’s *PASSOVER FEAST* with the Church’s *HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE* – the sacrament of the LORD’s Supper. We mentioned last Sunday something of the importance of the death of the lamb, and the personal application of the blood. You see, the Blood answers all legal claims, and cancels all legal action against the wrong-doer. We need often to be reminded that there is law in the moral and spiritual realm; just as there is law in the political and social realm. There can be no life without law – there can be no order – there can be no safety, security or continuity. It stands to reason, that a penalty must result from the breaking of a law; otherwise, it would only be good advice, not a law. In the case of a broken spiritual law (sin), the only possible consequence is a penalty in the spiritual realm – death; because that is the only way – the only instrument and agent, which can effectually put a stop to sin. Death is the only cure. If we could but see it, we’d agree that it is God’s unspeakable mercy that He ordained such a law; for if sinners never died, if they went on year after year, century after century, sowing and reaping, sowing and reaping the awful harvest of wickedness, this world would long since have become so fearful a place that only hell could be compared to it. It’s bad enough, as it is, when men can only live for sixty or seventy

years to practice their evil deeds. But, mercifully, death intervenes and cuts off the wicked from their wickedness.

Let me say just here that no one will practice sin after they leave this world. There will be no breaking of God's law in that eternal penitentiary of the lost. Men do not sin before they are born, and they will not sin after they are dead; and so, death is not only the effect of sin, but also the penalty of sin. It's the inevitable end of sin. There is no other way to settle the sin-question. Now here is where the blood comes in. Life is in the blood, but so is death; and once the blood is shed, the body can no longer live. Thus, God accepts the blood as evidence of the death of the sinner.

Now, you will see that it could not be the *sinner's* blood, for two good reasons: first, if the sinner's blood must be shed in order to save him, it would be too late. The guilty one has expired, and men cannot be saved after they are dead – they cannot be acquitted after they are dead – they cannot be condemned after they are dead. The second reason is that the sinner's blood is already corrupt; for sin is a matter of the blood. Death is already at work in the blood, and so it has no eternal value. God cannot accept it, because it is spoiled by sin. But a Lamb without blemish, the precious Blood of Christ, can and does answer all legal claims. It stops every mouth and satisfies every law. And so, it is written – *“The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world!” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”* (John 1:29; Romans 8:1).

Not only does the blood answer every legal claim; but because the life is in the blood, it is the agent and instrument that God has chosen to bring life to those who are dead in trespasses and in sins. There are life-giving properties in the blood, and blood transfusions in the treatment of the sick and dying are becoming more and more frequent. Jesus said, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10).

The one who personally, by faith, accepts the Blood of Christ as the Redemption price for his sin, and by faith applies the same to his heart and soul, thereby receives a Divine transfusion of the very life of the Son of God, whereby he may live the Christian life with joy, and die the Christian death with victory. Death has no terrors for the blood-bought ones; the boasted victory of the grave is gone! Glory, hallelujah to the Lamb!

When Israel sprinkled the blood on the door posts and lintel of their humble dwellings on that fateful night so long ago, they were giving testimony in “type” to the value of Christ's Blood for safety and victory. When we as Christians partake of the *HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE* we, too, are giving testimony that the sin-question has been settled as far as we are concerned. And, let me say just here, we have no right to partake of this sacred ordinance unless it has been settled. But if we do partake, we thereby testify to the fact that the death of Christ brought life to us, and *“the life we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us”* (Galatians 2:20).

Now let us examine another element in this great drama of Redemption. We have spent a good deal of time, and rightly so, on the value of the Blood (it cannot be over-emphasized); but we must not lose sight of the other element – namely, the body of the lamb. Let us read, now, in Exodus 12:8-11 *“Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”* Now, verse 10, *“You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.”*

After the blood had been applied to the door, then the body of the lamb was brought inside and prepared for eating. You will remember at that last Passover Feast of Jesus and His disciples – before Calvary, after the regular Jewish Feast had been properly observed, *“Jesus took bread and blessed it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you”* (Matthew 26:26). We are on very sacred and wonderful ground now, and will have to go softly, prayerfully and carefully; but it is very, very clear that the Body of Christ was broken for all who would believe on Him.

Now, the Israelites partook of the body of the lamb that they might be strengthened for the wilderness journey. In other words, their bodies needed nourishment that they might have strength for the way. Did you ever read in 1 Corinthians 11:29, 30 *“For he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks damnation to himself; not discerning the LORD’s Body. For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep”*? For which cause? Because they have not discerned the LORD’s Body. And the result was, that many were weak and sickly. There are, no doubt, many other causes for weakness and sickness; but this is certainly one of them. And it’s the failure to recognize that the LORD’s Body was broken for us. Jesus Himself said that it was.

I’m not speaking, now, of Divine healing, but of something that is still better, and that is Divine health. It is now written in Romans 8:11 that *“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”*

The bodies of these Israelites were just as much a matter of concern to the Almighty as were their souls. So is your body, and mine. They needed strength for the journey, and so do you and I. The blood had a spiritual value that answered the sin-question, and established a right relationship with God. The body of the lamb had a physical benefit that enabled them to take the path of obedience and walk out of Egypt to a land of freedom and victory.

Now the only question that we can take time to consider before we leave the air is this: How may I partake of the broken body of the LORD Jesus? How may I avail myself of the cleansing of the Blood? By Faith. You must apply the Blood by faith. It’s there for us.

Today, by faith, appropriate the strength your body needs for each day’s journey; for, *“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*

(Isaiah 53:4; Hebrews 4:15).

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – The Guiding Cloud & Crossing the Sea

1 Corinthians 10:11 – *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”*

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. *Redemption in Exodus* is the theme we have been following for several weeks. Last Sunday we considered the *PASSOVER FEAST* as a preview of the Sacrament of the LORD’s Supper. Today we have the children of Israel beginning their wilderness journey; an experience that is filled with instruction, and patterns for guidance for all succeeding generations.

First of all, we see Israel freed from Egyptian bondage. Until now, as servants of Pharaoh, their plans had always been made for them; but now they are servants of God. Before, they had been compelled to serve the king of Egypt; now, they must learn to serve God by choice. God will guide them, but they must be willing to follow. It took them forty years to learn this lesson; and their experiences have been written for “examples” to us “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Let us read, now, from Exodus 13:20-22. *“So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.”*

The first fact of Redemption for our consideration this morning is this: that though they are free from Egypt, they have not yet arrived at their destination. In other words, the initial experience of salvation is not the end – it is only the beginning. They haven’t yet arrived – they have only started. The *PASSOVER FEAST* was preparatory for a wilderness journey, not the celebration of a safe home-coming. Yes, we often need to be reminded that the death of the Passover Lamb finished (completed) Redemption, so far as God is concerned – there is nothing more He needs to do. However, as far as we are concerned, when we have accepted God’s provision, Redemption has only begun. Receiving Christ Jesus as LORD and Saviour is a wonderful experience; it’s so wonderful that it will take all the remainder of a lifetime, and then on into eternity, to discover everything that is ours since we belong to God’s family. What privileges are ours, what opportunities, and what responsibility!

Life begins by deliverance from Egypt; but the dangers are not yet over by any means, nor the hardships, trials, difficulties, or perplexities. In fact, Israel had circumstances to contend with after their freedom, which they never faced before.

So it is with the Christian Way, and we needn’t be surprised or dismayed; for won’t He who has delivered us, afterward protect us? Many people are kept back from becoming Christian, because of the fear that they would never be able to hold out. I have often heard the statement, “If I’m going to be a Christian, I want to be a real one!” But rather than take any chances of falling, and so bringing reproach on the Church, they feel it is best not to start. There may be someone listening to this program who has been in bondage to this age-old problem. Will you listen while I tell you again that He who is able to “save to the uttermost” can also, and will, “keep to the uttermost” all who will trust Him implicitly and obey Him unquestioningly.

Let us look again at these verses which tell of God’s guidance – the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night to lead them in the way. God is going with them, He will share every day’s experience with them. And did not Jesus say, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”*? and again, *“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”*? There was a pillar of cloud by day to shade them from the burning heat of the desert sun. Is it not written in the Book of Psalms, *“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”*? And again, *“The LORD is your shade at your right hand”*? (Hebrews 13:5; Psalms 91 and 121)

Let us think for a moment about the “cloud” idea. Nothing could be more flimsy and weak than a cloud. Sceptics would say, “Just wait for the first desert wind, and that cloud will disappear.” But a flimsy cloud guided the Israelites safely, through a waste and howling wilderness, for forty years. You see, *God is in this cloud*. This is God’s cloud. He is Master of all the elements – Sovereign over all the forces of

nature. When God takes up His abode in a cloud, there can never be a strong-enough wind to dissolve it, or move Him from His purpose. This is called a *“Pillar of Cloud.”* That is – it’s a cloud strong as a pillar.

Let us move on, then, with Israel, reading from Exodus 14. Israel is through with Egypt; but Egypt is not through with Israel. After the recovery from the first shock of the death of all their firstborn, they decided to pursue their former slaves, and bring them back into bondage again. How true this is of the Christian life to this very day! Satan, through his human agents, will bend every effort to encompass the downfall of a new-born Christian. Hardened old sinners, and unregenerate Church members will work together to try and persuade the young convert that the best thing to do would be to come on back with the gang. “Don’t be fanatical! Don’t be narrow! Don’t throw away all the pleasures and opportunities that old Egypt has to off to follow a ‘will-o’-the-wisp’ religious experience, that will probably peter out anyway before the year is over.”

“And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? . . . And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’” (Exodus 14:10-14).

Here is the picture of God’s appointed leader meeting the fear of these trembling saints with words of assurance and comfort. *“Fear not,”* said Moses, *“Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show you today.”* I like that word “salvation.” It is one of the greatest words in the Bible. It has to do with an experience with God, in which God has committed Himself to the deliverance of His people – not all at once and once for all, but rather, every day – a daily salvation for every day’s circumstance. Romans 1:16 is a testimony of Paul, who knew testings and trials such as few of us have ever endured; but through it all he had found that the Gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Paul said, *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...”*

“Stand still,” said Moses, *“and see the salvation of the LORD today.”* Redemption in Exodus is the same as Redemption in our day. It is Redemption for today – for today’s trial – for today’s testing. No matter how great the pressure may be, nor how mighty the enemy, there is deliverance for today. Not only does “salvation” mean deliverance; but, also “preservation.” It means safety and security. The enemy will overtake us, but he cannot overcome us if we keep *“looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2).

Now, let us see what God will do in this desperate situation – with an armed enemy behind them, and the waters of the Red Sea in front of them. God’s man Moses is confident that there will be some way out; but he doesn’t know how.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward; But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” . . . “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.... Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen.’ ... Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.... So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.”

Time has nearly run out for us again, but before we leave the air let us here be reminded that Redemption, from first to last, is a supernatural and miraculous affair. Nothing less than the power of God, in conflict and contest with the power of Satan, is the explanation. Salvation *is* by the Blood, but it is also by the omnipotent Spirit of the Living God. Redemption is accomplished by power; but not the power of human intellect, nor the power of education, nor the power of philosophy, nor the power of the human will, but by the power of Almighty God. Furthermore, God's power is operative only on behalf of those who are under the Blood.

John tells us that *"There are three that witness on earth – the Spirit and the Water and the Blood; and these three agree in one"* (1 John 5:8). That is to say, they work in closest harmony and co-operation, one with the other. The Blood of Christ fits the believer for the operation of the Holy Ghost in all His sanctifying, energizing power. *"The Angel of the LORD encamps all around about those who fear Him, and delivers them"* (Psalm 34:7). Blessed be His Name!

Let me repeat it again – Redemption is an act of God's power whereby those who are in bondage to sin and Satan, helpless to free themselves, are set free by Divine instruction and Divine intervention.

The last scene in this morning's story (Exodus 15:20) is a happy praise-service on the safe side of the Red Sea, with Miriam the prophetess leading the song in words something like these:

*"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea;
Jehovah hath triumphed, His people are free!"*

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Bitter Waters, Marah; Resting Place, Elim

1 Corinthians 10:13 – *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

Let us turn now to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation on *Redemption in Exodus*. Last Sunday we had the story of the guiding cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea. As we read in 1 Corinthians 10:2, *“They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the Sea.”* From this we learn that even in those far off times the idea of baptism was clearly taught. The children of Israel were in the very midst of the Red Sea, with a wall of water on either side, and right above them was the cloud of glory – the very presence of Jehovah. The Egyptians entered into the sea as well, but, because they had not kept the ordinance of the Passover lamb, and had not applied the blood to their door-posts, they were all destroyed. And so, we learn that the Red Sea experience in the book of Exodus is a spiritual “type” and “shadow” of a New Testament experience which is called Baptism.

Notice, first of all, that they went down into the sea; they did not bring the sea up and pour it on themselves. This is fundamental in the doctrine of baptism by water. For baptism means death – death to Egypt – death to the old life – death to the dark and dreary past, with all its slavery, its idolatry, its misery. As we have so often mentioned on this program, it is only by death that God can set His people free. When we think of what baptism is intended to represent, the only proper thing for a baptismal candidate to do, is to go down into the water. Not only does baptism mean death, but it also signifies that which follows death – namely, burial. The corpse must be buried, it must be covered, or, as the literal word “baptism” means, it must be overwhelmed, plunged beneath, completely enveloped. After death, comes burial. But there is still one more event to which baptism gives testimony, and that is resurrection. Death means the end of the old life, but resurrection means the beginning of the new. Therefore, says the Bible, *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away, behold, all things become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Well, all this and more happened to Israel, though the most of them never realized the spiritual significance of the things that were taking place around them. In today’s meditation, we find them on the victory side of the Red Sea, and they are singing Redemption’s song with all their heart. There is a barrier between them and Egypt now, which was never there before – the Red Sea. It opened up to let them escape from Pharaoh; but it will never open to let them go back to Egypt. This is one reason why it’s a good thing for young converts to be baptised in water very soon after applying the Blood to their heart’s door. It serves as a barrier and a reminder that they must not anticipate or contemplate going back. *FORWARD*, is the only way left for Israel, or for the young convert. And let me say just here, that there will always be a road forward, no matter how far we may have already come.

Now, let us go with Israel on the next stage of their journey. *“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore, the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, ‘What shall we drink?’”* (Exodus 15:22-24).

Just three days since an experience of victory and power – only three days since they had witnessed one of the mightiest displays of God’s power that any person has ever seen, one of the greatest miracles recorded in Scripture; and all is forgotten in the test that follows.

Let us not be too hard on these poor people, for they are not much different to folks like you or I. It’s a hard lesson to learn, but we’ll never amount to much until we do learn that miracles in themselves do not change people. No amount of the display of the supernatural will cure us of our fickleness, our shallowness, or even our unbelief. No people who ever lived have had a greater evidence of the constant daily care of Jehovah than this people Israel; but by the same rule, none showed such short-sightedness, or proved so difficult to manage and lead on in God’s good way, as they.

Faith is not the result of great miracles; great miracles are the result of great faith. Faith is born in adversity, trials and testings – in hardships and dangers – in those things which we dread most, and most dislike. Looking back three days doesn't seem long; but then, they had no way of knowing that it would only be three days. They had never gone this way before and, as far as the eye could see, there was nothing but the burning sand of the desert ahead. But, if they had just looked up, they would have seen the cloud. They would have had the assurance that God was there, and that He knew what the future held — He knew how far they could go without water, and how far it was to the next oasis.

Our trouble is just like that of Israel. When thirst comes, when trouble comes, when hardships come, we can think only of our suffering, and we forget the One who promised that He would not let any more come upon us *“than we are able to bear – and with every temptation He will make a way of escape”* (1 Corinthians 10:13). The song of deliverance they sang on the victory side of the Red Sea had long since died away. The only song they could sing now was a song of complaint and bitterness. Anybody can sing a song of triumph after a great victory has been won; but the song which most pleases the LORD is the song of faith that is heard on the desert air, when there is no water in sight, and it's been three days since the last good drink was enjoyed.

I suppose more people give up at this early stage of Redemption, than at any other point along the way. After the first glad and joyous experience of salvation has subsided, and the new-born convert must go back to work and face the old crowd again, the same old drudgery of the daily work – when he must face temptations that he never had before, and the blessings of the revival meetings are only memories; then is the dangerous and critical time. It was so easy to believe when you were in the atmosphere of the supernatural, and it is so easy to doubt, now that you are in the atmosphere of the natural. But just hold on! God didn't bring you out just to disappoint you, just to forsake you in the wilderness. Things may be very dry just now, but if you will look up, you'll find the cloud is still there. Learning to walk by faith is like a child learning to walk – there are usually a good many tumbles, but father or mother is not far away to help the little one back on his feet again.

Sooner or later, in the Christian way, we'll have to learn that faith is not sight – not feeling. Faith is the sacrifice of our own understanding to the all-wise God, and leaving the responsibility for our care to Him.

Well, three days without water is a very severe test, but at the close of the third day the Israelites came to a pool of water. With great joy, they all rushed down to drink, only to find that the water was bitter. They couldn't drink it. Surely, this is too much. This is adding insult to injury. This is only mocking their desperate situation! *“They complained against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And Moses cried unto the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made for them a statute, and an ordinance, and there He proved them.”*

I suppose thousands of sermons have been preached on this experience of Israel, and no doubt thousands more will be preached on this side of heaven. We only have time, today, to touch on the very clear and plain lessons that lie right on the surface.

These bitter waters are “types” and “shadows” of the many trials and difficulties of the Christian way. They fall across our path very soon after we begin our journey. Let us remember this, that they are not sent as punishments for some wrongdoing of the past. For all the past is under the Blood, and buried in the sea – the sea of God's forgetfulness. This is not a punishment. It's a test. It is putting your experience to the test, to see, first of all, if it will endure all the difficulties of the way; and then, to strengthen and build up in faith all those who do endure. For, faith grows by exercise in impossible circumstances. This new experience that Israel has entered into must be tested. It must be put on the proving ground. That is the sense of verse 25, *“There He made for them an ordinance, and there He proved them.”*

The remedy for this bitter trial is a very simple one, and yet, very profound. The LORD showed Moses a tree. I suppose there were many trees around this watering place, but there was only one that would heal these bitter waters. For the Christian, the tree is the Cross, as the Apostle Paul sings out, *“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ; by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* (Galatians 6:14). This is one of the most precious and valuable of all lessons to learn, as we begin to walk the Christian Way. There is never a trial so difficult, nor circumstance so bitter, but what the Cross of Christ will sweeten and purify it.

These waters were healed as the tree was cast into their depths; and, just to show that healing for both soul and body is set forth, we have the Covenant of Healing in the next verse. Listen to the words as I read them to you: *“and said, ‘If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.’”* The tree heals the waters, but it is the LORD in the tree – the Cross, that heals both body and soul. But it’s not the cross as a symbol, but the Cross as an experience; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of Jesus by the prophet, *“Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses”* (Matthew 8:17). The bitterness is taken from every experience by the knowledge that we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.

Israel seemed always to be afraid that they were going to die, whereas, if they had realised the spiritual significance of the experience of the Red Sea and the cloud, they would have rejoiced in that they were already dead, and the life they now were living was not subject to law of sin and death. Romans 6:11 tells us, *“Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* This “reckoning” is a daily affair, for it must be a daily experience; but it is especially valuable in the time of the bitter trial.

“I am the LORD who heals you” is the lesson Israel learned at Marah, and they could not have learned this at any other place. God leads us into the place of trial that He might manifest His grace, His healing power, and His mercy. Just one more stage of their journey, and we are through for today. Verse 27, *“Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters”* – a blessed oasis in a waste and howling wilderness – twelve tribes and twelve wells with seventy palm trees. Here we have a very early example of one of the songs of David, when he said, *“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning”* (Psalm 30:5).

It is true that blessings do not last forever; but then, neither do trials. And, thinking about a year, all the way through, there isn’t more night than day; and there isn’t more day than night.

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Manna

John 6:35 – “*And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’*”

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word and continue our theme *Redemption in Exodus*. Last Sunday we considered the bitter waters of Marah, and then the Resting Place called Elim. That, by the way, is the place after which *ELIM TABERNACLE* is named – a place of refreshing – of healing – of quietness and rest – a fruitful place where water is found in great abundance – the water of life whose source is the throne of the King (see Revelation 22).

We have the 16th chapter of Exodus before us this morning, and it promises to be very interesting. First of all, it’s the story of Israel’s hunger; and then, of God’s provision of the daily Manna. The children of Israel have been out of Egypt for nearly a month now, and all the supplies they had brought with them were exhausted. The only thing between them and starvation is God. It seemed to them then, as it does to many in our day, that this is a very impractical and unsatisfactory protraction.

To so many unreasoning materialists, there’s no connection between God and groceries – no relationship whatever between religion and bread. If they were given their choice as to whether they would have God or a good meal, they would be short-sighted enough to choose the immediate satisfaction for their hunger, without regard as to where soul and body should spend eternity.

Let us read Exodus 16:2-3 “*Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, ‘Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.’*”

How inconsistent these people are – always wishing they had died before they got here, and yet terrified that they might die while they are here – always blaming Moses and Aaron for their circumstance, and yet never giving credit when things changed for the better.

Listen to them talk about the good old days in Egypt, when they sat by the flesh pots and ate bread to the full. If things were so wonderful for them there, then why did they ever leave? They didn’t have to come with Moses and Aaron. They could have stayed there, if they had wanted to. Did you ever notice how people have a way of remembering what they want to remember, and forgetting what they want to forget? They could remember the bread and the fleshpots. But had they forgotten the whip of the taskmaster, the long days in the fields gathering straw and making bricks, carrying heavy burdens? Had they forgotten seeing their male children put to death, with no prospect of deliverance?

It is a good thing to call to remembrance the former days, providing we are really honest and remember the bitter as well as the sweet – and the sweet as well as the bitter. We still have these people with us today; they are always talking about the “good old days”; always wishing they had them back again. But as far as I’m concerned, I would rather have the present, with all its trials – with all its heart-aches – with all its perplexities, than go back to the most pleasant experience I have ever known.

If you will just stop and think for a moment, I’m sure that you would, too. And *that* for two good reasons: FIRST, we are now in the place *where God has planted us*. If He had wanted us in the past, He would have left us there. If He had wanted us to keep our old experiences, associations, and circumstances, then they never would have changed.

I say again, we are today where God has brought us. The place may not seem as pleasant as where we were before, but who said it ought to be pleasant? Who said we would always have flower-strewn pathways? fragrant bowers of ease and pleasure? nice little happy experiences that do nothing more than make us feel good; but never make us any better?

The main thing about the Christian experience is the SECOND reason: Namely, *we are moving on*. It is of the mercy of the LORD that we left the land of “Egypt;” that we got safely across the “Red Sea;” that the waters of “Marah” were sweetened. Yes, and it’s of the mercy of God that we didn’t stay at that lovely place called “Elim;” for we will never, never arrive in Canaan if we don’t move on.

The “good old days” may have their pleasant memories; but memories of the past are not nearly so

inspiring as anticipation of the future. Thinking of the past will never help us so much as thinking of the future. Well, I'm far more interested in the country to which we are going, than the country from whence we came. Tomorrow has far more hope than yesterday. Yesterday is spent – yesterday is gone – I'll never have it again; but tomorrow holds many surprises, new opportunities and privileges.

We are thinking of *Redemption* in the Book of Exodus; and in a very real sense, Israel's experience is a preview of the Christian experience. God's provision for His people under the Old Covenant is not better or more certain than it is for His people under the New Covenant.

Well, Israel needed bread. And, according to their remarks, it was the first time in their lives they had ever been in such a state. Bread and water are basic necessities for us all, and if we could only see it, God is the only One who can supply them. The Psalmist said, "*You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing*" (Psalm 145:16). Life is a wonderful mystery, which none of us understands, though we all enjoy it. God alone can give life, and only He can sustain it. And the way God has chosen to do this is with food. This principle is true for both body and soul; and Israel's experience in the physical realm is the Church's experience in the spiritual realm. In the first place, they couldn't bring enough food with them for the entire journey; and, since they were travelling onward, they couldn't raise their own crops. Besides, the country through which they journeyed was a desert land; it was non-productive. And so, they were shut up to heaven; confined, now, to the supplies of the infinite One – restricted to the boundless resources of the One who scatters the universe with worlds ten thousand times larger than this little earth.

Israel will be fed by a miracle; but then, are we not all fed by supernatural means? Every loaf of bread is a miracle; for it is made of grain that found its life in the death of the parent seed. The fire that baked it is a miracle, as well as the yeast that permeated it. The only difference in this case will be that the Creator will take a short-cut and feed His people directly, without the process of planting and reaping. Let us read verse 4 "*Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.'*" Now verses 14 to 16 "*And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, 'This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.'*"

Here, then, is one of the early pictures in "type" of the Bread of Life. All life must be sustained, whether it be physical or spiritual. God provides the food, but the hungry ones must gather it. They must go after it. God doesn't put it in their mouths or on their tables. Again, I say, they who want to live must go out after the bread.

Now, let us examine this manna – this mysterious bread which fell each night for 40 years, enough to feed that great multitude in a desert land. As to its source, there is no doubt about it – the Manna came from Heaven. "*Man did eat angels' food,*" says the Bible (Psalm 78:25). It is a marvellous substance – a complete and perfect diet for old and young alike. Little children ate Manna and grew strong and healthy; old men and women ate Manna and were able to take the trying journey through the desert.

I notice, too, that they had to gather it before the sun grew hot, or else it would melt. And yet having gathered it, they took it home and baked it in their ovens. Not only so, but it seemed to defy the laws of quantity; for it is written, "*He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.*" Then again, they could only keep it for one day, except on the sixth day, when they gathered enough for two days. Apparently, there was never any question as to the supply; there was more than they could ever use. But they couldn't take any more than they needed.

All these facts are very interesting. And they set forth, in the Book of Exodus, the great foundational truths of Redemption. Jesus said, "*I am the Bread of Life*" (John 6:35); and again, "*As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.*" (John 6:57-58).

Christian experience and Christian life is sustained only by partaking of Christ. I notice that the word "eats" is in the progressive and continuous sense. Nowhere is it suggested that spiritual life is an "all at once" and "once and for all" experience. Jesus Himself taught us to pray, "*Give us this day our daily*

bread” (Matthew 6:11). There is abundance, but you cannot have any more than you need; and you cannot have any more than you will partake of. The bread is given, but you must gather it. And just here, let me say that the morning is the time best suited to this matter.

Israel was calling to mind the good old days, back in Egypt, but God had something for them much better than anything they had ever known before. There is a soul-satisfying experience about which this world knows nothing; it comes from communion with Christ. Everything that Manna was to Israel for the body, Christ is to the believer for soul and spirit; the only difference being, that Israel ate Manna in the wilderness and died; but this is Bread that a man may eat thereof and not die. *“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”* (John 6:27).

Just as we leave the air, let me ask you this one question, Are you hungry? Are you looking back to Egypt with longing eyes? Are you murmuring and complaining at the way God is leading? Is your experience all desert, all barren and dry? Listen! It’s in the desert that Manna falls. And you won’t need to go far to find it either; for the Scripture says that it lay “all around the camp.” There is bread for the asking, bread for the gathering.

Well of water, ever springing;
Bread of life so rich and free;
Untold wealth that never faileth,
My Redeemer is to me.

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Water from the Rock

John 7:37-39 – *“Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”*

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. Our theme is *Redemption in Exodus*. Last Sunday we had the account of the Manna falling from Heaven as a pattern and “type” of the *Bread of Life*, even our LORD Jesus Christ. We have chapter 17 before us this morning, and there are two great lessons here for us; but I’m afraid our time will be too short to do them justice.

First, It’s the story of water from the rock, and then victory over Amalek. *“And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, ‘Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’ So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.’ And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”*

I don’t know if *JOHN NEWTON* was thinking of this scene when he wrote the hymn, *Amazing Grace*; but certainly, in this experience of Israel, grace is set forth in a most amazing way. There is a sense, too, in which Israel is being dealt with according to the grace of God; for the Law had not yet been given.

First of all, we want to take a little time to consider the “typical” value of water in Scripture. As we mentioned last Sunday, bread and water are the basic necessities for the human race – food and water are the most common and universal symbols used in Scripture. Water seems to be accepted everywhere as a picture and type of life. Though we are so familiar with the substance, there is still something wonderful and mysterious about it . . .

- The Garden of Eden had a river that parted into four heads and went to the four points of the compass.
- In Ezekiel’s vision of the coming Kingdom, he saw living waters flowing from Jerusalem and wherever the river went, the land was healed and became fruitful.
- It was at Jacob’s well, where Jesus met the woman of Samaria and said unto her, *“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”* (John 4:14).
- Just a little later, in John 7, *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing^[a] in Him would receive.”*
- And then, in the very last Book of the Bible, and the last chapter, we read: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”* (Revelation 22:1-2).

Thus we see that water is held out in Scripture as a picture from the world of nature, of a spiritual substance which works, in the spiritual, the way natural water does in the physical. There are four main uses of water that we are all familiar with.

I. *Irrigation*. All growth in the vegetable or animal kingdom is dependent on water, and so it is in the realm of the Spirit. All growth in Christian character, all fruitfulness in Christian graces, is conditioned by the supply of the Spirit’s fulness. Only the Spirit of God can produce the fruit of the Spirit in the garden of the heart.

II. *Refreshing*. How wonderful to be able to give a cup of cold water in His name. How refreshing and reviving is a drink at the cool sparkling fountain on a hot summer day. How strengthening and invigorating is a drink at the fountain of life that flows from the everlasting throne, when we faint in the

desert of worldliness and unbelief. It is the ministry of water to refresh and revive.

III. *Cleansing*. Whatever would we do without a wash day? And there wouldn't be one, if there were no water. All the soap in the world would be of little value if there were no water. David the Psalmist said, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word" (Psalm 119:9). Then, again, we read in Ephesians 5:25-27 that "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." What a blessed thing it is that though we have sinned, there is cleansing. You will remember reading in the Book of John, where Jesus was about to wash the feet of Peter, and when Peter objected, Jesus said to him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Peter was so overcome by the thought of being shut away from the presence of Christ, that he cried out, "LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:8-9).

One of the fastest cleansing agents in the physical world are the mighty rivers which transverse the continents, carrying all the filth and corruption out into the salty sea. There the water is purified, distilled, and carried back to the place from whence it came. So it is in the spiritual realm. There is a mighty river that carries the sins of the believer out into the sea of God's forgetfulness, where they are lost sight of forever, leaving the field of the human heart fresh and clean and pure.

IV. *Power*. To me it is quite significant that parallel with the amazing discoveries of the power potential of our rivers in this generation, has come the re-discovery of the unlimited resources of power available to the believer in that infinite River of the Spirit of the Almighty God. And so, we learn that water is life, it is refreshing, it is a cleansing agent, and it is powerful.

Now, in the light of all this, let us look at the Exodus account again, and see first the seriousness of being without water, and then the wonderful way that God came down to meet that need. First, let us see that Moses cried unto the LORD, saying what shall I do? Prayer is the requisite, when people cry for the Living Water. Only God can supply it. It must come from Heaven; and it will come, when prayer becomes as importunate as this prayer of Moses, the man of God. Prayer is the key that opens Heaven's door. Prayer gives us joy which we never knew before. Notice the answer to Moses' prayer: "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." God stood on the rock and told Moses to strike it. What a picture of Calvary! God stood upon that great rock, and one of the soldiers with a spear pierced Jesus' side, and forthwith came there out Blood and Water.

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY (1775) was meditating on this when he wrote this hymn:

| | |
|---|---|
| Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the Blood, From thy riven side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure, save From wrath and make me pure. | Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the Fountain fly; Wash me, Saviour, or I die. |
| Not the labour of my hands Can fulfil Thy law's demands; Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow, All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone. | While I draw this fleeting breath, When my eyes shall close in death, When I rise to worlds unknown, And behold Thee on Thy throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee |

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:4 "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." What infinite mercy and grace is manifest here! God takes the blow to open a fountain for perishing men. Man is given a rod of power with which he can strike the very heart of God; and having struck Him, having scourged Him, having spit upon Him, having crucified Him, he hears this amazing prayer, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). God takes the worst that men can do, and uses it as a means of satisfying their deepest need. They certainly didn't know what they were doing; but a few days later, when a handful of this despised Galilean's disciples began to

preach the Gospel in the power of the life-giving Spirit, propelled by a power they had never known before, these wicked men were convinced they had added to their wickedness by crucifying their Messiah. They were pricked in their hearts, and said *“Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:37-38).

Do you now see the connection? These men were thirsting, but they did not know what for. When one came to them and told them that He would give them living water, they despised Him and crucified Him. The result was such an effusion of the Spirit as the world had never seen. Indeed, there never could have been such a manifestation of the Presence and Power of God, until the Rock was smitten. As we read in John 7:39, *“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”* And here is another verse that speaks the same thing. Acts 3:26 *“Unto you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”* Unto you first – he is speaking to the very men responsible for the crucifixion; and they were the first to hear the Gospel of Life – of refreshing – of cleansing – and of power.

We are still on the subject of Redemption in Exodus, and this is one more picture in “type” of God’s way with men in the New Testament. Travellers in this part of the desert claim that there is still a spring of water running from this rock. Whether this is true, I couldn’t say; but this I do know: The Fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness, more the 1900 years ago, is still flowing as fresh and strong as ever. It is a life-giving stream, for it is the Water of Life – the Fountain of eternal youth. It is a Fountain that refreshes; for those who drink thereof will never again be satisfied with the world’s gaudy fountains and brackish springs. The moral cess pools where drink those poor deluded mortals will no longer have any appeal to those who have drunk from the Fountain that springs from the Rock of Ages.

Yes, and it’s a Fountain that cleanses whiter than snow, says the Bible, *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* (Isaiah 1:18).

Furthermore, it is a Fountain of power, the extent of which has never yet been explored. *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile”* (Romans 1:16). It is the power of God to deliver, to protect, to preserve, to perfect. Power to live and power to die, and finally, power to rise again from the dead.

Jesus said, *“Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely”*
(Revelation 22:17).

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Victory Over Amalek

Hebrews 10:23 – *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”*

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning lesson on *Redemption in Exodus*. Last Sunday we had the account of the smitten rock, with all its “typical” beauty and wonder – a perfect picture of the smiting of the Rock of Ages that all the world might come and drink of the Water of Life. Before we leave Exodus 17, we want to look at the next event in Israel’s experience – verses 8-16.

It is the story of Israel’s first conflict with the children of Amalek, a grandson of Esau. These folks were persistent enemies of Israel, a constant source of trouble and strife. Apparently at this time they were nothing more than a roving band of desert bandits, whose chief source of livelihood was found by robbing travellers on the caravan route from Egypt to Palestine. There always have been those whose life seems to be bent to destroy or interfere with the progress of God’s people; they are never happy unless trying to undermine their influence by slander or insinuation. Many children of Amalek still follow the path of those who are escaped from sin’s dominion and are seeking a better way of life, a land of peace and plenty, of honey, oil, and wine.

It sometimes comes as a shock to the new-born Christian to find that there are battles to be fought along the Pilgrim Way; but the sooner we find it out, the better; for then we will be prepared and ready to engage the enemy whenever and wherever he may appear.

We are considering, of course, the “typical” story of *Redemption in Exodus* – the experience of an Old Testament people which gives a sort of preview of a New Testament experience. First of all, these Amalekites were related to Israel. Their grandfather was a brother of Jacob. They were of the same family, but they were not of the same persuasion. Israel’s native land was Canaan, but these Amalekites seemed quite content to dwell in the wilderness, in the desert.

It is strange, but nonetheless true, that oftentimes the greatest opposition comes from our own relatives. Jesus said, *“I am come to see a man at variance against his father, the daughter against her mother; a man’s foes shall be those of his own household”* (Matthew 10:35). Somehow or other it seems to antagonize our own relatives to see one of their number show some concern about his spiritual welfare, and begin making an honest effort to follow the LORD. They have nothing but a wilderness experience themselves; but are quite decided that no one else is going to have a better lot than they.

In reading up on this matter, I learned, too, that these Amalekites did not come right out in the open to fight a pitched battle with all the host of Israel; but according to Deuteronomy 25:17, they came sneaking around the outer edges of the camp, and attacked the feeble and weary. This makes their activity all the more contemptible and unreasonable.

Here again is a principle that holds true through all Church conflict: the enemy never comes out in the open to declare his intentions with a challenge to fight it out in the open field. Rather, he is always trying ways and means of taking us unawares, attacking us just at our weakest point. This is one of the reasons that Jesus so often warned His disciples to *“watch and pray”* lest they *“enter into temptation.”*

- Matthew 26:4 - the Scribes and Pharisees *“plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him”*
- Mark 13:33 - Jesus said, *“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is”*
- Mark 14:38 - *“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”*
- Luke 21:36 - *“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

Be on your guard at all times, *“because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). To me it is highly significant that the conflict with Amalek is recorded immediately after the story of the smitten Rock.

In the Book of Exodus, the children of Israel drank of the spiritual Rock, Christ Jesus “typically,” and so, are prepared for the battle with Amalek. God’s knowledge is all foreknowledge, the future is as clear as the past to Him whose orders we seek to obey. And so, though we may be taken by surprise, God never

is; and as we follow Him, He will see to it that we are always prepared, though we may not realize at the time what God is doing.

Not only do we find that our own relatives are so often opposed to the stand we have taken, and the direction we are going; but there is an enemy who is closer to us than our closest blood relation – closer than father or mother, brother or sister. Galatians 5:17 tells us that *“the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you wish.”* The “flesh” in this verse is a “Paulism” for the self-life; it is the old ego – the old nature – the old desires clamouring for attention and trying to interfere with our journey into our inheritance.

Of all the enemies that we have to contend with along the Christian way, none is so treacherous, so deceitful, so beguiling, and so persistent as this one, called “the flesh.” And by the same rule, there is no other enemy with whom we are so inclined to be so lenient with, so willing to come to terms with as with “the flesh.” Yet, it is absolutely fatal to agree to any kind of an armistice, or arrange any truce, for, says the Scripture, *“these are contrary one to the other.”* That is, they are never consistent one with the other in their views, desires, or intentions. It is impossible to reconcile these two, so that they will live together in peace; for they are unalterably opposed to each other’s principles. These are contrary one to the other, so that you cannot, you must not, you dare not do the things this enemy suggests.

Romans 7:21 tells, in other words, the story of this wilderness conflict: *“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our LORD!”* Then, in 8:2, *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

There is only one way to deal with Amalek – or the self-life; and that is to put it to death. I notice in this chapter of Exodus that it was Joshua who was sent out to deal with this treacherous foe. And “Joshua” is the Hebrew name for the Greek name “Jesus.” And so, we are taught, as we study Redemption in Exodus, that victory is in Jesus. He is the Captain of our Salvation; He is also Jehovah Sabaoth, the LORD of Hosts.

Let us read Exodus 17:10-13 *“So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”*

Here, then, is another aspect of the conflict that must never be lost sight of. These three men on the top of the hill may not seem to be of very much use, and just on the surface it might seem that they should be down in the front lines taking their share of the danger and doing their share of the fighting; but actually, they are just as important as any other person, and the work they are doing is just as essential as Joshua or his soldiers. This is one of the clearest pictures in the Old Testament of the place of intercession in spiritual conflict. These three men are worth more than a whole regiment with all their artillery. They may be out of the front lines, as far as the natural or physical battle lines are concerned; but they are right in the front lines, as far as the spiritual is concerned.

Let me say just here that men and women who know how to pray are worth more to the nation than all its armies, tanks, planes, and bombs. And in the Church, I would rather have three men who really know how to get in touch with heaven in prayer, than ten times that number who only know how to sit comfortably in a pew, and give the appearance of being interested in the sermon or the song. All the other activities of the Church, no doubt, have their place, and accomplish some good things for the glory of God; but when Amalek comes with his treacherous hordes, when the self-life rises up and would destroy the progress of the Christian Church; then we don’t need songsters to sing, nor musicians to play; we don’t need men who are clever in debate, with great influence in politics. This situation will not be helped by putting on a drive for more members or more funds. But this is a condition that calls for someone to pray.

Fortunately, Israel had Moses. They wouldn't even have gotten this far, if they did not have him, and they won't get any further than this, if Moses fails them now. But he must not fail. His elder brother Aaron and another man, by the name of Hur, stood one on either side, holding up his hands until the sun went down, and Israel won the day. Amalek was defeated and his people dispersed. Then Moses built an altar on that hill, and called it *Jehovah Nissi - The LORD our Banner*.

Let us take just one more look at this experience of Israel, before we leave the air. There is an army of Israel under Joshua out there in the desert, engaged in battle with a most unprincipled and unscrupulous foe. Think of yourself as being in that army; for, if you are a Christian, then you will certainly have to contend with Amalek. *"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other."*

But there is an Intercessor. There is One up there, on the holy hill of Zion, whose interest in our affairs never wanes and whose ministry never ceases. Listen, while I read it for you from the Epistle to the Hebrews:

(4:15-16) *"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"*

(7:25) *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

(9:24) *"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"*

(10:19-25) *"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."*

(12:2) *"Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."*

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – Necessity of Law

Galatians 3:24 – *“The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our morning meditation. We have come now to a very interesting and vital place in our study of *Redemption in Exodus* – when Israel comes to Mount Sinai; and, through Moses their leader, is given God’s Law as a rule of life. It is the most important event in Israel’s experience between Egypt and Canaan. Not only so, but it is also one of the most important revelations in all Scripture as to the nature of God, and as to what He requires of His people. If we did not know God’s attitude toward sin and His standard for righteousness, we could have no appreciation for the full meaning of “Redemption from sin.”

Let us consider, first of all, that life is always conditioned by law. Indeed, there can be no life or existence, if there is no law. There must be fixed principles. These fixed principles govern and regulate the behaviour of every created thing; otherwise, creation would result in chaos and confusion. Every created thing must find its proper place in the order of things and maintain its proper relationship with every other created thing – and its proper relationship with its Creator. Not many of us ever stop to think how much of our daily living is controlled by laws. We have gotten so accustomed to the law of gravity, for instance, that we forget all about it until we have an accident and fall off the roof or into the cellar. Then we are very forcibly reminded that there is such a law, and we had better regulate ourselves to conform to it. In civil affairs, we have long since learned to respect the rights of others, and the possessions of others; for if we don’t, there are laws which will, once again, very emphatically remind us of our obligation. We often use the expression, “breaking the law;” but actually, we can do no such thing. We may transgress the law; that is, step over the prescribed boundaries; but that law isn’t broken – it is just as solid and intact as ever it was. We can’t break the law; but it will break us if we don’t respect and regard it.

Let us here be reminded that there are laws in the moral realm, just as surely as there are in the physical realm – laws that are just as firmly established as is the law of gravity – laws which cannot be changed along with changing ideas and fashions of men. These laws of morality cannot be changed by the mere whim and fancy of created man; for they are fixed principles that rest upon, and have their origin in, the very nature of God our Creator. There are some things that are fundamentally and basically wrong; because they are at variance with, and opposed to, the very nature of God.

They are not wrong because the Bible says they are wrong – they are wrong because they are wrong. Therefore, the Bible gives utterance to them. For instance, the law that says, “You shall have no other gods before Me,” does not suddenly introduce the fact that only the God of Heaven and earth, the LORD Jehovah of the Bible, should be recognized. But in the very nature of things, nothing but confusion comes from the serving a multitude of gods, each with different requirements in the moral realm. For evidence of this fact look at India. With over 300,000,000 gods, it is filled with misery, suffering, sorrow and death.

Well then, let us come and stand with Israel at Mount Sinai – that dreadful place. There are only eleven days’ travel left, between them and the Promised Land. Here, at Sinai, God comes down to advise and instruct His people as to what He requires of them now. Let us read Exodus 19:3 *“And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My Covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”*

Next given, are special instructions to prepare the people for the revelation of God’s will for them. The following 12 chapters detail the regulations, precepts, statutes, and judgments to cover every phase of life for this nation, who are now God’s people. Nothing here is left to choice. The people are not consulted as to their opinions – they are not asked to suggest any amendments or alterations. This is not a man-made law growing out of man’s concept of God. It is God’s own statement of what will be the basis of His Covenant with them, and by what standard they will be judged. It would take us weeks to cover this

matter, and we have only two more Sundays, after today. So, we will just have to summarize the whole picture in few words, and leave you with the highlights of *Redemption in Exodus*.

The very first commandment is the sum total of them all. Every other article that the law deals with, given through Moses, is briefly comprehended and embraced by this first one, and greatest of all – namely, No Other God Beside Me. God *first, only* and *always*. This is the very first commandment, and it's the very first principle in Christian living. We must keep in mind that Israel had only recently come from a pagan land, where gods were as thick as trees, and as low as creeping things. All around them for all their lives they had seen people worshipping both inanimate objects and living creatures. So, this first requirement of God for their lives must have seemed very extraordinary to them.

Let me say again, however, that this is the very first principle in Christian living, and the very essence of all proper relationships. Once it is properly established that God has first claim on your life, and that never at any time and under any circumstances will anything be allowed to take precedence over Him, then all other relationships will be found to fit into their proper place. If we have joined that great assembly, the true “Church of the First Born” who have their names written in Heaven, then we must allow our Master to bring our lives into harmony with His all-wise and merciful plan. Just as all the instruments in the orchestra must be tuned to the piano, so everyone of us must be tuned to the Divine will. Then we shall also be in tune with each other.

To some narrow-minded, shallow-thinking people, it seems tyrannical and intolerable that God *must* come first in every Christian's life – that He should have the first claim on our affections, desires, and ambitions. But those who have at last, with glad surrender, entered into this experience of submission, have all found that rather than being slaves to an unreasonable despot, they have entered into a fellowship with a living, loving, and merciful Redeemer. It is no longer bondage in slavish fear; but freedom, with a glorious liberty to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in Heaven. After all, who has more right to first place in our lives than He who created us, and then redeemed us after we were sold under sin? What could be better than to be under the direct control of the Master of ocean and earth and sky? What could be safer than to be the personal possession and peculiar treasure of the Guardian of the Universe?

Last Sunday we considered the conflict with Amalek, and its “typical” significance of the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. Let me point out, just here, that if God does not have supreme control of our lives, then someone else will have control. It may be the self-life – or business, or pleasure, or dissipation – or even downright and outright devil-possession. But in any case, our lot will be ten thousand times worse, at its best, than submission to God could ever be at its worst. The laws of God may seem exacting and demanding – it may seem that He asks for everything and gives us nothing; but that is only seeming. For He only asks for that which He has first given to us. “Render to God the things that are God's,” is all that He requires (Matthew 22:21). All through our study of *Redemption in Exodus*, we have been drawing the parallel between the Old Testament “type” and the New Testament “experience;” and, in every case, we have found that the Old was only a shadow, just a faint outline, or background of a coming Dispensation when the shadow would be lost in the full light of Divine Revelation. When the “figure” would give way to the reality.

As we come to the end of this Broadcast, then, let us think of the New Testament fulfilment of this Old Testament Sinai. First, let me ask a question. Is there a law governing the believer in the Christian Church? The answer is – Most definitely, there is. “*For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*” (Romans 8:2). What then is the purpose of studying the Old Testament law? That we might know God's attitude toward sin, and being convicted by the Spirit, because we have already broken that holy law, we might be led to cast ourselves upon the finished work of Christ, who kept all the law's requirements on our behalf. “*For the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*” (Galatians 3:24). None of us can ever claim that we have always kept the whole law without fail in any part. But though it is written, “*Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them*” (Galatians 3:10), it is also written that “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).*

Finally, is there a mountain to which *we* may come and learn God's way?

Yes, there is. Turn with me to Hebrews 12:18-24. *"For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore:... And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.'* Listen, now, to these words: *"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."*

REDEMPTION IN EXODUS – The Tabernacle

Exodus 25:22 – God said, *“I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat...”*

Now let us turn to the Wonderful Word for our final lesson on *Redemption in Exodus*. Last Sunday we mentioned briefly the Tabernacle as an Old Testament witness that God wants to dwell among His people. The epistle to the Hebrews is our authority for believing that this divinely inspired pattern of a meeting place in the Old Testament is a very real “type” and picture of Redemption in the New Testament. As such, every article of furniture carries a lesson for us all – of God’s plan for this age. For our final message this morning, we again want to consider with you the inside of this place of meeting.

[Note: the sermon he mentioned is missing. skm]

As for the outside of the Tabernacle, there was little that was attractive in appearance or design. The outer covering was of a very coarse and drab-looking material, for God never puts His best things on the outside for display. It is the inside of the house, and the inside of the heart, that God wants – the hidden beauty. It is written even of Christ (of His First Advent) that “. . . *as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men; a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*” (Isaiah 53:2-3).

“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7). Man is always prone to parade his best things, and display all that will make an impression; but God reverses this order and purposely hides the beauty and glory of Himself and His attributes under the covers of sacrifice, privation and persecution. He promised His disciples a cross – suffering and death; but with it all, He also promised them His Presence. Apparently, they considered it a very good bargain, and spent the rest of their lives in His service.

The message of this Old Testament Tabernacle is, first of all, a message of Christ. For it is *in* Him and *by* Him that we have a meeting place with God. In the days of His earthly ministry, He was God’s tabernacle with men. After His ascension, the Church took His place; for God resides in the Church, the body of Christ. What was true of this Old Testament Tabernacle was true of Christ; and is now true of the Church. As to its outward appearance, there is little to attract or impress men of this world. Its members are for the most part very ordinary people, without social influence or political power. *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”* (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

It is true that ambitious and shallow thinking people all through the history of the Church have worked with all their might and main to adorn the outward appearance of the Church with all the embellishment of human achievement. They have proudly displayed to an unconverted world all the pompous pride, and childish vanity with which the world is already satiated. Local congregations have gone all out to impress their people of their community with the sense of the importance and position. The message of the Tabernacle, however, is this: that God clothes the exterior with the most commonplace and uninteresting appearance. All the Church’s glory is within. *“The King’s daughter is all glorious within,”* said the Psalmist (Psalm 45:13). *“Christ in you, the hope of glory,”* is the mystery that Paul writes of to the Church at Collosae (Colossians 1:27).

Redemption is a matter of the heart, and has to do with the inner man. Reformation has to do with the head, and concerns itself with the outward appearance. If anyone wants to know what is the beauty, or glory of the Christian experience, they must first come inside; for God does not hang His glory on the outside walls for man’s inspection. All that the unconverted can ever see – all that they may expect to see, is the cross, the altar, the place of sacrifice. But the Cross-experience leads into the inner Sanctuary of God, where Heaven is felt rather than seen; but where nothing could ever be ordinary or commonplace.

Let us come, then, to this inner shrine and see what God has designed for the pleasure and profit of His

people. Last Sunday, we very briefly mentioned the Table of Bread, the Lamp-stand for Light, and the Altar of Incense which ever speaks of Worship. This Old Testament Tabernacle had two rooms, each of equal size.

The first one was for daily ministrations, where the priest entered daily to offer incense, care for the lamps, and partake of the bread. The next room (holy of holies) could only be entered once each year, on the Day of Atonement, and then only by the High Priest. But he *MUST* enter with blood, which he offered first for himself, and then for the sins of his people. This inner sanctuary, or holy of holies, was the very throne room of the KING of Kings. His Presence was manifest above the Mercy Seat; for the only article of furniture in this inner room was the Ark of the Covenant – that sacred instrument which meant so much to Jewish people in after years. This ark was just a small box in which were the two tables of stone, and the cover of which was called the Mercy Seat. The LORD said unto Moses, “*I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat.*” (Exodus 25:22).

Think of it, once every year this people were privileged to come into the immediate Presence of the living God, have communion with Him, and He with them. How eagerly they must have looked forward to that wonderful day. And, what heart-searching by the individual! and what national humiliation! preceded this solemn and sacred occasion. (We read the story in Leviticus 23.) This is the very heart of Redemption’s Story. It is the ultimate end of Redemption, that man might be brought back to that place of communion with God, which Adam and Eve once enjoyed.

As I mentioned last Sunday, worship is the highest act of which man is capable, for it is worship that opens the heart and prepares the soul for God to reveal Himself.

Notice again, that this Tabernacle was divided into two rooms of equal size. The one was man’s area of responsibility, and the other was God’s. This is a matter of principle that God has always adopted in His dealings with His people. There is an area in which man must minister, where he is responsible. I say, there is a place in the plan of God for human activity. There is a place for human effort, for the exercise of human understanding and human intelligence – all placed on the altar, of course – all sanctified by the Spirit and by the Word.

The plain statement of Scripture is that “*we are labourers together with God*” (1 Corinthians 3:9). “*The LORD working with them,*” is the testimony of the writer of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:20).

The cause of Christ has suffered a great deal from poor misguided folk who feel that everything human is evil, that it is wrong to bring anything that smacks of the human touch into God’s temple. The fact of the matter is that God made us with energies, and gifted us with abilities which He is willing to sanctify and use for His own glory. There is a place in God’s tabernacle for man to exercise his ability and energy, and affection, in the interests of the Kingdom of God.

However, we must emphasize the other half of the story. The inner part of this tabernacle was entirely God’s place. It was His area, in which to manifest Himself as He saw fit. If the Church has been troubled by those who would rule out human activity, it is also true that it has been much hindered by those who have no place for God in their programme. How many churches there are which have no thought of giving God a place to exercise His blessed sovereignty. The entire pattern of service is all carefully blue-printed before-hand, and never a minute is given especially to God to do with as He pleases. In short, there is plenty of room for the natural, but there is no room for the supernatural. And let me say just here, that we need them both. Not only in the Church as an assembly, but in our individual lives in particular. There must be a time and place wherein God is sovereign and takes supreme control.

Time has nearly gone for us again, but we must not leave this matter before reminding ourselves that New Testament Redemption always goes further than the Old. It is always better, the further on we go. To enter the Holy of Holies once every year was the very best an Old Testament saint could ever hope for. Even then, he could not enter in person; but only through his representative, the high priest. But when the Christian’s altar, the cross, was lifted up on Golgotha’s Hill, and the Perfect Lamb of God was offered thereon, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the way was opened to whosoever will.

You may, this very day – *YES*, this very hour, enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus – this new

and living way!

Redemption in Exodus is the story of how a nation of slaves was delivered from bondage, cleansed from their sins, instructed in the laws of the LORD, and admitted into His holy presence for communion and blessing. Redemption still does that for the "*whosoever*." It will do that for you.

Amen. God bless you every one.

WHY WE BELIEVE and PREACH the BIBLE — Inspired Word of God

John 7:44-47 – “*Now some of them wanted to take Jesus, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’*”

We have time now for a very brief message from the Word of the LORD - *Why We Believe and Preach the Bible*. We will always make a place in our program for the *Word of Life*, for there ought to be a place in everyone’s life for God to speak, where His voice can be heard, and His will can be known. And since we will always be quoting from the Bible during our little visit with you each Sunday afternoon, it seemed most fitting on this our first time together, that I ought to tell you why we place such confidence in the Bible; why we believe it to be the inspired Word of the living God. If you would like to take a pencil and paper and jot down these reasons, they may prove helpful later on.

1. First of all, we will preach the Bible because of what it is – the most extraordinary Book in Literature. Of all the millions of books that have come to us from past or present generations, there is not one that can in any wise compare with this Book of which we speak – either in literary beauty or moral quality. It has been truly said, that no one can be properly educated who remains ignorant of this Book of all books. The Bible is the only Book that claims to be a direct revelation from God; and then proves it by its utter consistency with truth, and its survival over every organized effort to destroy it. It proves its supernatural origin by the very manner by which it was composed. In the Bible, over forty different writers wrote on one subject for a period of nearly 2,000 years; and yet their findings and statements all agree with, and corroborate one another. The Bible proves its miraculous nature by making the most unlikely predictions; and then, when the centuries have rolled around, it records the fulfilment of those predictions in detail. All the prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the Person of Christ, which secular history has already taken account of, should be enough to satisfy the most incredulous person, that this Book is Divine. No human mind could ever have foreseen what would happen to the most perfect Man the world has ever known. It is, then, a supernatural Book.

2. Then, in the second place, we will preach from this Book because of what it says. You will remember when the chief priests sent the temple police to arrest Jesus and bring Him to them, they returned without Him, and their only explanation was, “*No man ever spoke like this Man!*” (John 7:46). The same could be said of the Bible, “*No book has ever spoken like this book.*” No other book that has ever been written . . .

[Note: the rest of the sermon was missing. skm]

WHY WE BELIEVE in the SECOND COMING of CHRIST

John 14:3 – *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Let us spend a few moments now with the Word. Last Sunday we considered with you three main reasons *Why We Believe and Preach the Bible*. Because of what it is, and what it says, and what it does. This Book *speaks*. It has a message for us; for every one of us. And each time that we have the privilege of coming into your home we want to tell something more of what it says. Today we want to remind you of what it says about a most important event that has to do with the future. Just how far away it is, no one knows – not even the angels of God can know when it will occur. We are speaking, of course, about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the LORD of Glory. In the few moments that we have with you this afternoon, we want to think of why we believe He must come again. The LORD willing, next Sunday we will consider how He will come again.

1. Jesus said it

Here, then, are some of the reasons why Jesus must come again; and the first one is sufficient in itself to answer every argument and make it more certain than the rising of tomorrow’s sun. He said he would. Jesus said, *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* – *“You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice . . .”* – *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”* (John 14:3; 14:28; Matthew 24:44).

I want you to think of the words of Jesus as absolutely final. I know we are living times spoken of by the prophet, *“. . . scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’ . . .”* (2 Peter 3:3-4).

But man’s opinions and deductions about the future are absolutely worthless; they are not to be relied upon; because the future is a subject about which man knows nothing at all. Only God knows the future; and He knows it as well as He knows the past. Jesus never spoke of probabilities, nor uncertainties; He always spoke positively and with authority. Whenever He said he would do a thing, He did it. If He said He was going to a certain place, He went there. When He went away, He knew where He was going, and declared without peradventure that He would come back. I believe His Word, don’t you?

2. The prophets said it.

Not only did Jesus say He would come back, but all the prophets from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to the prophet John in the book of Revelation, prophesied of another appearance of the Messiah. In fact, there is far more in prophecy regarding the future revelation of Christ than there is about the past. But someone will say, “How can we know that the predictions of these men who lived thousands of years ago will come to pass?”

Well, the best proof is found in prophecy that has already been fulfilled:

- * 750 years before Christ was born, the prophet Micah foretold that He would be born in Bethlehem; and for nearly two thousand years all the western world has acknowledged the fulfilment of that statement.
- * Nearly 1,000 years before Jesus’ birth, David the Psalmist foretold the very words that the LORD would use while hanging on the Cross. Read them in Psalm 22, and then read the fulfilment in Matthew 27.
- * 700 years before His birth, Isaiah told of his burial in a rich man’s tomb. *Dozens of predictions regarding the first Advent of Christ have been literally fulfilled; so there isn’t the faintest shadow of doubt, but what all that the prophets have spoken concerning His Second Coming will also come to pass.

So then, He will come again, because He said He would, and because the prophets said He would. *“By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”*

(Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1)

3. The angels said it

And so, the third witness that we will examine now, is the witness of angels. Here are their very words: *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”* (Acts 1:11). I’d take the word of an angel against the word of any man who ever lived – even if he, who didn’t believe in the Second Coming of Christ, happened to be a minister.

4. Resurrection Day awaits the Second Coming

One more good substantial reason, before we leave the air. The Resurrection of the saints of all the Ages awaits the Second Coming of Christ. If He doesn’t return, then there can be no resurrection. For, according to Scripture, Resurrection Day will happen when He comes: *“For the LORD Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air. And thus we shall always be with the LORD. Therefore comfort one another with these words”* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

All the value of His first coming would be cancelled if He did not come again. All His sufferings on the Cross would be of no avail, for it is written that *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable”* (1 Corinthians 15:19). It is true that Calvary forever settled the sin-question – the entire work of Redemption was covered by the sacrificial death of the Son of God; but unless He comes back for those He has redeemed, to take them unto Himself, then of what value is their Redemption? All the martyrs of the Christian Church died in vain, if Christ does not come again; for they all looked for His coming and gladly surrendered their lives in hope of a better Resurrection. The Resurrection of the saints of past ages, and the taking out of this world of the living who trust in Christ, awaits that glad and glorious morning. That will be morning, indeed; because it will never grow dark again. The sun will never go down in that land to which Jesus will take us. The long, long night of sin’s dominion will be broken, and all those who were saved from the power and dominion of sin, whose record was cleared from the guilt of sin, will then be saved from the presence of sin.

Amen and Amen.

“Even so, come, LORD Jesus!”

SECOND COMING of CHRIST – How?

Revelation 1:7 *“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”*

Now let us turn to the Book for a few moments’ meditation on the subject of *The Coming of Christ for His Church*. Many books have been written on the coming Armageddon, the coming of Anti-Christ, the coming of the revived Roman Empire, the false prophet, the mark of the beast, and other kindred subjects; which are all very interesting, and have a very real place in prophecy. But there is one event that far outweighs in importance, and far outshines in glory all other themes of Scripture – and that is the coming of Christ for His Church. All these other things that I have mentioned have to do with the world system, and should be looked for with fear and anxiety by the unconverted, the un-regenerated; by men who have their portion in this life. But the coming of Christ for His Church is the glorious hope which has burned in the hearts of God’s people ever since the disciples said goodbye to their risen LORD.

It seems to me that if more time and thought were given to prophecies which regard the coming of Christ, there would be less fear and worry regarding the coming of the Anti-Christ, or the coming Armageddon. Jesus said to the Church at Philadelphia (the true Church); *“Because you have kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, that shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth”* (Rev. 3:10). Again He said, when speaking to His disciples about the last days, *“When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near”* (Luke 21:28). If more sermons were preached, and more Scriptures read, regarding that blessed Advent, there would be fewer backsliders, and many more would answer the call of the Gospel and be saved. The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is the great incentive to holiness, for it is written, *“follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the LORD”* (Hebrews 12:14). It is the great incentive to evangelism, for Jesus said, *“Occupy till I come”* (Luke 19:13). It is the great incentive to all Christian service, for it is when He comes that rewards for service are given out, when the faithful warriors of the Cross hear those blessed words, *“Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Matthew 25:34). It is the great stimuli when discouragement or weariness would overcome the struggling saint, *“for yet a little while, and He that is coming will come, and will not tarry”* (Hebrews 10:37); *“and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes”* (Revelation 7:17; 21:4; Isaiah 25:8).

How will He come? Some say – when a person accepts Christ as Saviour, that this is His Second Coming. But that could hardly be, because the first disciples had already accepted Him as Saviour, and it was to these who were saved that Jesus said, *“I will come again and receive you to Myself”* (John 14:3). Some say – the Second Coming is when death comes and carries the Christian out of this world. But that will never do, for Jesus said, *“. . . the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”* (John 5:28); *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”* (Daniel 12:2); and again, Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life”* (John 11:25). The Christian has not been taught to look for death, but *LIFE* – not for the undertaker; but for the “upper taker”. The Christian Way does not culminate in death, but in resurrection – life abounding and glorious. No! He’s not coming as the angel of death; but as the Messenger of Life.

Then again, others say that when all the world is converted, that will mean Christ has come. The biggest trouble with that theory is that Christ Himself made it quite clear that all the world will not be converted in this Dispensation. In fact, He went so far as to say, *“. . . when the Son of man cometh, will He really find faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:8); and again, *“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold”* (Matthew 24:12); and yet again, *“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be . . .”* (Matthew 24:37). No! There is only one way to think of His Second Coming, and that is to remember how He went away.

Jesus was with the disciples for forty days after the resurrection. Then He led them out as far as to

Bethel, lifted up His hands to bless them, and, while doing so, was taken up from them. A cloud received Him out of their sight. In other words, He had a bodily form that could be seen by the disciples, but only by them; for none of the unconverted ever saw Jesus after He was put in the tomb. And so it is written: *“To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”* Then His words will be fulfilled: *“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left”*

(Hebrews 9:28; Luke 17:34-36)

Secret Coming for a Secret People

This “Coming” of which we speak this afternoon, is a secret affair. And is not to be confused with the universal world-wide revelation, or unveiling, when Christ shall return *with* His Church and *“every eye shall see Him, even they who pierced Him. . .”* (Revelation 1:7). This Coming of Christ *for* His Church is, I say, a secret appearing. He will come as a thief in the night.

Not only is His coming to be a secret, but He is coming for a secret people, a hidden people. For there is *“a People”* scattered all over the world, *“a People”* of many languages, nationalities, and church affiliation, who all have one thing in common – they know Christ as their own personal Saviour – their names have been written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life. These are they who have been set free from this world with all its follies, and are ready for the sounding of the arch angel’s trumpet which will herald the coming of Jesus whose love has won their hearts.

Amen.

SECOND COMING of CHRIST – When?

Mark 13:32 – *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”*

Let us turn now to the Word of Life and consider this vital matter for a few moments: *The Coming of Christ for His Church*. We have very briefly touched on why He *must* come again; last Sunday it was how He *will* come again; and today we will see *when* He will come again. Why, How, and When are three very important matters, and the last one is certainly not the least. As for the actual calendar date, Jesus said, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only”* (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32). It is one of Heaven’s best kept secrets, and anyone who claims to have discovered the date, only advertises his ignorance and presumption. It is the very height of folly to profess knowledge of things which Jesus Himself declared are known only to the Father.

Several times during the last century, fanatical groups led by fanatical leaders have set the time of Christ’s Coming, and have prepared themselves to welcome Him, only to discover to their own confusion that the Almighty God entirely ignored their presumptuous claims and is still going by His original plan. And so for today, we are not going to make any attempt to set the time for His coming, and we trust that before we are finished you will see we have something even better than a set time on the clock.

First of all, let me say that He is not going to wait until the world is ready to receive Him. God doesn’t wait until man is ready, at last, to fit in with His plan. The first Advent of Christ did not occur when the world was prepared to welcome Him; but He did come in the fulness of time, that is to say, He came at that time which God had before determined that He should come. If man is not ready for the revelation, then it’s not God’s fault. There has been plenty of time. God did His part through the Ages to let man know what He was going to do. But rather than being ready for that infinite manifestation of God coming to earth in the form of man, the world was bitterly hostile, and antagonistic – so much so, that through their leaders they attempted to destroy the Child Jesus before He was two years old.

So it is, and so it will be, when He comes again. As a matter of fact, there are many signs and evidences that show that the world is becoming more and more opposed to all that Christ both did and said. Men and women *SO* despise the world’s only Redeemer, that in every country where the Christian Gospel has come, the name of Jesus has become a common expression of blasphemy and profanity.

However, in spite of all this, He will come again. And when He comes there will be a people ready to hail His arrival. A people like Simeon of old, when his eyes first saw the son of the virgin Mary, *“LORD, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”* (Luke 2:29-32). It is written, *“. . . to those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation”* (Hebrews 9:28).

But the question is still before us, *“When will Jesus come?”* Though we can’t tell the day nor the hour, we know the time is drawing near. It is 1,900 years nearer, than when the disciples looked for Him and taught their people to expect Him. In Matthew 24 we see that conditions on a world-wide scale are shaping up to usher in that *“lawless one,”* the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet – the Anti-Christ that John speaks of in his epistle, or as Paul called him, *“man of sin and son of perdition.”* A world that has rejected the Christ of God is being prepared to welcome this lawless one, *“who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped...”* (2 Thess. 2:4).

The Coming of Christ is drawing nigh, because the forces that are antagonistic to righteousness, to godliness, to holiness, are becoming more and more active, open, and organized. He is coming soon; for never, since the days of the Apostles, has there been such a world-wide preaching of the glorious Gospel, and never before, in the history of the Church, have so many people heard the truth proclaimed that Jesus is coming again. But just to say ‘He is coming soon’ still doesn’t properly deal with the question *“When is He coming?”* For when we say He is coming soon, we naturally inquire, *“How soon?”*; and we are very apt to conclude that it will probably not be in our time.

There is only one proper attitude to take, regarding the time of His coming, and that is the attitude of the early Church, which is summed up in Philippians 4:5, "*the LORD is at hand.*" That is to say, "As far as we are concerned, there is no known event that must take place before He comes." When we say that we believe in the imminent personal coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, we mean that the event is hanging over us and may occur at any moment. Nothing between, to separate His coming or postpone it to some future day. We are taught in Scripture not to set the time, but to expect Him always. Now you can see how much better this is, than to have a set time.

If the time was long, we would conclude that there is no hurry. "We'll have plenty of time later on, to do the work He left us to do; plenty of time to right the wrongs we have done to others." Carelessness would rule the day.

Or, if on the other hand, the time was near, we would think "There is so much to do, and so little time, there is little use in even starting."

But, knowing neither the day nor the hour, we expect Him always, and each day is spent as though it may be our last.

Since we do not know, plans are laid for the next generation, that they too might hear, believe, and be saved. There is so little time, that none should presume; and yet, enough time, that none need despair.

PATTERN PRAYER – *“Hallowed Be Thy Name”*

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

Shall we turn again to *the Pattern Prayer* in Luke chapter 11, and learn something more about one of life’s greatest privileges – the experience of prayer. It would be impossible to over-emphasize the importance of the subject of prayer, since every part of living is affected by how we pray. To pray right is to live right; and for one not to pray at all is not to really live at all. As *ALFRED LORD TENNYSON* says:

“More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of;
wherefore let thy voice rise like a fountain for me day and night.
For what are men more than sheep or goats,
that nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole round earth is every way bound
by gold chains about the feet of God.”

Jesus said, *“when you pray, say Hallowed be Thy Name.”* After the greeting of *“Our Father, who art in heaven,”* the very first article in the entire pattern of prayer is that of worship. We need to be reminded so often in these days of greed and covetousness that prayer is not just a matter of asking and receiving – it’s not just a long list of petitions that are daily presented in hope that some at least will be granted.

The basic and principle ingredient in this divine recipe for prayer is worship. Jesus said, when talking to the woman of Samaria, *“God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” The Father seeks such to worship Him!* Worship is the highest act that mortal man is capable of. It is the greatest of all the sciences – the most inspiring of all the fine arts. No other creature on this earth has been created with such a capacity for worship as the children of Adam and Eve. And though millions of this wayward family worship every imaginable fetish, Ju-ju, charm, or idol, there is only one object in all this wonderful universe that is worthy of our worship, and that is the Almighty God whose Glory fills earth and heaven and sea and sky.

Prayer will never be what it ought to be, nor will life be what it ought to be, until there is a proper attitude of reverence toward the Almighty God. It is as true today as ever it was that *“the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.”*

Read Romans 1:21-25, the inspired history of the pagan world, of whom it is written that *“although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”*

Our concept of God our Creator will determine our concept of ourselves, for in the image of God we were made, and anyone who does not properly respect and appreciate his Maker can have little respect for himself. Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, Hallowed be Thy name.”* The word *“hallowed”* is taken from the same root that we get our word *“holy”* which means *“set apart, marked with a special and sacred distinction, to observe and honour with reverence.”* Whenever you meet anyone for whom there is nothing sacred or holy, you can be very sure that this is a person who is utterly corrupt, with even the mind and conscience defiled. God’s name is holy, and so it is written, *“Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain.”*

You see, in Scripture a name has reference to character, and to blaspheme God’s name is to blaspheme His character – a crime which must make the angels shudder, who cover their faces with their wings

before the glorious light of God's holy presence. The entire moral structure of society totters and falls, when the holiness of God is questioned, and His character is dishonoured. Jesus said, "*When you pray, say, Hallowed be Thy name.*" That is to say, "The character of God, whom we have called our Father, is holy." He governs the affairs of the universe in absolute righteousness, and He will deal with every one of us in absolute righteousness.

It may sound clever to speak of God as "the man upstairs," and talk about prayer as if it were a joke, but it's no sign of intelligence when we stop to think what this world would be like, what this country of ours would be like, if it were not possible to communicate with heaven and get in touch with the highest court in the universe.

Once we establish a proper attitude and relationship with God in heaven, then and only then will we have a proper attitude and relationship with every other creature in this, God's world. It would be impossible to truly and reverently worship God, and then curse men who were made in the image of God. It would be impossible to properly worship God and then continually cry out against His management of the affairs of this world, which God has condemned.

Jesus said, "*When you pray, say, Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.*"

The Person and Work of Christ – Jesus is LORD

Acts 2:36 *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and Christ.”*

Let us take a few moments, now, with the Word of Life. For the past three Sundays, we have considered some of the facts regarding *The Coming of Christ for His Church*, and though He has not come yet, we are nearer now to the wonderful day than ever we have been before.

Nearer my Father’s house, where many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne, nearer the crystal sea ...

Until that glad day comes, when faith will be lost in sight; and prayer, lost in praise, we want to be diligent about our Father’s business. This is His chief concern: that all men everywhere hear about the excellencies of His Son, Jesus Christ, and believe on Him to life everlasting. To this end we dedicate this broadcast, and solicit your prayers. *“... for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). The theme of this message is *JESUS IS LORD* – may God bless it to your heart.

Our text is Acts 2:36, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both LORD and Christ.”* This is the very keynote of the Apostles’ message to their nation; and later, by Apostle Paul to the Gentiles, that Jesus is LORD. His official title is *the LORD Jesus Christ*. “LORD” refers to His Divine office; “JESUS” is His human name; and “CHRIST” refers to His credentials. Once the Lordship of Jesus is established, not only as an historical fact, but as a personal experience, then the virtue and power of His will become a reality.

Come with me to Matthew 8, and we will see the most complete demonstration of His sovereignty to be found in any one chapter of the Bible. In the first four verses, we have the account of the leper who said to Jesus, *“LORD, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”* There is no question in this poor man’s mind; but that here was One who had the ability to set him free from this dread disease. He addressed Jesus as LORD. His only question was, *“If You are willing?”* And let me say just here: it is one thing to know that Jesus *can*, but quite another thing to know that He *will*. Our experience with our fellow-men has taught us that one who has the means to help us is not always willing to do so. But, this man saw, that Jesus was someone who was not only abundantly able, but instantly willing. Jesus said, *“I am willing; be cleansed.”* And immediately his leprosy was cleansed; not with ointments, nor injections, not by any lengthy process, but by His Word, *“Be cleansed.”* The power of this loathsome disease was cancelled. It lost its grip on the flesh and blood of its victim. Immediately the man was clean.

A Roman centurion then came to Jesus (vs.5), also calling Him LORD. He received healing for his servant by asking Jesus, *“Only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.”* It was done. Next, Jesus entered into Peter’s house (vs. 14), healed his mother-in-law, and, as we read verse 16 & 17, *“... He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.’”* (See Isaiah 53:4) It would be impossible to read the Gospels without seeing clearly that Jesus is LORD and Sovereign over all diseases; and it is my part to tell you today, that He is still *ABLE* and *WILLING*.

Matthew 8:23-27 tells the story of the storm at sea; of how the disciples came to Him saying, *“LORD, save us: we perish! Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.”* The men in the ship who had called Him “LORD” now marvel because even the wind and the sea obey Him.

No other person who ever lived has been able to control the forces of nature with a word. What helpless creatures we all are, when wind or water or fire go on the rampage. How puny are the best of our efforts in the path of a flood or a cyclone; but here is One whose voice calms the tempest. Look to Him, troubled heart, today. Ask Him to undertake your case. Just come to Him as did the disciples of old, and say, *“Save, LORD, we perish.”* And when you truly call Him “LORD” He will demonstrate His authority.

Verses 28-34 tell of the contest with two demon-possessed men; *“exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.”* But when Jesus said to them, *“GO!”* the men were immediately set free. There

are spiritual forces controlling men and nations – spiritual powers that lead men to destruction and perdition.

We are told in Ephesians 6:12 that *“we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.”* It is useless to try to combat these with natural or temporal means. You would have as much success as if you tried to sweep the air out of your house with a broom.

Everywhere we go we find men and women, young married couples and grey-haired parents of grown up children, whose lives are being ruined by the powers of evil. Though they want to do better, the chains that bind them cannot be broken with anything that man has to offer. But, thanks be to God, there is One who is LORD over all spiritual forces. There is One at whose Word they must let the captive go free. That is why it is such a joy to preach the Gospel, for *“it is the power of God to Salvation to everyone that believeth”* (Romans 1:16).

When proud Saul of Tarsus was lying in the dust of the Damascus Highway, overpowered by a light that was brighter than the noonday sun, he cried out, *“LORD, what do You want me to do?”* (Acts 9:6); – the dying thief on the cross cried out, *“LORD, remember me”* (Luke 23:42); – doubting Thomas, when he saw the nail prints and the spear wound in Jesus’ side, cried out, *“My LORD, and my God”* (John 20:28); – the Syrophenician woman said, *“LORD, help me”* (Matthew 15:25; Mark 7:28), and her daughter was healed; – when Peter began to sink, after walking on the water, he said, *“LORD, save me”* (Matthew 14:30), and the hand that holds the stars in space reached out and lifted him to a place of safety. Whatever may be your distress, your fear, your affliction – acknowledge that Christ is LORD of your life, believe that He is Sovereign over all things, and help will be yours today.

PATTERN PRAYER – “Thy Kingdom Come”

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

Let us turn to *the Pattern Prayer* again, for our morning meditation. Luke 11:2 is the text. Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, Thy Kingdom come.”* After the worship prayer of *“Hallowed be Thy name,”* comes the asking. The first request is for a Kingdom. Not just for an ordinary kingdom, like the Kingdom of Britain, or the Kingdom of Sweden; but the Kingdom of God – God’s Kingdom, which covers a greater area than any earthly potentate ever, ever ruled over.

We think of the ancient kingdom of Babylon, which embraced all the known territory between India and Ethiopia. And then later, the kingdom of Rome, under the mighty Caesars. What blood has been shed, what misery and suffering has been caused to the children of men, because of ambitious men with a thirst for a kingdom. What a pity that they did not know, or did not believe, that a Kingdom could be had for the asking. Without the marshalling of armies, and the manufacturing of munitions, with hatred or blood shed, for this Kingdom has been won for us by the Captain of our Salvation, who, with His own Blood, met the terms by which we might enter into and possess the Kingdom.

“Fear not,” Jesus said to His little group of disciples, *“for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”* this inspired prayer that we are considering together, is an outline of God’s desires for His children. Rest assured, that if Jesus tells us to pray for something, then it must be that God wants to give it to us. Only our scant asking, and faithless praying, shuts the door of the soul so that He cannot give.

Let us look at this Kingdom again, that Jesus told us to pray for. Is it an earthly Kingdom, with temporal and material possessions? Turn to John 18:36. Jesus said, *“My Kingdom is not of this world.”* It is not a kingdom of outward splendour and glory, with all its political intrigue and insecurity. Is it a democratic kingdom, where man rules himself for better or for worse? No. It is a Theocratic Government. It is the rule of God over man, for the good of man, and for the glory of God. It is fundamental to all social security that we must have government; and the worst of all governments is usually better than no government at all. But the best of all governments is when God rules in all the affairs of men and nations.

No one in all this universe is so well qualified to manage the conduct and regulate the behaviour of your life and mine, as is the God of Heaven. The beauty of His order, and the wisdom of His direction, can be seen in every order of this wonderful world, from the mightiest planet that moves through space at such amazing speed, to the smallest dew drop that finds a resting place on the petal of a flower. Everything around us tells us that to obey God’s law and to be obedient to His government, is to find a place in His plan that brings both peace and profit. Only the human kingdom is in a state of rebellion against the rule of the heavens; and as long as this condition prevails, there can be nothing but confusion misery, suffering, and sorrow.

The best diagnosis I have heard, of the world’s sickness, is this: that we have decided to get along without God, and God apparently is letting us try it. That is, of course, only on the surface, so far as God is concerned; for if it were not for His boundless mercy, and bountiful providence, we would long since have lost every good and pleasant thing that we now enjoy. For every good gift, and every pleasant thing, comes freely from the Father of Light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, Thy Kingdom come.”*

Now, a kingdom in this sense must have at least two principal factors. First, the King, and second, the Subjects. The third, of course, would be its Place. There is no doubt whatsoever, in this case, who the King is. We have already considered something of His qualifications. But what about the Subjects? Who are they? What are they like? Of what order of being are they? Turn with me to Matthew 5:3, and again we have the words of Jesus. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”* No

boasting braggarts, nor blustering bullies – no pompous plutocrats, or domineering dictators make up this heavenly society. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom.

You remember the story of the two men who went up to the temple to pray. The one was a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, *“God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. I give tithes of all that I possess. I fast twice a week.”* But the Publican would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, *“God be merciful to me a sinner.”* Jesus said that this man went down to his house justified. He has become an heir to a Kingdom. And in a very real sense he has already entered into it. And the Kingdom has come to him.

You will remember again that when Nicodemus came to Jesus, seeking light, he was informed that, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, and except he be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter that Kingdom.”* Ever since sin entered the human heart, man is by nature a boaster, whose life is largely ruled by pride – pride of race – pride of face – pride of place – or pride of grace. But blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, “Thy Kingdom come.”*

The Person and Work of Christ – His Human Name, Jesus

Matthew 1:21 *“And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

Let us turn now to the Word of Life for another brief meditation on the Person of our LORD Jesus Christ. Last Sunday we considered the fact that *Jesus is LORD*. Today we want to talk about our LORD’s human name. The angel of the LORD told Joseph, the husband of Mary, the virgin, *“You shall call His name Jesus,”* and then the inspired historian adds, *“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us”* (Matthew 1:21-22). And so, we have all the truth of the Incarnation, and the reason for it in these two names. *“God with us,”* and when He comes He shall be called *“Jesus”* – a name which was as common in those days as the name John, or James, is today. There may have been others by that name, but this Jesus will be the first one ever who was able to fulfil its meaning. *“His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

The name *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Jehoshua*, which literally means, *“The LORD shall save.”* It means *Deliverer, Emancipator* – one who is clothed with Divine authority to set free all who are bound. That is why, in His first sermon in His home town of Nazareth, the LORD Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me; because the LORD has anointed me to preach Good Tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”* The sermon that followed was only nine words long, *“This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears”* – and yet so full of meaning that books could be written on their content. In other words, *“Here I am to do for you all that the prophet Isaiah said I would do.”* What a tragedy it was that those who lived in such momentous days did not appreciate them, nor were they at all aware of the fact that they were themselves bound – that they were in prison – that they were slaves to a tyrant more cruel and oppressive than any Roman government. But how much greater is the tragedy when after nearly two thousand years of accumulated evidence of His Lordship and mercy, we still have hundreds of thousands of people who reject His offer of deliverance, or ignore the wonder of His name.

“You shall call His name Jesus,” said the angel, *“for He shall save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). The emphasis is placed on *“He.”* This is the very heart of the Christian Gospel. This is the very essence of Christianity. It’s not a religion, primarily – it’s not a creed – it’s not a doctrine – it’s not just a belief. It’s a Person, and that Person is the LORD of Glory, who became the Son of man, was called by the name of a common man, so that all the sons of men might be called the children of God. If we had no other cause for thanksgiving, if there was not a single bright spot in all the cloudy sky, this one great truth is enough to bring us all down in humble gratitude before God. We say with the Apostle of old, *“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift”* (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Notice, now, this blessed combination, *the LORD Jesus Christ*. The name *LORD* speaks of His absolute sovereignty, His ability, and His authority; while the name *Jesus* tells that all this wondrous power is directed to us-ward, to one end, and that is that we might be delivered. This is what Paul meant, when he said in Romans 1:16, *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation...”* It is the power of God *UNTO...* Not unto our social betterment – not unto our material advancement – not unto our moral enlightenment – nor even unto our intellectual progress; but it is unto our deliverance, *unto our salvation*. All these other things that I have mentioned will of necessity follow once men are free; but as long as they are bound by passions, by appetites, by desires, by habits, by sins that warp and twist and blight, then all material advantages and benefits, instead of being a blessing to us, become, at the last, a curse.

He shall save His people from their sins, because He shall be called *JESUS*. No other among the world’s great and mighty ever made such a promise, no other religion can give us any such assurance. Many try to tell us how to conquer our sins, others deny that we even have any sin, still others declare

that there can be no deliverance until we die; but the message of the Evangelist is this: “He shall save His people from their sins.” No one else can do that; but He is *LORD of all*. The main reason why no one else could have brought us deliverance from sin, is because all who tried were themselves in bondage to it’s claims; but here is One who “*was made in all points like as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15).

Sin has to do with the nature, it’s in the blood, and it’s one hundred percent fatal. Death is its only cure. So then, to be delivered from sin, is to be free from death. “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal LIFE*” (John 3:14, 15). And so then, it is written, 1 John 5:12, “*He who has the Son, has life; but he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*” Sin is in the blood, but there was no sin in the Blood of Jesus, “*in Whom we have Redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of our sin*” (Colossians 1:14).

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
and sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean –
His Blood avails for me.

PATTERN PRAYER – *“Thy Will Be Done”*

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

One of the most difficult, and yet most sublime prayers that could ever be addressed to the Father in Heaven, is that short phrase which follows *“Thy Kingdom come.”* Listen while I read it for you: *“Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth”* (Luke 11:2). It is difficult in that it involves the surrender of our will; but sublime, in that it asks that in its place should be exercised the Divine will of our Heavenly Father. It is the will that distinguishes man from the animal kingdom. And it’s the will that leads men to do things that even animals wouldn’t do. It is the will that makes a man a person; and it’s the will that leads that man to become like God, or like the devil.

The free exercise of the will is the most sacred and wonderful privilege that God has conferred upon us; and yet, how, in what direction, or upon what things we exercise that choice, is life’s greatest responsibility, and ultimately fixes our eternal destiny. What we are today is the sum total result of the choices of our yesterdays; and in a very real sense, which we cannot avoid, we will begin to manufacture our tomorrows by the choices we make today.

The thing that makes all this so complex, so serious, and so difficult, is that all around us are people just like we, who also have wills, who will also make choices, and the thing that bothers us most is that some of them will make their decisions without considering or consulting us, and sometimes their will is opposed to ours, conflicts with ours, crosses ours, and the final result is either the weaker giving in to the stronger, or else a war is declared – a battle is fought – the day is spoiled – hatred is engendered which will influence further choices and foster greater conflicts and greater sorrows.

Perhaps there will be someone listening right now, whose will has been crossed; the plans which you fondly cherished have been upset by the will of another. It seems you will not be able to have your own way – I mean your own will – today, and you’re feeling just downright provoked, and genuinely peeved about the whole thing. Listen, while I read to you again the divine recipe and remedy for your unhappy situation. Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, ‘Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth.’”* Heaven is the standard to measure by. But earth is the place to demonstrate Heaven’s methods. Some folks seem to think that it just isn’t practical to introduce Heaven’s principles into earth’s practises; but unless we do, we will have to deal with men who have absolutely no principles whatsoever. Read the Sermon on the Mount, and try it out at the very next opportunity, and you will find it is the most up to date and workable system ever devised for a happy relationship with our fellow man.

Let us look at this prayer again. *“Thy will be done.”* Did you ever think this, when you wanted your will, or your way, that perhaps this may not be God’s way? Has it ever occurred to you that before you make your final plan for the day, or for your life, that it would be the better part of wisdom to consult God about the matter? Did you know that He too has a plan for your life? That He has a place for you to serve – a work for you to do, and that to find that place and to do that work is life’s greatest privilege, and life’s greatest joy? To be in God’s will, is even better than success; and to be in His will, you can never fail.

This is why the LORD Jesus made such a success of life, and why, after nearly two thousand years, He is still the greatest figure of all history. With unswerving devotion, and with unquestioning obedience, he did the will of the Father in Heaven, even though it meant Gethsemane, Calvary, and a tomb in Joseph’s Garden. It also meant a glorious and victorious Resurrection, and as the inspired Apostle says, *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Philippians 2:9-11).

When you pray *"Thy will be done"* you may as well prepare for a cross of some sort. It will never be easy to do the will of God in a world that is hostile and antagonistic to His will. If you are looking for an easy life, then don't pray, *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."* It has been well said that, "God only had one Son without sin, but He had no son without suffering." It costs something to do the will of God; but it is written, *"He who does the will of God abides forever."* (1 John 2:17).

Here is something else I see in this prayer, and that is – if you want God's will to be done in your life, you'll have to ask for it. It won't come by chance, nor will God impose it upon you by force. God has a will, and so have you and I; but we will never find God's will, nor will we ever discover what a blessed thing it is to do that will, unless we sincerely ask God to do it both in us and for us.

We can all look back over our lives and see those places, and experiences that would have been so much different if only God had had His way in the matter. Many a young person would have been spared a life of heartache and sorrow if they had only taken a little time and prayed this prayer: *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."* There would never be a broken home, a broken heart, or a broken life, if we had early sought and found God's will for our lives. And of course, if we had walked in that way He had shown us.

But before we leave the air, we want to make it very, very clear. It's still not too late for God to have His way. There is still time for God to intervene and gather up the tangled strands of a disappointing life and let you live long enough to see

Undated Bible Lesson – *"God's Will"*

Matthew 6:10 *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."*

We are in the "Time-section" of Eternity – it's just a little paragraph, a brief episode, in the endless Ages. We've been brought into the eternal system by God's eternal decree. We live out life's short day – it is very brief; but what we do, during this brief period, affects our destiny – it affects us and others for all time to come. The LORD's Prayer seems to me to be the key – the centre – the core – of all our relationships. *"Thy will be done..."* I can't think of a request more profound, more far-reaching, one that'll do more good – I can't think of any brief saying we could ever invent that would have more possibilities, more opportunities, more wonderful things in store than this one! There *are* people (thank God for them!) who pray *"Thy will be done"* and mean it; and God answers their prayer. You see, it's like this: God has a plan – a master-plan for each person's life. A blueprint with each detail carefully inscribed. Like a blueprint for a vast factory, where every detail is anticipated and provided for. God has a plan for your life; but it will never happen if you don't ask for it. If you want God's will to be done, you must ask for it; which means you have to pray. God does not impose His will on us. We're in this brief period of "Time," first to discover God's will, and second, to do it. That's all that life is about. Nothing else really matters but this. Now we are influenced by the wills of other people – others exercise their wills over us; but, in the final analysis, it's whether we are accomplishing and fulfilling the will of God that really matters.

You'll notice that when Jesus was teaching this prayer He said, *"WHEN you pray."* He didn't say *"IF"* you pray. Everybody prays some time or other – somehow or other. Heathens pray some way or other. Everybody prays some time or other. But, (condensed into the briefest possible frame), when *YOU* pray say, *"Thy will be done."* It's not *"IF!"* We tangle this up. We confuse ourselves by putting an *"if"* before *"Thy will."* Jesus said, *"When you pray, say 'Thy will be done.'" No "ifs" about it. No question about it. God has a plan, and He'll carry it out. Putting an "if" on it, puts it on our side. "If I let Him." "If I'm willing." "If I'm obedient." But the "if" is on our side of the problem, not on God's side.*

"Thy Will Be Done!" I'm satisfied that it is God's will for us to be here in this place this morning. Now, some might question this and say, "Of all the hundreds and thousands of churches in the country, how do you know that you're in God's will by choosing this one?" We are here, because we are here. We're nowhere else. It is God's will to be in a place of worship. Not necessarily at this time of day, or this time of the week; but it *IS* GOD's will for His people to assemble themselves together to worship. It is God's will. No question about it.

So, here it is. Reading the Scriptures, (particularly the Gospels and Epistles), we are informed in detail as to what God's will is. No question about it. And we're confronted continually with definite specific statements about obedience. For example, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Now, here is brevity in a very marvellous fashion! It is God's will that you and I be totally set aside for His use. That is the meaning of "sanctification." (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

When we get up in the morning we ought to pray "Thy will be done." (Morning is a good time to pray – I'd hesitate to start a day without praying. I'll probably blunder very badly today, unless I discover God's will; unless I'm obedient to God's will. I had better stay in bed – better keep out of circulation – rather than do things contrary to the will of God. Now, does that mean I never sin? I never make a mistake? Does it mean that just every word I say, every thought I entertain, is God's will? I'm sorry – I'm just not that perfect. But, I'm working to that end. I would it were that way! I have no wish to do things contrary to the will of God. It just doesn't pay.

When you're working against the will of God, it's like trying to go up on a down-going escalator. Did you ever try that? In a big store, try walking up, on a down-going escalator. If you're going against the will of God, you're going in the wrong direction. You'd better get onto the other side. Get on the ascent. Start climbing. In the will of God, you're always going upward. You're on the side of what is right, without question, because it's the will of God.

I can't imagine anything more absolutely perfect than a life being totally regulated by the will of God; simply because I cannot conceive of God planning anything for anybody or anything but what that plan is the sum-total of perfection. It cannot be improved upon – it is right. No other reason; just because it's right. Anything else is wrong.

Thy Will Be Done is the centre of the Sermon on the Mount – and I think I can broaden that to say that it's the KEY OF ALL PRAYER. It could be the centre and core of our lives. We could live, to the best of our knowledge, in the will of God.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. We thank You that You are ready to take over the management of our affairs; even to controlling our thought-life and our speech, our labours and our attitudes. So, in all honesty, (Oh God, we do want to be honest about this); in all honesty we pray, 'Thy will be done.' Let it be done. And let these, Thy people, be ones who will do it. We ask it in Jesus' Name. Amen."

Amen. Thank you very much, everyone.

“WHAT IS TIME?”

I asked an aged man with hoary hair,
wrinkled and curved with worldly care.
"Time is the warp of life," said he.
"Oh, tell the young, the fair, the gay, to weave it well!"

I asked the ancient venerable dead;
sages who wrote, and warriors who bled.
From the cold grave a hollow murmur flowed,
"Time sowed the seed we reap in this abode."

I asked a dying sinner, e're the tide
of life left his veins. "Time?" he replied,
"I've lost it. Ah, the treasure!"
And he died.

I asked the seasons in their annual round,
which beautify or desolate the ground.

They replied (no oracle more wise), "
'Tis folly's blank and wisdom's highest prize."

Of things inanimate I then inquired;
and this was the reply:

"Time is a season fair of living well;
the path to glory, or the path to hell."

I asked old Father Time himself, at last;
but in a moment he flew swiftly past.
His chariot was a cloud; the viewless wind,
his noiseless steed which left no trace behind.

I asked that might Angel which shall stand,
one foot on sea and one on solid land.
"Mortal," he cried, "the mystery now is o'er!
Time was; time is; but Time shall be no more!"

- Author unknown -

The Person and Work of Christ – *Jesus, the Christ*

Luke 4:18 – Jesus said, *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of LORD.”*

Let us turn again to the Word of life for the message of hope and help. We have been considering something of the meaning of the title *The LORD Jesus Christ*. Last Sunday we found a few things that had to do with the name *Jesus*, and now we have before us the last one in this blessed trinity of ideas – the name, or title, *Christ*. This is the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Messiah*, which literally means, *“the Anointed One.”* It suggests that the One who bears this title not only has the ability to meet the requirements of His office, but that He also has the authority, or, He has the right to do, and this right has been conferred on Him from above.

In all the Old Testament, you will notice that both priest and king were anointed before taking over their respective offices. And in each case, they were anointed by the prophet, God’s official representative, who in turn was anointed by God Himself with the Holy Spirit. Remember how Samuel anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel; and with the symbolic anointing of oil came the Spirit of the living God. The Scripture says that he was *“turned into another man”* (1 Samuel 10:6). David the shepherd boy, who became Saul’s successor, was anointed by the same prophet; and once again, the Scripture says, *“And the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward”* (1 Samuel 16:13). It marked a turning point – a crisis in his life, so that he could never be the same again.

Now, when we think of this term as applied to Jesus, we find the same principle is demonstrated. Except for His sinlessness character, and His unusual understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, He lived the normal life of an ordinary Jewish boy until He was about thirty years old. Then, through God’s prophet John the Baptist, He was officially proclaimed as *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29). After He was baptised in water by the same prophet, the Spirit of God came down and rested upon Him in the form of a dove, while a voice from heaven declared *“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”* (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 2 Peter 3:22). From that time on, for three and a half years, the LORD Jesus went up and down through the land of His nativity, preaching and teaching the glad tidings concerning the Kingdom of God. And, as I said before, the credential of His office was a mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit.

After preaching that matchless *Sermon on the Mount*, found in Matthew chapters 5-7, *“the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes”* (Mark 1:22). He was anointed.

After His temptation for forty days in the wilderness, it is written that *“He returned in the power of the Spirit”* (Luke 4:14). When He preached to the people of His home town Nazareth – neighbours and friends with whom He had grown up, He said to them, *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor”* (Luke 4:18).

The thing that I want you to see is that there never was any hesitation or uncertainty about His ministry. The scribes and Pharisees were like many of their kind in our day – they never seemed to be quite sure of anything – they would never come right “out and out” and say “this is the truth, this is the Word of the LORD, this is the way, walk ye in it.” The best they could do was to quote the findings of “Doctor So-and-so”. Their sermons were largely made up of speculations, surmisings, questionings, and sometimes outright denials of the truth of God’s Word; because they didn’t believe anything for certain, they partly believed a little bit of everything. But when Jesus came on the scene He swept away all their speculations, and superstitions, and came right out with, *“But I say to you;” “it is written”* – in other words, *“This is God’s Word, and this is God’s way.”* Amen. So be it, LORD.

There was an authority about His words and deeds that no one could successfully contradict – He was clothed with all the rights of Heaven’s Parliament. He was, and is, the official Word of the living God. For *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,*

has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.” (Hebrews 1:1-2). “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

My listener, let me encourage you to take the words of Jesus and count on them, stand on them, put your confidence in them, for He is God’s anointed One.

There is another fact growing out of this great truth, to which we must refer before leaving the air. Acts 11:26 says, *“The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.”* They were called *“Christians,”* which literally means, *“anointed ones.”* There was so much similarity between what these people believed and the way they lived, that their neighbours saw the resemblance and called them Christians. The very Spirit of God’s anointed One rested upon them. *“Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His”* – if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (Romans 8:9). Everywhere and all around us are “Christians in name,” whose only hope for the future is a “hope so” religion; their only ground of assurance is what they have learned from “scribes and Pharisees” who seem to think it a sign of intelligence to express their doubts. But those who are anointed with the Spirit of God’s anointed One, (with the Spirit of our LORD Jesus Christ), can say, *“I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day”* (2 Timothy 1:12).

As VANCE HAVNER says, “I’d rather know a few things for certain, than to be certain of a lot of things that aren’t so.”

(Vance Havner was an evangelist, missionary - 1901-1986).

The Person and Work of Christ – *Jesus, the Son of God*

1 John 1:7 – *“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”*

Let us turn now to the Word of life for a few moments of prayerful consideration of the central figure of all Scripture, and the outstanding character of all history. The LORD of Glory, the Prince of all the princes of the earth, and the world’s only Redeemer – *Jesus, the Son of God*. We have before us today the very vital subject suggested by that phrase; for unless we see, believe, and accept the truth that He *is* the Son of God, we cannot be saved, for it is the blood of Jesus Christ, *God’s Son*, that cleanses us from all sin – not the philosophy of the world’s greatest teacher – not the example of the world’s most beautiful character – not the sayings of the world’s wisest man – nor the influence of the most holy person who ever lived among men; but according to 1 John 1:7, it’s the *Blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son*.

As the Apostle John was coming to the close of the Gospel he was writing, which bears his name, it would seem as though he looked back over what he had written and considered what he might have written. Then, by way of explanation he said, *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”* (John 20:30-31).

Matthew tells the story of Jesus, the King of Israel; Mark sets Him forth as Jehovah’s servant, the burden bearer; Luke sees Him as the Son of David and the Son of Man; but John emphasises, more than any of the other Gospel writers, that Jesus is God’s own eternal Son – the Second Person of the ever blessed and most adorable Trinity. This was the principle charge which the Jews brought against Him, and for which He was crucified. And yet, if they could have seen it, this is the very point on which their salvation depended, and what all their prophets foretold. *“God with us,”* said the Prophet Isaiah, when he foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

“Therefore, the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God-With-Us’” (Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:23).

Let us read a few verses in the Gospel of John, which so wonderfully set forth the facts concerning the deity of Christ. The first two verses tell us about His pre-existence, before Bethlehem, before David, before Abraham, before Noah, yea, and before Adam. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* Then in verse 3 we are told of His creative power, *“For all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* This world did not come by chance, nor did light appear by accident. All creation had a Creator, and the inspired Apostle tells us who He is – even our LORD Jesus Christ.

Some people may find satisfaction in tracing their origin back to a single-celled creature that came from nobody knows where, and is destined for nobody knows what. But the most satisfying, and most satisfactory account, as to where we are from and where we are going, is that *“All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist”* (Col. 1:16-17), and though *“it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure”* (1 John 3:2-3).

Listen, now while I read you verses 10, 11, 12 from John chapter 1. *“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”* Only the Creator could give such a promise. Only God could fulfil it.

Now, let us hear the testimony of the last of the Old Testament prophets, *John the Baptist* – a man whose birth was brought about by supernatural means, and whose life was spent in obedience to the will of God. John’s uncompromising ministry was a rebuke to the inconsistent professors of his day. Reading now in verses 33, and 34 *“He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”* John the Baptist was a devout and fearless man of God. I would

take his word against the word of any time-serving, place-seeking, hireling Pharisee, even if he does happen to have DD after his name, wouldn't you?

Witness, now, the first miracle that Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee (John 2). It is a marriage, and they have run out of wine. Jesus told the servants, *"Fill the water-pots with water,"* and they filled them to the brim. Then, as the Great Master Chemist who fashioned nature's secret forces in the beginning, by the mystery of His Divinity, and independent of any earthly means, the water became the pure juice of the grape – the best quality and flavour that man had ever tasted.

But the greatest proof of all, which forever settles doubt that He is Creator God, and answers every argument, is found at Calvary. There the sun hid her face, the earth went into convulsions, the rocks were rent in twain. The Roman Centurion, a hardened old veteran of many a crucifixion, smote upon his breast and said, *"Truly, this man was the Son of God"* (Matthew 27:54).

When Jesus died, all the world of nature testified to His deity, but the crowning fact of all other facts, the very capstone of the great demonstration, is found in the Resurrection. The LORD Jesus Christ was *"born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"* (Romans 1:3-4).

Death could not keep its prey, Jesus my Saviour
He tore the bars away, Jesus my LORD.

The Prince of Life has forever vanquished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Eternal life is now offered to *"Whosoever."* *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The last word we have from "doubting" Thomas, in John 20:28, is, *"My LORD, and my God!"* May that also be *your* last word, and mine.

The Person and Work of Christ – Jesus, Great Physician, Jehovah-Rophi

Matthew 9:12 – *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”*

Now let us turn to the Word of life and consider something more about the Person and Work of our LORD Jesus Christ. We have chosen the song, “Tell Me the Story of Jesus” as a theme for this program; and that is just what we want to do.

Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.
Tell how the angels in chorus,
Sang as they welcomed His birth,
“Glory to God in the highest!
Peace and good tidings to earth.”

Tell of the cross where they nailed Him,
Writhing in anguish and pain;
Tell of the grave where they laid Him,
Tell how He liveth again.
Love in that story so tender,
Clearer than ever I see;
Stay, let me weep while you whisper,
“Love paid the ransom for me.”

Fasting alone in the desert,
Tell of the days that are past,
How for our sins He was tempted,
Yet was triumphant at last.
Tell of the years of His labor,
Tell of the sorrow He bore;
He was despised and afflicted,
Homeless, rejected and poor.

Tell how He’s gone back to heaven,
Up to the right hand of God:
How He is there interceding
While on this earth we must trod.
Tell of the sweet Holy Spirit
He has poured out from above;
Tell how He’s coming in glory
For all the saints of His love.

Refrain:

Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard. [by Frances J. Crosby - 1880]

Newspapers headline stories of war, crime, politics, or business; radio covers the same field and tells us vocally what the papers tell us in print. All these things are very interesting and play a great part in our everyday lives; but the story of Jesus takes us into another realm and deals with matters that are far more important and vital to our welfare than anything that could possibly happen in the political or social world. If men and women spent as much time with their Bibles as they do with their newspapers, the news would be quite different. Our behaviour one with another is determined entirely by our moral and spiritual outlook on life, and when that outlook is warped and distorted, our conduct takes on the same pattern. The story of Jesus for today is based on Matthew 9:12. *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”*

We have considered something of the significance of the title The LORD Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. Now we would like to take up with you something of His ministry toward the children of men. In this verse, He likens Himself to a physician who has made a missionary trip to a sick world.

One of the Old Testament Names by which God revealed Himself to His people was *Jehovah Rophi – the LORD who heals*. And, from the time that revelation was given until the present, He has proven to trusting hearts that He is able – regardless of the seriousness of the disease, or the hopelessness of the circumstances, He is able to do exceeding abundantly *“above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20).

That this healing includes the body as well as the soul is quite evident, even from a casual reading of the New Testament; but it would miss the mark entirely, and completely fail in its effect, if it had only to do with the body. Indeed, many of the recent discoveries in medical science show a very close relationship between the organic disease and the mental and moral life of the patient. And so, the treatment must go deeper than drugs or surgery can ever go. Doctors often confess that they can do nothing to help the patient until there is a change in the patient’s attitude toward life.

Now, when we think of our LORD Jesus Christ as our Physician, we are reminded that there is no part of our being that He’s not familiar with. He understands our emotions, our reflexes, our inhibitions. He

knows the reason for our fears, our passions, our ambitions, our inordinate desires, and our depraved appetites. And there is no disease, be it physical or spiritual, but what He has the remedy for it.

Let us examine a few cases in Scripture and see how completely sovereign He is, wherever there is a patient who will trust Him and allow Him to deal with the problem.

Luke 19 tells the story of Zacchaeus, a tax collector for the Roman government who was afflicted with that awful disease called covetousness. It's true, he had grown rich through the workings of this plague; but he was no happier, no more contented with life, because of it. In fact, as I read the account, it seems evident that there was something lacking in his heart and in his home which money could not buy. At last he became so desperate, that when Jesus passed through Jericho for the last time, this little man ran on ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree just so he could see Him.

You've all heard the story. You know how Jesus, the great Doctor, looked up and saw this poor, rich man, and invited Himself to Zacchaeus' house for dinner. And though we don't know what treatment Jesus used, before He left the house Zacchaeus was standing up and testifying that he was completely cured. "*Behold, LORD,*" he said, "*the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I'll give him back four times as much.*" Amen.

Let us pray that this Great Physician will call on some of those afflicted with this same disease, here at the Lakehead, and set them free; because covetousness is one hundred percent fatal. As far as I can learn, there is nothing in the annals of medical history that tells of a cure being affected, except through the ministry of our LORD Jesus Christ.

There is another case in Acts chapter 9. It's the story of another little man whose name is Saul. He has had an acute attack of ecclesiastical intolerance, commonly known as bigotry. The case is so serious, that Saul is going up and down the country "*breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the LORD.*" He is so religious that it's running out of his mouth in imprecations and accusations against anyone and everyone who is simple enough to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Israel's Messiah. But the Great Physician undertakes his case.

With nothing but the Damascus highway for an operating table, this fanatical Jew is transformed. He is regenerated – he becomes a "new creature." No wonder that his testimony from that day onward is this "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek*" (Romans 1:16).

Just one more case, before we leave the air. Mark 5:25 – It's about a certain woman who had blood-flow for twelve years. She had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. When she heard of Jesus, she said within herself, "*If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.*" That's it. That's the sure and certain cure.

The healing virtue is not in pills and potions. It's not in creeds or notions. It is in Christ Himself – *JEHOVAH ROPHI, the LORD Who heals.*

Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from destruction,

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*, so that your youth
is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalm 103:1-4

PATTERN PRAYER – *“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”*

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

Luke 11:3 is the text for today’s meditation. *“Give us day by day our daily bread.”* This the only place in this pattern prayer, where material substance is asked for, and even here it is more than likely that bread for both body and soul is meant. This does not mean that we ought not to ask for anything but bread, but this is a pattern prayer – it’s an outline – a summary of all life’s requirements in three short verses. These are basic and foundational things that everybody must have, if life is to be what God intended it to be. We must have nourishment, we must be fed. The life we now hold is a very fleeting and temporary thing, that can only be sustained by frequent feeding. This prayer teaches us to come to God for our sustenance, to trust in Him for our supplies, and to acknowledge Him as our source of life. To me there is a world of comfort in this brief request of only one sentence. If Jesus tells us to pray *“Give us day by day our daily bread,”* then it must be that our Heavenly Father is prepared to do just that. There will never be a day as long as we live, not matter how hard that day, no matter how long that day, and no matter how impossible the circumstance, but what there will always be One to whom we can go for help, and from whom we may expect to receive our daily bread. His loving heart and hand, we can feel; but not see. We’ve always been provided for, and we always will be.

Notice, it says, *“Give us day by day our daily bread?”* We are such cautious and careful creatures. We want at least a year’s supply ahead at all times. Indeed, some have already accumulated enough of this world’s goods to last them for ten ordinary lifetimes. Remember the story of the rich man in Luke 12. He said to his soul, *“Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”* But God said, *“You fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?”* This prayer teaches us to trust God for our daily support and supply. And that is certainly much safer than to trust in uncertain riches or in unstable markets. If we could only see it. It is much safer to have just enough than to have too much. For when we constantly depend on our Heavenly father to look after us, we are more likely to stay close by Him, to receive.

There is a story told of a certain man who sent his son to college in another city, and placed sufficient funds in the bank in that city to see the lad through that term. The next year, when it came time for the college to open, the father said, *“This winter I’ll just send you enough for a month at a time. Then you’ll have to acknowledge receipt of it before you get anymore.”* You see, the first winter the son seldom wrote to his dad. For, why should he? He had everything he needed. It is the sad fact of history that prosperity robs people of gratitude. But a constant dependence of God from day to day increases our sense of appreciation and fills each day with glad surprises. Life must get very monotonous for that poor soul who has everything laid up in store for years to come. And what a terrible tragedy it would be if anything happened to that store. But when our daily supply is dependent on our Father’s mercy, we never know how or what He will supply. We only know that bread is sure, and no one can ever rob that storehouse, or impoverish His resources.

Here is a conversation that is supposed to have been heard in an orchard. I don’t know who heard it, nor who translated it, but here it is:

Said the robin to the sparrow, I would really like to know
Why those anxious human beings rush around and worry so.
Said the sparrow to the robin, I think that it must be
They have no Heavenly Father, such as cares for you and me.

Here is another thing I see in this prayer for bread. It simply asks for it, but doesn’t tell God how to send it. We ought not to think that once you have prayed for bread that all you will need to do will be to

sit down until He delivers it all wrapped in wax paper. God could do that, mind you, if that were necessary, but He has chosen a better way. And that is to enable you to work for it. I say, it's a better way because then you'll have an appetite, and will be able not only to thank God for the bread, but for the strength to labour and the health to enjoy it.

I remember on one occasion when I had a debt that had to be met. It was an honest debt, and it was through no fault of mine that it had to be paid *now* – and I didn't have the wherewithal. I was asking God to supply this need, and of course, expecting that I would get a letter in the mail with the needed cash enclosed – or else someone would stop me on the street and hand me the money – just like I had read of in other people's experience. But strange to say, it didn't happen that way. But a man did stop me on the street one day and ask me if I could come out to his farm and help him for a few days. Well, I went. The time I spent on the farm was a real blessing to my soul, and the debt was paid.

Jesus said, *"When you pray, say, "Give us day by day our daily bread."* Fresh bread every day – right from the Father's hand. Jesus said again, *"I am the Bread of Life. He that comes to me shall never hunger and he that believes on me shall never thirst."* When Israel travelled through the wilderness, they had Manna from Heaven every morning, but they had to go out and gather it. It was there for them; but they would go hungry if they didn't go after their supply. Listen, hungry heart, while I tell you – you will never be satisfied with anything this world has to offer, there isn't bread enough in this whole world wide to meet your heart's need. You must seek your nourishment from God. *"When you pray, say, "Give us day by day our daily bread."*

The Person and Work of Christ – *The Great Physician Heals Heart Disease*

Jeremiah 17:9 – *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"*

There is nothing to show that people of Jeremiah's day were any worse than they are today, and they certainly weren't any better. And from that day to this, there has only been one doctor come forward with the promise of a cure for their malady – only one has been able to show that He has the remedy. That Doctor is our LORD Jesus Christ. Other doctors have been able to accomplish much, in dealing with the physical organ called the heart; but the "spiritual heart" of which we speak today is entirely out of their province. It has to do with an area within the human personality – into which no X-Ray can penetrate. It has to do with a problem which no microscope can discover

The most common of all spiritual diseases is *wickedness and deceit*. Jeremiah mentioned it when he said *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"* It's that strange bent of human conduct downward, while all the while the victim thinks that "every day, in every way, he is getting better and better." Even though his conscience tells his mind that his conduct is not good, his heart argues back that in this special case it is either necessary or justifiable. Not only so, but such is the nature of this strange disease that the one affected shows an increasing unwillingness to even acknowledge that there is anything wrong.

Finally, this deceitful spiritual disease completely lulls the patient into a false sense of security and well-being, and an outright denial of the need of a personal physician – I mean, a personal Saviour – to cure this sinful state. This, no doubt, is one reason why the prophet Isaiah warns us to *"Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon"* (Isaiah 55:6-7).

Then, of course, there is that so common disease, *"the hardening of the heart."* The final result of this disease is that the afflicted one seems incapable of responding to Jesus, the greatest of all doctors; incapable of responding to the most gracious offer men have ever heard – the offer of Doctor Jesus to undertake his case absolutely free of charge. The unbelieving heart closes the very door of hope in the face of God. It seems to me that this particular kind of *heart trouble* is increasing at a most alarming rate, being aggravated by the teaching of so-called modern theology which takes all power out of the Gospel – all the deity from Christ – all the truth from the Bible – all the fear out of sin – all the gold out of heaven – and all the fire out of hell. An unbelieving heart dulls the hearing of the soul until even the voice of conscience cannot be heard, it blinds the eyes so that the patient cannot see the inevitable end of transgression, he cannot see any beauty in Christ that he should desire Him; nor can he see any value in Calvary's Cross to meet his need.

For all these things that I have mentioned, there is only one Doctor, and there is only one cure; and the Cure *IS* the Doctor. He does not prescribe, He heals. That *deceitful heart* – that *hard, unfeeling heart* – that *unbelieving heart* cannot abide His presence.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up – that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

PATTERN PRAYER – *“Forgive Us Our Sins”*

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

Luke 11:4 is the text for the day. Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, ‘And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.’”* This is a pattern prayer – an outline that embraces every part or every person’s life, and covers every relationship in life. As an overall picture then, of every person’s prayer-life, it is to be expected that there would be a place somewhere for some reference to personal conduct, and the person’s attitude toward that conduct.

Here it is, then, in verse 4: *“And forgive us our sins.”* This simple request is at once an acknowledgment of transgression and an entreaty to God, that He would treat the matter according to the multitude of His tender mercies. The old proverb that “to err is human, to forgive is divine,” has a great deal of truth wrapped up in it. The Pharisees found fault with Jesus, because He claimed to have the power to forgive sins. They argued, and rightly so, that only God can do this. Only God can forgive sin, because it is His Law that has been broken. Others may suffer from the effects of our misdeeds, but it is God we will have to answer to for our behaviour. You may injure someone else by breaking a traffic law, but it’s the court you will have to deal with to make a settlement.

Let us examine this problem of *“transgressions”* for a few moments or, as it is called in the text, *“our sins.”* What shall we do about them? How shall we treat them? Most people take one of three attitudes:

1. The first, which seems most popular, is to deny their existence. Like the little boy in school who was asked to write an essay on the snakes of South America. He disposed of the whole matter very easily by simply writing, “There aren’t any.” But while this may have settled the problem for the boy, it didn’t settle it for the teacher; nor did it dispose of the snakes in South America. It may seem a clever bit of strategy to deny the existence of things, which of they did exist would cause us a good deal of trouble. But actually, it’s a very short-sighted method; for we’ll have to meet them a little farther down the road, whether we want to or not. In this case, there can be no doubt about the fact of our personal guilt, when we measure ourselves by God’s holy law.
2. The second method which a great many people follow, is to ignore the personal responsibility for the guilt. They do not deny wrong doing, but lay the blame always on something else. An inherited disposition – an extreme case of emergency – the result of very unusual circumstances. They may even take the psychologist’s explanation of “repressions, reflexes, phobias,” or what have you. But Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, Forgive us our sins.”*
3. This is the third, the best, and the only satisfactory way of dealing with these ugly facts. We have broken God’s laws, and He’s the One to state the terms by which a law-breaker must be dealt with. Isn’t it strange that so many of us are unwilling to come to God and acknowledge our transgressions, when His own Word tells us that *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?”* (1 John 1:9). There isn’t a court in the land that would send a law-breaker away justified, no matter what the charge, just because he pleaded guilty and asked for forgiveness. Our country’s courts are established for justice; but the court of Heaven is established for mercy. *“Let us come boldly to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:16). There is only one alternative to God’s forgiveness, and that is God’s judgment. If we will not have mercy, then we must have justice. It is engraved on the statute books of Heaven, as in eternal brass – *“The soul who sins shall die”* (Ezekiel 18:4). Death is the only suitable way to deal with the rebel who will overstep divine boundaries. Death is the only satisfaction that God’s justice will allow. But Jesus said, *“When you pray, say, Forgive us our sins.”*

Is there a place, then, where justice can meet with mercy and both be satisfied? Only one place in all

the moral universe, and that place is the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ – where, as the Prophet David said in Psalm 85:10 *“mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”* This is where God can be just; and the Justifier of the one who believes in Jesus. There are two great words in Scripture that are very closely joined together, and are almost synonymous. They are *“forgiveness”* and *“remission.”* The root idea is *“to lift up and carry away”*; and when applied to a person, it means his guilt. It means the separation of the sinner from his sin. When we say *“forgive us our sins”* we mean, *“carry them with all their guilt and penalty.”*

You will remember reading in Matthew 26:27 when Jesus was instituting what we call the LORD’s Supper, He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, *“Drink from it, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins – for the carrying away of our sins – for the separation of our sins from ourselves.”*

Hebrews 9:22 tells us that *“without the shedding of blood there is no remission”* – there is no forgiveness – no deliverance. *BUT “if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:7-9).

The Person and Work of Christ – *The Great Physician Gives Spiritual Sight*

John 9:39 – *“For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind.”*

Now let us take a few moments with the Word of the LORD. For the past two Sundays, we have been considering the theme, *Jesus, the Great Physician*, and it seems that the more time we spend in meditation and prayer about His ministry as a Physician, the more evidence we find (both from Scripture and experience) of His manifold grace toward us in meeting all our need. Last Sunday we read of Him treating the diseases of the heart. He is a Specialist in this field – the only Doctor the world has ever known who can give us clean hearts. Let us read John 9:39 *“For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”* These words were spoken to men who were spiritually blind, and yet thought they could see. Jesus, the Great Physician, had just opened the eyes of a man who had been blind from birth; and because He had done this on a Sabbath day, the religious leaders concluded that He must be a sinner. But Jesus said to them, *“This is the very reason why I have come to this world; that they who see not, might see.”*

One of the early prophecies regarding the coming Messiah was to this effect that He would *“open the eyes of the blind”* (Isaiah 35:5), and right here, before their eyes, the prophecy is fulfilled. But these Pharisees were so blind, they could not recognize the wonder of the days in which they were living. Blindness is a very sad affliction. Not to behold the light of day, not to see all the beauty of the world around us, must be a very sore trial to all who are so burdened. But Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (John 8:12). He said again, *“The light of the body is the eye; if therefore the eye is bad, the whole body is full of darkness”* (Matthew 6:22-23). This Doctor, Jesus, is qualified to deal with both physical and spiritual sight. There are a great many people today who have lost their sight, but they can still see. There is light in their soul, for they have the light of the world dwelling within.

Think of *HELEN KELLER* – both blind and deaf; yet she radiates all the brightness of one who has the light of life. Think of the blind hymn writer, *FANNY CROSBY*, whose spiritual perception has brought light and gladness to hundreds of thousands. On the other hand, we have many people all around us who can't see, even though their eyesight appears to be quite normal. They can find their way around town alright – they can read the street signs and interpret the traffic lights – they can read the newspapers and the magazines; but they can't seem to find the way that leads to the city of God. If they read this Bible, they can't see value or truth in its sacred pages. They can look on the Son of God, but see in Him no more than a good man who died before his time. They can behold the light of the sun; but cannot see that creation must have had a Creator. They can see that *“it is appointed unto man once to die”*; but they can't see that after death is the Judgment. Jesus said, *“For judgment I have come into this world, . . . that those who see may be made blind.”* The same God, who *“commanded light to shine out of darkness”* in creation's morning, will shine into our hearts, *“to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* . . . *“But even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”* (2 Cor. 4:3-6).

Here we have the explanation – the cause for this blindness of which we have been speaking is that *“the god of this age has blinded those who do not believe.”* They *did not* believe, therefore the god of this world blinded them, so that they *could not* believe. We hear people talk about blind faith, but really, there is no such thing. Faith gives *“substance”* to the things we hope for (Hebrews 11:1). Faith sends the realizing light, so that we walk in certainty, saying, *“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that Day”* (2 Timothy 1:12). We ought rather to say with the hymn writer:

Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain.

But now, we have the question: “How may the blind be made to see?” Read the Gospel story. Read about blind Bartimaeus, (Matthew 10:46-52), who sat by the wayside begging, and when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he cried out with all his heart, “*Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!*” You see, there was no doubt about his blindness. All his neighbours knew it, and he knew it himself. He also knew that Jesus of Nazareth could open his eyes. *He asked, and was healed.*

Read the letter to the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3:18. “*Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*” The eye-salve in question, no doubt, is faith. For it is written of Moses that he endured “*by faith . . . as seeing Him who is invisible*” (Hebrews 11:27). *Seeing Him who is invisible!* Remember how God took Moses to the top of Mount Pisga and showed him all the land of Canaan, right from Dan to Beersheba – all the land of promise.

This great Physician will do as much for you, and He will do it today. For Jesus said, “*For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see.*”

Isaiah prophesied of these days, when he said, “*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off*” (Isaiah 33:17).

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the LORD by feeble sense.
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

by William Cowper, 1731-1800

PATTERN PRAYER – *“Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Forgive”*

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” is the only part of this Pattern Prayer that Jesus enlarged upon, and commented on – *“For,”* said He, *“if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”* (Mark 11:26). We need to be often reminded that our relationship with God is measured and determined by our relationship with our neighbour; and when we ask God to deal with us according to the same rule, and by the same pattern that we follow in our dealing with our neighbour, it certainly would be the wise thing to make sure that our attitude toward our neighbour is the very best. And then we ought to know that whether we ask for it, or not, this is the basis for God’s dealings with our own lives.

Jesus said, *“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* (Matthew 7:12). It is just as true in our relationship with men, as it is in our relationship with the soil, that we reap whatever we sow. If we sow suspicion, envy, or malice, we will certainly reap the same. But this text that we have this morning, infers that we are the injured ones. It supposes that we were going peacefully on about our business, and someone deliberately wronged us. At least, it seems that way to us. What should we do?

Human nature says, *“Talk to him in his own language. Give him some of his own medicine. Get even with him, if it’s the last thing you ever do.”* But the Good Book says, *“Just a minute now, must be careful, for “with the same measure you use, it will be measured to you again,”* and not only by your neighbour, but by God Himself. (Mark 4:24). Before we begin to lay plans how to settle the score, let us remember that though we have been burned, it won’t heal the burn to throw more fuel on the fire. What we really want to do is to put the fire out. And there is only one way that this can be done, and that is to *forgive*.

Evidently there are several different kinds of forgiveness.

–There is that kind that says, I forgive, but I’ll never trust you again. And this seems reasonable too, for if a person has wronged you once, does it not seem most probable that he will do it again? Peter said to Jesus, *“LORD, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”* But Jesus said, *“I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”* You see there is only one cure – only one kind of medicine will remedy this sad condition. And if one treatment won’t do, try it again. If the patient is no better, do it the third time, and until seventy times seven. You see, all the while you are applying the remedy, it’s helping you just as much as the guilty offender. And if forgiveness won’t cure him, then there is no cure. God Himself can do nothing for the one who can’t be reached and won by a forgiving spirit.

–Then there is that kind of forgiveness that will work on certain kinds of offences, but not on others. It would forgive a man who had robbed you of two dollars, but wouldn’t forgive if the amount was two hundred. It would forgive someone who told a lie about you, but wouldn’t forgive if he lied about your family. But now this Pattern Prayer says, *“For us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* With the same kind of forgiveness – the same measure of forgiveness. Obviously then, this restricted or limited kind will never do, for unless God can forgive all our sins, we shall be lost on account of the ones He cannot forgive. In short, then, forgiveness that does not forgive *ALL*, is not forgiveness at all. Only the kind and quality of forgiveness that God exercises toward us will be the acceptable kind to use toward others.

I wonder, can we really appreciate God’s forgiveness this side of heaven? As yet we do not know what havoc – what grief – what confusion – our sins have made in God’s universe. We cannot know the injury our transgressions have done to others, and to ourselves.

The greatest demonstration of forgiveness, that the world has ever seen, is manifest at Calvary. After they had received nothing but good from the hands of the Son of God, He, in return, had received nothing but lies, abuse, and then the crowning sin – crucifixion at their request. While the sun hid her face at the horror of men’s deed, and the earth shook and trembled as though it could scarcely endure to the cross on which the Prince of Glory hung. But Jesus said, “*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*” How wonderful, that God can forgive! Remember when Moses was interceding for his people after they had turned their back on God, after He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage in such a wonderful way. But Moses prayed to God for them, saying, “*Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin . . .*” And then, as though the thought of a God who could *not* forgive were too terrible to contemplate, he couldn’t finish the sentence. (Ex. 32:3).

If God cannot forgive us, then there is no help for any of us. But God *CAN* – He *DOES* – and He *WILL*. –And His forgiveness is of that sort that the offender is completely pardoned. The relationship is restored, as though there had never been any estrangement. He will do as much for us as ever He would, for the past is buried in the sea of His forgetfulness.

Let the Spirit of the forgiving Christ be *our* enablement – to forgive all who trespass against us, for Jesus’ sake.

THE LORD'S DAY

Revelation 1:10 – *“I was in the spirit on the LORD's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.”*

Now let us turn to the Word of Life for the Gospel Truth – the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God which He gives to us through our LORD Jesus Christ. We interrupt our series of talks on the Person and Work of Christ, and today draw your attention to one of the great gifts of God to this land of ours. A gift that as yet has never been fully appreciated, nor have the full benefits and blessings that are included in this gift ever been fully realized. In fact, there are altogether too many who have entirely forgotten that it is a gift, and have thought of it as a burden to be laid aside as an unnecessary nuisance. I will read my text, and from it you will know what gift we are thinking of. *“I was in the Spirit on the LORD's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet”* (Revelation 1:10). That's right, it's the LORD's Day.

And again I say, the full blessings and benefits that are wrapped up in this day have never yet been full realized by anyone. There have been long periods when the gift has been lost, its meaning forgotten; but with every spiritual awakening that God has been pleased to send to this world which loves darkness rather than light, there has always come a rediscovery of the gift, and a fresh appreciation of its value.

Then, let us think of the LORD's Day as a gift. For that matter, every day is a gift – no one but God could ever make a day. But the day which is called *“the LORD's Day”* has such a special significance that it stands in a place by itself on the calendar. It's the gate that leads to six more days – all the same size, but each will be a little different from the other. Not only so, but how we spend these other six – how we will enjoy them – what they will do for us – and what we will do with them, is largely determined by how we enter that gate that stands at the first of each week. What we do with the LORD's Day, and what it does with us, will have much to do with how we live, and why we live. Altogether too many people don't care how, and don't know why.

The song writer who tells us, *The best things in life are free*, expressed a fact that is very applicable to this gift of God, the LORD's Day. It's free. We did not earn it, or merit it in any way, nor are we compelled by the Giver to use it, or spend it according to any set form or pattern. We can do what we like with this day, as we can with every other gift of God. But once again, let me say that what we do with God's gifts will determine how we build our lives; and in the final analysis, will determine what God will do with us.

The foundation of the Christian Gospel rests on the “giving-ness” of God. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. . .”* Some folks have the mistaken idea that the church is trying to legislate people into the Kingdom of Heaven – trying to compel people to go to church at least once a week – trying to dictate to everybody how they must spend their time. Nothing is further from the truth. I, for one, would leave the ministry if I were compelled to preach to people who were compelled to listen. Any legislation that has been prompted by Christian people, with Christian principles, has been introduced to prevent the non-Christian from taking away freedoms from those who wish to serve God as the Good Book and Conscience would indicate. This is especially true regarding legislation concerning the LORD's Day. It's not an attempt by the Church to force people to become religious. Rather, it's a simple piece of legal machinery designed to permit the Christian to take one day in seven to serve his God, rest his body, and refresh his soul. This is one of the blessings of living in a democracy, where even Christians, if they are strong enough, can legislate in the interests of spiritual and eternal values. Would to God we were stronger! We could revolutionize our community, and make the Christian way so attractive and so practical that everyone would see the benefits of a Christian society.

By now you are probably thinking that I must be a member of the *“Sanity for Sunday”* committee. You're right. And I'm using this wonderful invention called radio to come right into your home and talk to you about one of God's best gifts – the LORD's Day. What are you doing with it today? And then, what are you going to do about it on Dec. 8, when the citizens of this community will be given the right to decide whether they will hold on to their right to have this day as their own, and use it as they will; or, whether they will surrender it to commercial interests that would make slaves of us all, if they could.

They put dollars as the chief end of man, and spiritual and eternal verities of such little worth that they aren't worth taking one day in seven to work for.

You see men of the dollar are so short-sighted that they cannot see that a man or a woman who is concerned enough about heaven to take one day in seven to find out all about it, will become so enthused about the wonder of the prospect, and so concerned that they follow Him who is the life, the truth, and the way, thus becoming better workers. And, since they are more honourable in their business practices, and more generous in their relationships, all commerce will improve, and God's gift of a day will be seen to be the most practical and beneficial of all the days of the week. And so, if for no other reason than to protect short-sighted "men of the dollar," let's all go out on Dec. 8th and say "No" to this plebiscite that will commercialize even the games that people play on the LORD's Day.

The Person and Work of Christ – *Jesus, the Prophet*

Hebrews 1:1-2 – *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds”*

God has been speaking since time began – making His will known – seeking to guide the affairs of the children of men – seeking to lead them in paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake.

Enoch, the first recorded prophet, prophesied, *“Behold the LORD comes!”* (Jude 1:14); and the last of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, prophesied, *“The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, repent and believe the Gospel”* (Mark 1:15). Between these two great characters of history is a great army of prophets, each a mouthpiece for God to the people of his generation. We are thrilled as we read the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, of Daniel in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, or Moses who talked face to face with God. But they were all men of like passions as we are, subject to human frailties, discouragements, and fears.

Nevertheless, they were *“holy men of God,”* speaking as they were *“moved by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1:21). *“... the prophets made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating, as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look”* (1 Peter 1:10-12). But with the coming of the One whom the prophets foretold, there has come to us a new Dispensation – a new age – a new era. Now we have to do with Christ Himself.

In this age, God will not speak to us by Elijah, nor Isaiah, nor Daniel; but hear the words of my text again, *“He has spoken to us by His Son.”* He is the embodiment of all that was said through the prophets of the Old Testament, plus all the fulness of God for the New Testament.

What would we do if Elijah came to our town and preached the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus to us? What would happen if Jeremiah, the prophet of the broken heart, was found preaching in our church today, the LORD’s Day? Perhaps, you may think there would certainly be a great spiritual awakening, great searching of heart and a great turning to God.

Listen, while I tell you again, that *“God in these last days has spoken unto us by His Son.”* A greater than Daniel, or Elijah, or Enoch may be heard – every time the Gospel is read, every time the words of Jesus are quoted, God is speaking unto us by His Son.

Remember when Peter and James and John were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? After the vision had passed Peter said to Jesus, *“Let us make three tabernacles – one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”* (Matthew 17:3-4; Luke 9:30-33). Just then a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, *“This is my beloved Son, hear Him!”* Jesus reminded the people of His day that *“The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold,”* said He, *“a greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here”* (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31).

Just as Noah was God’s final messenger before the Flood-judgment, so Christ is God’s last messenger before Judgment falls again. It was water in Noah’s day, but the next time it will be fire. God has spoken to us by His Son. Some folks are always looking for new revelations, trying to discover some new method of awakening the people to their privileges and responsibilities; but God has spoken unto us by His Son. If men will not hear Him, then they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead before their very eyes. If men will not accept the words of the LORD Jesus Christ regarding life, death, judgment, and the future state, then there is no hope for them. God Himself can do no more. He has sent us and spoken to us by His Son.

What, then, is the message that we hear from the Son of God? Read it in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Read how the Apostles went out after the day of Pentecost and preached those things which they had been told by the LORD of glory. If we were called on to briefly summarize the message that this

Prophet of God has left to the world, there is no better verse to be found in all the sacred writings than John 3:16 – the Gospel in a nut shell. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* These are the very words of God’s Prophet, our LORD Jesus Christ.

Now, in closing, let me read for you in Hebrews 12:25 *“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’”* (Hebrews 12:25-26).

Listen, while God says it to us again, *“This is my Beloved Son, hear Him!”*

PATTERN PRAYER – “*Lead Us*”

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
 Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

The prayer that we have before us this morning is, “*And lead us not into temptation*” (Luke 11:4). It’s not a very long one, but it’s very deep and wide. First of all, it’s an acknowledgement of the need for guidance, and that guidance must come not from something, but from Someone. This pattern prayer begins with “*Our Father who art in heaven,*” and this section of it says, “*lead me.*” It says, “*Father, lead me.*” the picture is that of a little child, lifting up beseeching hands for support on a very slippery and dangerous path. It’s a prayer we all ought to make every day, and especially today. We need guidance today, so that tomorrow will find us nearer the celestial city, and that our path be as “*the path of the just – like the shining sun that shines ever brighter unto the perfect Day.*” (Proverbs 4:18). Perhaps, just here, it might be well to ask ourselves just whom are we following? Or, what are we following? What is the guiding light of our lives? Is it money? If so, it will lead us only as far as money can go, and sometimes money can lead to prison and to death. As the poet says,

Dug from the hillside, washed in the glen;
 Servant am I, or the master of men;
 Earn me, I bless you; steal me, I curse you;
 Grip me and hold me, a fiend shall possess you;
 Lie for me, die for me; covet me, take me.
 Angel or devil – I am what you make me.

In any case, money I say can only lead us as far as money can go. And that is to pay for our coffin, and the services of the undertaker. Whatever is left over must be left behind.

The next line to this prayer says, “*But deliver us from evil;*” and money can never do that, though often times it does deliver us to evil.

Or, are we saying to “Education”, lead us? If so, we will still not reach our goal. For now we know only in part; our knowledge at best is only half knowledge. For knowledge knows only the past, it depends entirely upon experience; but our Heavenly Father knows the future. He knows my tomorrows, He knows your tomorrows; and so we say to Him “*Father, lead me.*”

But someone says, “I am following Religion. I am trusting the church to lead me, surely this must be safe. Surely the church must know the way. Well, it would be safe alright if you could find a church that was absolutely infallible – a church that is not troubled by the human element – a church in which there are no human frailties, human weaknesses, and no human errors. In short, if you could ever find a perfect church, where Christ is LORD of all, and all are in absolute submission to His will, then and only then will it be safe to say to the church, “*Lead me.*” But in the light of my text, this morning, it’s not necessary to get our guidance second-hand. God does not need to relay our instructions through institutions or organizations. He is quite capable of making Himself understood by anyone who really wants to know the Father’s will. It is not necessary to look to priest or pope or parliament, for divine instruction or heavenly guidance. It is not the duty of ministers to lead the multitudes through a world of wickedness; but rather, it’s their happy privilege to lead the individual to put his case in the hands of God, and encourage him to leave it there until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away. Until all uncertainties and perplexities are ended in the pure light of eternal day. Amen, and Amen.

Jesus said, “*When ye pray, say Our Father who art in Heaven, lead me.*” A thousand years before the disciples heard these words, David the Psalmist wrote “*The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.*” Here is a sure and certain guide as to whether it is the LORD leading, or not. Is it the path of righteousness that we are directed to take? It’s not a question of

asking ourselves whether there is any harm in it or not, but is it right. For right is never abstract or passive. It's always active and concrete. The path of righteousness is another name for the way that Jesus spoke of when he said, "*narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it*"; and then again, He leads "*beside still waters.*" (Matthew 7:14; Psalm 23:2). In other words, He leads us into a quiet place – a place of inner peace and tranquillity – a place where we can find rest for our souls. As Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" Where we can sing:

He leadeth me, Oh blessed thought,
Oh, words with heavenly comfort fraught.
Whate're I do, where'ere I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

(by William B. Bradbury - 1864)

Jesus said, "*When you pray, say, "Our Father, who art in heaven – lead us."*

The One Who guides the stars in their stately march through space . . .

- Who directs birds through the pathless air, so the swallow can find the same nest she had last year;
- Who directs the busy bee to the flowers where the sweetest honey is found;
- Who has been in absolute control of this wonderful universe since the very dawn of creation;
- Whose word is forever settled in heaven;
- Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion;
- Whose Kingdom shall never fall . . .

Heavenly Father, we ask You to lead us. We have never gone this way before – we have no way of knowing what the future has in store – we do not even know what a day will bring forth; so we want You to lead us. Thank, You, LORD!

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene;
one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now – lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears, pride ruled my will:
remember not past years!

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still will lead me on.
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile, which I have loved long since,
and lost awhile!

(by John Henry Newman – 1833)

The Person and Work of Christ – *Jesus, Our Priest*

Hebrews 7:12 – *“The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek’”*

The subject today is *Jesus, our Priest*. Last Sunday it was *Jesus the Prophet*. Prophet and Priest – these are two of the highest offices in all the affairs of the human race. The Prophet is God’s representative with the people, and the Priest is the people’s representative with God. Both are very, very, necessary, for we do need to know what God requires of us, and we certainly need someone to take our case before the throne of God. Since these are the two highest offices in all human relationships, isn’t it a wonderful thing that the Christian has the most outstanding Personality in all the universe to fill these offices? Who could be better qualified to carry God’s message to us than God’s own eternal Son? And who could best represent our case before the Father, but the Son of Man, our LORD Jesus Christ?

All religions have a priesthood; but only the Christian can claim the high honour of having the most outstanding figure of all history to act as his personal representative before the Majesty in the Heavens. Not only is there no one else so well-fitted for this important office, but no one else can claim *Divine appointment* to act on our behalf. Just as the courts of our land will allow only those who are legally qualified to plead our case before the bar of justice; so He who would be our advocate before the highest Court in the universe must have the legal right, before His intercession will have any value.

Listen, while I read to you of His appointment. *“The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.’”* (Hebrews 7:21). By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. You see, there is no point whatever in counting on the good offices of a priest, if that priest cannot get a hearing before God, or has not been appointed by God to this office. It is true that every Christian has the right to act as priest, and intercede on behalf of others; but they must present their supplications in the name of our Great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God.

Let us look now at some of the qualifications of this Priest. We have already discovered that He has Divine appointment to this office. Everything else depends on this fact. Then, *He must be thoroughly familiar with our case*, before He can adequately present it. In this connection, let me read Hebrews 4:15 for you: *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”* He first placed Himself in our shoes, faced the same temptations and testings that we are faced with, came to first-hand knowledge of all the problems that surround us, and, because He knows, He cares.

That’s the next requirement – *He must be compassionate* – He must *feel* for the one for whom He pleads. No mere professional will be of any value, as far as we are concerned, nor as far as God is concerned. We want to be sure that our Advocate is sincerely interested in our welfare, before we ask Him to take our case, and God must be satisfied that our mediator is interceding for us for no other reason than that He cares for us. There never can be any doubt on this score. Let me read Hebrews 2:17 for you *“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”* In all things, He had to be made like us, that He might be merciful.

– *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”* (John 15:13).

– *“I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep”* (John 10:11).

– *“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”* (Isaiah 53:4).

– *“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). *Yes, He really cares.*

Then again, is the priestly ministry of Jesus is still available? Is it still efficacious? We know He prayed for Peter and he was restored. We know that just before He went back to heaven, He prayed for all the disciples, that they might be kept from the evil in the world. But, what about today? Listen, and I will read the answer. Hebrews 7:24-25 *“But He (Jesus), because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him,*

since He always lives to make intercession for them.” Then we have those well-known words that ever give us hope *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”* (Hebrews 13:8).

Finally, as a priest *He must have an acceptable sacrifice*; for priests are more than mediators – more than advocates – more than merciful intercessors – they must have a sacrifice; not to placate and angry God, but to satisfy Divine justice, to make an adequate settlement of the sin-question that has caused the estrangement between God and man. You see, sin cannot be disposed of by argument or persuasion. God cannot be induced to overlook the iniquities of the transgressor just because his priest appeals for mercy. There must be atonement made, before guilt can be cancelled, and so the priest must offer a sacrifice that is acceptable to the injured one.

Let’s read Hebrews 9:12 *“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”* Now, verses 26 to 28, *“He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”*

PATTERN PRAYER – *“Deliver us from evil”*

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen”*

(Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

The final request in the pattern prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray is, *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”* (Luke 11:4). Here we have in two short phrases a complete summary of the only proper attitude toward right and wrong. And an admission that without the help of God we could neither find our way safely through all the snares and traps that are set for our feet, nor could we deliver our own heart from the power and dominion of evil. Let us look at the second part; *“But deliver us from evil”* is the petition, and we don’t need to look very far to see how necessary it is that by some means or other we should be delivered from this abominable thing that is working such havoc with the human race. The first picture that these words bring to my mind is that of a cruel monster who has laid hold on us, and is bent on our utter destruction; but there is One within reach of our voice who is able to save – One who is strong to deliver. To Him we lift up our voice and cry for help. This is not an imaginary situation, nor just poetic fancy, for everywhere we see the destruction, the suffering, the misery and heartache that evil is causing, and we can also see the utter helplessness of any of us to deliver ourselves. The picture that Bunyan paints for us in the story of Pilgrim’s Progress, with Christian and Faithful locked up in doubting castle, and giant *“Despair”* coming in every morning and beating them with a huge club, is not over drawn in the least. The power of evil is very real, and very mighty, but thanks be to God, there is a Deliverer, there is an Emancipator, One who is able to save to the uttermost. But we need to pray for deliverance, or it will never come; nor will it come by praying a formal, well-memorized prayer. God says, *“Ye shall seek and ye shall find Me in the day that ye seek for me with all your heart.”*

I have good reason to think that many who often repeat what we call *“The LORD’s Prayer”* have very little desire to really be delivered from evil, and the main reason is that they do not realize how truly awful and destructive is the working of iniquity. Not many people want to be called a liar, and yet it’s surprising how many there are who want the right to tell what they are pleased to call *“little white lies”* if the occasion seems to warrant it. Not many want the reputation of a thief, but there are altogether too many who, if the clerk in the store makes a mistake and gives them too much change, will cheerfully go their way, congratulating themselves on their good fortune. And there are hundreds of thousands who have no compunction whatever about stealing God’s Day, or God’s Money. Too many of us want to be delivered from the evils we find in other people, but the same things in ourselves are called by another name. Then again, there are those who seem to think that it’s just a matter of opinion what constitutes evil, and as long as their conscience doesn’t bother them, they think everything must be alright. This is a highly dangerous principle to follow; for conscience is only safe to follow after it has been thoroughly awakened by the Spirit of God, and has been properly educated by the Word of God.

When we pray to God to deliver us from evil, then we’ll have to allow Him the right to advise us as to what evil really is. After all, God is much better qualified to know the full and final result of our behaviour than we are. He understands the chain of reaction that every evil word, and every evil deed will set in motion.

Let us think now, for a few moments, on some of the ways we may expect God to deliver us from evil, if we really ask Him to. First of all, and we are reminded as the Christmas Season comes again, that the message of the angels was to this effect that the Babe born in a manger should be called Jesus, for He should save His people from their sins. *“For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the LORD.”* The word *“Saviour”* means *“Deliverer, Emancipator, One who defeats the oppressor, who opens wide the prison doors, strikes off the chains that bind the prisoners, and leads them*

out into sunshine and freedom. We have read in days gone by of the siege of Lucknow, and how the Campbells came just when it seemed that hope had perished, and *My!* What a shout of joy went up from the besieged. Other stories have come from more recent wars; and they never fail to stir us, as we think of what a change, what a difference, what an experience to be one day languishing behind prison bars, without hope, and the next day to be free, with liberty to choose where to go and what to do. This is just what happens when God's great Deliverer, our LORD Jesus Christ opens for us the prison of Satan's bondage, frees us from the chains of evil habits that for years have galled us, and brings us out into the sunshine of God's love and care.

One of the chief weapons the Son of God uses to effect our freedom, is the Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God; especially the promises that are found therein for perishing sinners. Once we really begin to pray "Deliver us from evil," it will not be long until we find the verse that says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Or, if we don't know 1 John 1:9, then we may find John 1:12 *"For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."* Indeed, there is on almost every page of the New Testament, some ground of assurance that the troubled soul may lay hold on as the Sword of the LORD, and put the enemy to flight. *"But when you pray, say, Deliver us from evil."*

The Person and Work of Christ – *Jesus is KING*

1 Timothy 1:17 – *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

Jesus is God’s Prophet to speak to us, God’s Priest to intercede for us, and God’s appointed King to rule over us. We all need someone to tell, someone to help us, and someone to govern us. And whom could we have better qualified to do all three than Jesus, the Son of God? The very first question in the new Testament is *“Where is He that is born King of the Jews?”* The Scripture says they were *“wise men”* – tradition says they were three, representing the white race, the brown and the black; but one thing is sure, they were wise men to whom God made known, by some supernatural way, that a King had been born in a far-off land. They set out to find Him.

The study of history would seem to indicate that men have always been seeking a king – someone wise enough and mighty enough to bring them security and prosperity. And, as if in answer to this desire, great leaders have come on the scene and for a few short years have risen to great power and glory. Babylon has had her Nebuchadnezzars – Greece, her Alexanders – Rome, her Caesars – and France, her Napoleons; but one by one they have gone the way of all flesh. All their power and glory has perished. The kingdoms they built have faded away.

But here is a King, whom the wise men found, whose glory shall never fade, and whose Kingdom shall never pass away. Born in a stable of an obscure Jewish maiden, with only simple shepherds aware of His Advent, raised in the little town of Nazareth, in a carpenter’s shop; only in the public eye for about three years, and dying as a criminal on a wooden cross. How absurd to call Him a King! And how foolish to own Him as Sovereign, and yet, He has more devoted subjects today than any earthly potentate that ever held a throne – more men ready to die for Him – more women ready to live for Him – and more children to sing of Him, than any other king in all the annals of history. More money is spent annually in the celebration of His birthday than playboy King Farouk spent during his reign as king of Egypt. Every letter that is written, every paper that is published, every Radio Station as it begins its daily schedule recognizes the birthday of this King by the dateline.

All history points toward His birth, or stems from His birth. Not only so, but this King during His brief stay on earth, set in motion the most revolutionary movement that the world has ever known. A movement that cut across all racial barriers, that does away with all social boundaries, and knows nothing of a colour line. A movement that has won disciples by the millions from every race and every religion. A movement that the mighty Roman Empire at the very height of its power, employed all its legal machinery and all its military might to destroy. But in a few short years, Rome had crumbled, and this spiritual revolution had covered all of Europe, crossed oceans, mountains and deserts. This Kingdom of Jesus sends more ambassadors to more nations than any other kingdom on earth.

All this is still more wonderful when we remember that this Kingdom has no police force, no military, no implements of warfare, no earthly headquarters. This King has not been seen by mortal man for nearly 2,000 years, but His Kingdom still stands, and this generation in which we find ourselves has more people listening to the message of the Kingdom than at any other time in history.

There may be some who are fearful at the rise of Communism, that the Christian way of life will soon be driven from the earth; but this shall never be, for our King is Almighty in power, and Omniscient in wisdom, when the enemy shall sweep in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. Other kings have won their position by the blood sweat and tears of their loyal subjects. Hundreds and thousands in the armies if kings have laid down their lives to keep the throne of their sovereign; but this King, of whom we speak today has, with His own Blood, secured eternal redemption for all who will accept Him and own Him as their King. He has met the enemy single-handed, and *“Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it”* on Golgotha’s hill. (Colossians 2;15). Just as David the shepherd boy met the giant in the Valley of Elah, and with five dripping stones from the brook, defeated him; so great David’s greater Son met this greater giant, and with five bleeding wounds has forever conquered our greatest enemy, who had the power of

death, that is the devil.

“We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9).

Just before we leave the air, let us look into the future, and see the place this King has in Prophecy. He is the central figure of all history, and we shall see that He is also the central figure of Prophecy.

Reading now in Revelation 19:11, 16 *“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war... And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: – KING of Kings and LORD of Lords.”* And then, Revelation 11:15 *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* And, finally, Revelation 3:21 *“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”*

Say with me now, *King of my life, I crown Thee now, Thine shall the glory be ...*

THE “WHY” OF BETHLEHEM

Jesus said – *“For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth”* (John 18:37) – *“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10) – *“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10).

In the midst of all the rush and clamour of the Christmas Season, it’s good to take a few moments with the Bible and ask ourselves, “What is this all about, anyway?” Just why do we have a Christmas? And what was the real purpose of the Advent? Why did Jesus come to Bethlehem? And are we realizing in our own lives the full benefits and blessings that this even was designed to bring?

I have found three great verses in the Good Book, that answer in a measure at least, the question as to the “why?” of Bethlehem. The *First* one in John 18:57 “Jesus said, *“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world; that I should bear witness unto the truth.”* and then, as though to ask the question that most of us feel at times, Pilate said, *“What is truth?”* Is it possible, that in this world where there is so much deceit, hypocrisy, and sham, for one to find the truth and know that it is true? Bethlehem gives the answer. Jesus said, *“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into this world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”* You see, in those far-off days, religion was in the same state as it is now. Almost completely buried under a great mass of superstition, tradition, and speculation. To some, religion was something that was put on like a robe on certain holy days; and by following certain ceremonies, and making certain sacrifices, they would gain merit and win the favour of the Almighty. To others again, religion was just a matter of saying certain prayers (magic little formulas) that would open the door of heaven and bring God’s blessing on their life. Then again, there were those then, as there are now, for whom religion had no meaning whatsoever. And therefore, the best thing to do was to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” What a blessed thing, then, that someone should come right from the Throne of God and sweep away all these uncertainties and unrealities; and let us know plain and straight that God still loves the world. In fact, He *“SO loved the world that He has given His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Jesus came to bear witness to the truth about God – the truth about sin – the truth about hell – and the truth about heaven, and how to get there.

Second, let us go back to John 10:10. Jesus said, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* Some would have this verse to read, “I am come that ye might have great revelry, with feasting and dancing every year in the month of December.” Others, again, would have it read, “I am come that ye might receive many gifts each Christmas Season.” And then, (and this, to my mind, is the silliest of all), “I am come that ye might have a visit from an imaginary person called Santa Clause, who comes from a land that doesn’t exist; who will come down a chimney eight-inches square with a pack of toys three feet in diameter.” What a pity we can’t take a little time, and read the Gospel Story, and discover therein that Jesus came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. After all, life is the thing we want most, and without it nothing else can be enjoyed. Life is not found in things. It isn’t found in trinkets and tinsel and trumpets and trash. And it’s certainly not manufactured by breweries and poured into bottles. Life is not found in Night Clubs, nor in Pleasure Palaces. Life is not found in dissipation, nor in recreation. Life is found only in God’s Salvation – our LORD Jesus Christ.

Not only did He come that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly. That’s the true meaning of Christmas – more abundant life – life that is full, joyful, and restful. Abundant life that overflows with songs of praise, and praise-filled songs for God’s great Gift to man – eternal life through Jesus Christ, our LORD.

The *Third* reason is found in Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* This completely reverses the idea of human philosophy that man has been groping after God all through the ages. Some “wiseacres” would have us believe that even the Bethlehem story is man’s attempt to bring God down to our own understanding. But Jesus said, *“I am come to seek and to save that*

which was lost.” If man had produced the story of the Incarnation, they would have had the Christ Child born in one of the great palaces in the religious centre of the world – Jerusalem.

No one but God would have considered a manger in Bethlehem a suitable place to begin the greatest mission the world has ever known. There is no doubt about it, this poor old world has gone astray. We have missed the road. We’re on the wrong track. We’re on the downgrade. In short, we’re lost. And the story of Bethlehem is not the story of a mythical Santa Claus, seeking good little boys and girls. It’s the story of the Heavenly Shepherd, coming down to a wicked, sinful, lost and ruined race to try and persuade men and women, boys and girls to follow Him. He will lead them safely and surely back to God – back to the way of righteousness and peace – back to heaven and home. “*For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*”

The Person and Work of Christ – *Christ of the Past, Present and Future*

Revelation 1:4 – “*John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come...*”

The annual celebration of the birthday of Christ, with all its carnival pageantry and trumpery, with all its high pressure selling and instalment buying, its revelling, banqueting, recreation, and dissipation; we all recognize to be quite foreign to the true meaning and significance of the Advent. But one thing we all must concede: that the birth of no other person in all of history has ever created such wide-spread interest, and attracted the attention of so many different people as Jesus’ birth. The Christ of the past, the Christ of history, holds an absolutely unique and unequalled place in the story of the human race. A star of unusual brightness led to His discovery by wise men from the East. But the radiance of His Person has come to the West, and brought Light to multitudes who sat in darkness, in the region and the shadow of death.

When we speak of the Christ of history, we need to be reminded that only His humanity began at Bethlehem. For it is written “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” then again, in that matchless prayer of John 17 “*Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*” There is no other way to explain the human greatness of Jesus, except by tracing His lineage to the very heart of God. The virgin Mary supplied the human frame for the eternal Spirit. God has now confined Himself to human limitations, subjected Himself to human infirmities, entered the human family by birth just as everyone of us has entered. And He will leave it by death, and that death, the death of the Cross.

Before the foundation of the world, the cross was in sight, and Bethlehem is but the prelude to Calvary. From life, to death went the Son of God; that we might go from death to life.

My text says, “*Grace to you and peace from Him who was and is...*” Sixty years after the Calvary event, the inspired writer brings greetings to his friends from Him who was and who is. Altogether too many people know only the Christ of history. They think only of the past, and do not seem to realize that the One whose birthday we are preparing to celebrate would be glad to attend His own birthday party. For He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. We often wonder how He must feel to witness all the excitement, preparation, and commotion that this season brings, supposedly in honour of His birth. And yet, He is so often shut out of all the plans. His presence is ignored, and the cause for which He came to this world suffers loss.

The Christ of the past is also the Christ of the present. He was given His human body at Bethlehem, but He surrendered it at Calvary. It was taken by violent hands and nailed to a cross. He said, “*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit,*” and He died. The body was placed in a tomb, but on the third day it was changed. It was sown a natural body, it was raised a spiritual body. It was sown in weakness; it was raised in power. And as He said to John on the Isle of Patmos, “*I am He that lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death.*” (Revelation 1:18).

He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
 He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way.
 He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart.
 You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.

Religions have nothing more than history, or tradition on which to rest; but the Christian Gospel has both historical fact and present experience to confirm its reality. This would be a very different Christmas for a great many people if they would ask Him, whose birthday they keep, to join with them. If they would let Him be the guest of honour.

But my text does not end here, for the greetings are from Him “*who was, and is, and is to come.*” The Christ of history is also the Christ of prophecy. The very same prophets who foretold Bethlehem with its humiliation, speak of another Advent of the very same Jesus; but this time He will come in power and great glory. In the Providence of God, we have appeared on the scene just between the two events. We look back to Bethlehem, and forward to the New Jerusalem.

We know that He did come, we know that He is now with us, and we know that He will come again. The announcement by the angels of “Peace on earth and good will to men” seems farther away than ever, of being realized. But the prophets direct us to look for the Prince of Peace, who makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth, who in His times will show who is the blessed and only Potentate KING of Kings and LORD of Lords.

The Person and Work of Christ – *Jesus, the Lamb of God*

John 1:29 – “*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*”

The story of Jesus today is about His official and public introduction to the world, which occurred about thirty years after the Bethlehem story. Thirty years of His life passed over in silence, except for one short story when He was 12 years old and He stayed in Jerusalem after Mary and Joseph had returned to Nazareth. Evidently, His public ministry and death intended to overshadow in value the circumstances of His birth and early life. It seems we have a tendency to over emphasize the details of the birth of Jesus, but give little attention to the principle reason for His birth. However, we have in the Gospels the inspired record which places the emphasis where it belongs, and we see all the details of the Advent of this wonderful Person in their proper perspective. Our text for today, words from John 1:29, are very well-known and yet, their full value has never yet been realized. “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*” This is the official presentation of the King who was born in a manger. The place was Bethabara, beyond the River Jordan. And the man who makes the announcement was prepared from birth for this sacred responsibility – he was John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets.

John the Baptist was an advance agent whose business it was to prepare the way for the soon coming Messiah. Please note that the public was never invited to Bethlehem. Though all might have come, the fact is that only a very few ever knew that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. Very few ever knew that this little family had moved to Egypt, and then later returned and settled in the little town of Nazareth; but now God’s time had come to show His Son to the nation that professed to be expecting Him.

The stage was all set for the dramatic introduction; but it was not in Jerusalem, in the palace of the high priest; but out in the country, where a crowd had gone to hear the preaching of a man named John. This is always God’s way. He passes by, or ignores all man’s pomp and show, –choosing a little town for the birthplace of His Son, –another small village for Him in which to grow to manhood, and then, when He is to begin His world-shaking spiritual revolution, –presents this Mighty Conqueror as “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*” (John 1:29).

We understand this better when we remember that Israel for centuries had been trained by priest and prophet to look for their protection and preservation in and through the “lamb idea.” Remember how the nation was delivered from Egypt through the Passover Lamb, and once a year they kept the feast of the Passover as a memorial of that wonderful night. But apparently, they didn’t know that the feast was intended to be prophetic as well as memorial. As their own prophet, Isaiah, showed them of One who was to come, who would be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep that is dumb before her shearer. And now, John the Baptist says, “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*”

The Jews were looking for a conquering lion; God sent them a defenceless lamb. They wanted to be free from the bondage of Rome; God wanted them to be free from the bondage of sin. They wanted an earthly kingdom, with material prosperity; God wanted them to have the Kingdom of Heaven, with all the spiritual riches that Heaven can afford.

We mustn’t be too critical of these short-sighted Jews, because there is nothing to indicate that we Gentiles are any wiser. By all reports, Canadians, this Christmas Season, have gone on the greatest spending spree that we have record of – department stores all show a decided increase in sales, over any other year. But there isn’t a thing to indicate an increased interest in the mission that brought Christ down from the Ivory Palaces – nothing to show that the ideals which Christ preached, and for which He died, are getting a greater grip on the thinking of men and women of this generation. It may have been a very prosperous season in merchandising; but there is everything to show, in the matter of morals, that we have dropped to a very low mark. Which do you think is most important, goods or goodness? merchandise or morals? dollars or decency?

Who is the most popular at the Christmas Season, Santa Claus, whom we credit with bringing trinkets and toys, or the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world? Which would you rather have, a new coat, or a new heart?

Now, of course, you could have them both, if you meet the conditions, you could have the new coat if you can pay for it, but you can't have a new heart unless you surrender the old one. The providence of God may enable you to get the coat, but the Spirit of God, and the Word of God both agree that if you have not yet received a new heart, then that is what you need the most. You need a new main-spring of desires – a new motive for living – and a new hope, when dying.

My text says, "*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*" Philosophy may tell us we don't have any sins. Culture may show us how to hide them. Education may dress them up until they appear respectable. But the Lamb of God will take them away.

Someone may ask, "Why a lamb?" How can a lamb take away sin?" the answer is found in Isaiah 53:5, 6. "*He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*"

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin to the world."

TIME – OUR PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY

Romans 13:11 – *“It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”*

Many will be listening for the time signal today – adjusting their watches and clocks just to make sure they will know the exact moment when 1952 comes to an end and 1953 begins. We would save ourselves a good deal of trouble in our journey through life, if we always carried the right time, and always were sure that we have the right time.

Time is too precious a commodity for anyone to be careless about, for Time is the stuff that life is made out of. We often use the expression “We’re just killing Time” but what we really mean is, “Time is killing us.” That’s what happens, when a person dies – they have run out of Time. Time for them will be no more. Never again will they have such a treasure as Time, because Eternity has taken over, the moment Time ends. Never again will it be early or late, yesterday or tomorrow, but only an Eternal Now. Time is only the dressing-room where we make ourselves ready to take our places in that great drama called Forever.

God has written the score for those who want to make Heaven their last stopping place. Satan has written the score for those who want to share his eternal abode, called in the Bible, the Lake of Fire. We all have to make up our minds which part we intend to take, and, having made up our minds, the leading character of each part will supply the required costume, and train us for our place we will occupy in Eternity.

Evidently, Satan has a great many more on his side than God has on His, and seems to have no trouble recruiting others, even though the part that each one takes is sometimes disgusting, and often debasing, and the costume is often filthy and rotten. But while he may have more followers as to quantity, God’s followers excel in quality. God provides robes of righteousness, the beauty of character, and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Satan provides a cloak of hypocrisy that covers the garments of evil habits, evil thinking, and evil speaking; and it seems he trains his followers well, so that they do their parts without even thinking. The followers of God, likewise, show the works of the Spirit of God, and the Word of God is written on their hearts.

All this, of course, is just a little parable; but I think you’ll agree, it shows something of the true meaning of life, death, judgment, and the future state. Romans 8:19 says that all creation is eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. Just waiting for the Day when Time will be finished, and all preliminaries are ended. The Day when God will reveal, before the wondering universe, those who have been redeemed, sanctified, purified, and glorified – a great multitude from all kindreds, tribes, peoples, and tongues, which no man could number.

You can read about it in the 19th chapter of Revelation, and if you read the account prayerfully, you will see that to be among this chosen company is the greatest privilege, the greatest honour, the greatest opportunity ever offered to any people. To miss it would be a tragedy, greater than it’s possible to conceive of. The prophet Amos, (who by the way, was a cowboy preacher away back in the Old Testament), in one of his sermons, said to his people, *“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”* – a very reasonable and timely exhortation. We prepare for everything else in life (that is, if we have any sense). So why shouldn’t we prepare for the greatest experience that we can imagine. Someone who wants to be a doctor will have to prepare for it; if the letters MD will never appear after his name. Young fellows may dream of someday being at the controls of one of the great ships that fly through the air, but they’ll never make it if they don’t prepare. How much more, then, should we prepare for a vocation that angels couldn’t fill? It is a high and holy calling, for it is written *“He has made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”* (Rev. 5:10). And again, *“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”* (Rev. 3:21). And yet again, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Well, that’s what Time is for. Just to get ready – that’s what life is for – just to prepare. And before we

leave the air, let me remind you that it's later than you think. If you're not ready, don't waste another day. It might be your last. Let me read Romans 13:11 for you now, "*Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But...*" and this is the sum and substance of all necessary preparation, "*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*"

What time is it? It's time to awake out of sleep. It's later than you think.
