

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

IN THE INTEREST OF JARVIS STREET BAPTIST
CHURCH, TORONTO, AND OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH.

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

SA'URDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1922.

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"MELODY IN THE HEART."

A Sermon by the Pastor.

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."
—Mark xiv. 26.

The Book of Psalms bears witness, that in the Old Testament, music had a large place in the worship of God. Of the priestly order of Levites many were regularly employed in the temple as singers. In the Apostolic Church, too, singing had a prominent place in the simpler worship of New Testament saints. But it is a remarkable fact that there is no evidence of music of any kind having been employed in the services conducted by Christ Himself. So far as I can recall, perhaps the only occasion, during His public ministry, when there was anything approaching song, was when He rode in triumph into Jerusalem, and "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." But even that was rather a spontaneous outburst of popular applause, than formal singing.

Nor does it appear that audible music had any place in the private devotions of Jesus and His disciples when they were withdrawn from the multitude, and He taught them concerning the kingdom of heaven. Indeed, I think it is not too much to say, that the public ministry of Jesus was a songless ministry, save for the melody made in the heart unto the Lord.

This being the case, the text before us is the more remarkable. Why, after the long silence, did Jesus on this occasion teach His disciples to sing? What was there about this solemn service, when He took the bread and wine, and instituted the holy ordinance which we are to observe to-night, to inspire song? I think the answer is not far to seek: It is a workman's song when his work is nearly completed; it is a lover's song when his bride is nearly won.

I. It was appropriate that "the last supper" should have ended with a hymn, because it symbolized the great atonement.

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." Creation was heralded with music: "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." And where God holds undisputed sway, the original harmony is undisturbed. The divinity of music appears in all God's works. There is a music of shape and proportion, a harmony of color as well as of sound. There is music in the heavens above you; there is music in the beautiful world about you, in the melody of birds, in the proportion and perspective of the hills, in the color of the flowers, in the lithe and graceful flight of the hind of the forest, and in the merry laughter of little children at their play. The Divine passion for rhythm and consonance is evidenced in the poetry and punning joyousness of a mountain stream; in the majestic fortissimo of a mighty cataract; in the deep and resistless flow of some great river; and in the thunderous diapason of the ocean wave.

But these material witnesses all speak of the deep and undisturbed repose of Deity Who sovereignly dwells in a realm of undiscordant spiritual harmony; and from Whose holy hand the beauty of the created order came. And yet from one part of His creation an attempt was made to drive Him. This planet became discordant. It was the one instrument in the universal orchestra which was out of tune with that absolute pitch with which the rest of the universe is in accord, and which was ever out of tune with the Conductor's baton. The "Vox Humana" was the one stop in the organ which spoiled the universal music, which made only discordant response to the touch of the Divine Organist's fingers.

And it was to re-tune this world to the Creator's will and purpose that Jesus came. Do you wonder that He did not sing aloud at His work? "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." But when His work was nearly done; when He was about to report to His Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do"; and to cry in the hearing of the universe, "It is finished!" He took the bread and wine, and said they were symbols of His broken body, and His shed blood by which sin's discord was removed, and said to His disciples, "Now, you may sing."

And from then until now it has always been fitting to sing when these precious symbols were before the believer. This is our only hope of finding ourselves in harmony with God, and with all things that are beautiful and holy.

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And 'Father, Abba, Father,' cry."

II. A second reason for the appropriateness of music as an accompaniment of the Supper is this, its symbols summarize the principles of the great Harmonizer.

There are many discordant elements in human life. The ancient "enmity" existing between Jew and Gentile was but typical of many a "middle wall of partition" which separates men from each other, making many of them enemies who ought to be friends. There are walls of partition which separate nations, and "enmity" which is concreted in crushing burdens of armaments which make life a bitter bondage to the nations which carry them. And there are other walls of partition which divide men of the same race and language from each other; there are social distinctions, and commercial and industrial bar-

riers, which make men rivals who ought to be each other's servants. Then, too, there is that large class of men and women who are at war with society everywhere, who come under the condemnation of human law and government; the clank of whose penal chains must ever spoil the music of human life. And, coming nearer home, even in the home-life itself, there is sometimes friction. The house is divided against itself, and the members of the family are not in harmony with each other. Or, to make the application still more personal, we are sometimes at war with ourselves, with our circumstances, and with our own sense of what is right.

And all these warring elements are but symptomatic of an individual, rebellious, attitude of mind. The fact is, we are, by nature, at war with God and the truth. If anyone refuses to sing in the choir it is no new thing. We all have done it.

But who is going to restore harmony, and by what means is it to be done? How is peace to be brought to the individual heart, to the home, to society at large, and among all the nations of the world? Is there any way, and any power by which these opposing elements in human life can be reconciled, by which there can be made of twain "one new man, so making peace"? There is but one answer, that the only gospel for an inharmonious world, is this: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

And on "the same night in which He was betrayed" did not Jesus, to Whom the future was ever present, like John on a later day, "behold, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And did not Jesus, when He took the bread and wine and gave them to His disciples, mean them to understand, "These elements symbolize and summarize the glad tidings, the Gospel of My grace, that I died for the ungodly, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God." And think you, will my imagination take too great a liberty, if I imagine our Lord making His disciples dimly to understand the appropriateness of music, saying, "As I approach the cross, even now I hear a mighty hymn of praise sung by a choir of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I hear saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Was it not in anticipation of that universal chorus in praise of Him who sitteth upon the throne, and of the Lamb, that Jesus led His disciples to sing an hymn ere they went out into the Mount of Olives? And we do well, when we also have partaken of those elements which so beautifully symbolize and summarize this Gospel of divine harmony, to sing,

"Pity the nations, O our God,
Constrain the earth to come;
Send Thy victorious word abroad,
And bring the strangers home."

III. But I must mention a third reason for singing at the Supper: It proclaimed the divine masterpiece set in a minor key.

He is a true musician who can turn a discord to account, and make it enhance his music. And that is just what Jesus did. He maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him. The sin which, by itself considered, is but a blatant discord, in relation to His grace, becomes a dissonance which gives effect to the smoothly articulated tones of creation's measured music. And of all music, there is none so sweet as the song of redemption, albeit, there is in it the agony of the garden and the death-cry of the Cross. And in heaven itself all lesser harmonies are merged in the glorious oratorio of Moses and the Lamb. Is it any wonder that this great Master of spiritual harmonies bade His disciples sing an hymn as they rose from that feast of love, ere He went out into the Mount of Olives to score the sweetest and most difficult strain in all His great masterpiece, "Thy will be done!"

And by the transforming power of that which the bread and wine symbolize, Love's sacrifice upon the Cross, even these once-discordant hearts of ours are made to sing His praise. Like some choice old violin, which seems to have stored within the fibre of its wood the exquisite melodies wakened from its strings by a master hand; so grace creates in us a capacity for divine melodies, for songs in the night, as we, too, go out into our Mount of Olives with its agonizing prayer, and subsequent crucifixion, and ultimate resurrection.

In this attitude I trust we shall come again to the table of the Lord to-night; with hearts made new by grace and filled with gratitude and praise. And even though Olivet be in prospect for some of us, let not the darkness silence our songs. We can at least come singing,

"Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice,
Thy will be done!

"And if, in our unworthiness
Thy sacrificial wine we press;
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done!

"If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain,
Be Liberty's eternal gain,
Thy will be done!

"Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies!
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done!"

OLD FAITH AND HIS RIVALS.

By the late Rev. T. T. Shields. (the Pastor's Father).

Old Faith, the Armorer, worked away in his smithy, and was justly famous for the armor he made. The wondrous shields never failed to quench the fiery darts of the enemy. His swords were never known to break or buckle up in conflict. His breastplate of righteousness might be dimmed for a time by the breath of slander, but it soon shone out bright again when God brought forth His people's "righteousness as the light, and their judgment as noon-day." With one of the helmets of hope of salvation on his head, the Christian warrior took the field without a fear, and never had there been a record of a soldier of the cross being defeated. The soldiers were so much attached to Old Faith that they commonly spoke of him as "Our Faith." Faith obtained all his metal from the mine of divine truth. He was enthusiastic in praise of its quality. He declared it was all good metal, and did not contain one particle of dross.

His method of manufacture was simple. He heated his metal in the fire of love, and then hammered out his armor with the hammer of conviction, on an anvil of solid trust. For many years without a rival in his own line, Faith became the object of energetic and organized competition. A new company was started. They called it the "Take-Nothing-For-Granted" Company; for the manufacture of spiritual armor by machinery. They got their metal from the same old mine as Faith. They appointed Mr. Reason as their chief engineer, and fitted up new machinery which they called "modern thought."

Their theory differed from Faith's in this, that while he held the metal was all good, they maintained that there was a considerable amount of dross in it, and their first business was to separate it. In practice they differed in this, that while Faith worked it hot, they worked it cold. Everything was to be kept cool, and lest any enthusiastic heat should be generated by the friction of the machinery, they enjoined that the oil of calm consideration should be constantly employed.

They first put divine truth into a crushing mill of human criticism, "higher criticism," they called it. Then it passed through a sieve of Rationalism, and all the big miraculous lumps which they could not pound smaller, and which would not go through the rationalistic sieve, they picked out and threw away.

Then they placed the metal under a ponderous steam hammer called "scientific investigation," which was worked by vast wheels of evolution, thousands of years in diameter. They were so high that they were dreadful.

But all their machinery failed to make any plates fit for armor. Do what they would, they could not make a plate of good-hope with all their hammering. The fact was, the supernatural ingredients had all been taken out, and the metal would not weld or cling together. With all their efforts they could not produce the fine temper of assurance which characterized the armor of Faith. They used rivets of probability to fasten their plates together, but in actual warfare the rivets flew out, and the warrior was left defenceless. Their swords were fitted into handles of conjecture and speculation, most elaborately decorated with rhetorical flower-work; but the handles came off in conflict, while the swords were shivered at the first blow. They never attempted to make a shield, declaring it a piece of obsolete armor belonging to a former dogmatic age.

Engineer Reason summoned the firm together to consider the situation. The machinery was perfect. Modern thought could not be wrong. The fact was the metal was not what people thought it was. Such a temper as assurance was not to be attained, it was all a delusion. The utmost they could reach was strong presumption.

Unfortunately for the company's verdict, Old Faith was still working away, making as good armor as ever from the same metal. The warriors' truth encased in this divine panoply were gaining splendid victories as of yore. And as they fought they sang, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith."

THE LORD'S TABLE.

The religion of the New Testament is very simple. The book itself is a revelation and record of vital and vitalizing principles, rather than a list of unelastic, enslaving rules. It is a banqueting table laden with the luxuries of redeeming grace; but it is also a storehouse of precious seed whose planting shall make the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

The New Testament enjoins but two ordinances upon the believer. The first is baptism, which properly belongs to the beginning of the Christian life. It is a symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ, in which, by faith, the soul becomes partaker (Rom. 6). Baptism is for the believer only and for all believers. It is designed as an outward confession of what the grace and power of the Holy Spirit has wrought within. It is not a "sacrament." (It) itself it confers no grace and imparts no merit. Its value is wholly conditioned upon the spiritual fitness of the subject. If it be a simple act of confession and faith in Christ, and if it be done out of love for Him and as an act of obedience to Him, it carries with it the unspeakable blessing of "the answer of a good conscience toward God." But without a vital faith and a spiritual affection, baptism is only a meaningless ceremony.

The same is true of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It is not a "sacrament." There is no merit earned by its observance. It is a means of grace only as those who observe it, by a spiritual preparation of heart, enter into its spiritual significance. Like baptism, its symbolism is related to the death of Christ: the bread, the symbol of His broken body; the wine, of His blood shed for the remission of sins. It is of value only to those whose faith has discerned that in Christ we have our redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.

A little reflection will convince us that if the ordinances be observed in their New Testament simplicity they will serve their undoubted purpose as outward and visible signs of our inward perpetual spiritual need. As we keep them in their primitive form and order we shall preserve their spiritual symbolism and proclaim their spiritual message.

As a Baptist Church, in accordance, as we believe, with New Testament teaching, makes faith in Christ and obedience in baptism a condition of entrance into the Church, so we ought to have some recognized condition of continuance in membership. The Church that makes the one ordinance which is required to be observed but once by every believer a term of admission to membership, should make every effort to instruct its members in the duty and privilege "often" to remember the Lord's death by the observance of the ordinance of the supper. Our recent discovery that the Church has retained in its membership many persons who for years together had absent

themselves from the Table of the Lord, should give us much concern, and should lead us to resolve by prayer and exhortation to endeavor to bring all who are now in membership with us to see the importance of regular observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Let us begin at once.

THE "HOME GOING" OF THE PASTOR'S MOTHER.

A great wave of sympathy spread over the congregation on Sunday last, when it was announced that our beloved Pastor's aged mother had received the "home call" about seven o'clock that morning. It was not unexpected, as for more than two weeks Mrs. Shields had been ill, and partially unconscious, and all knew that the end was not far off.

At last it came, and the aged saint went quietly home to be forever with her Lord.

A telegram was sent to the Pastor from the assembled congregation, and later one from the Sunday School, assuring him and the other members of the family of our sympathy and love.

This church will long remember with gratitude the great joy the Lord graciously gave us a few weeks ago in permitting the Pastor's mother to be present at, and share in, his Twelfth Anniversary Services. The picture of the Pastor and his mother together on the platform, and the loving way in which he bent over her, as she was presented with a basket of lovely roses, will not easily be forgotten.

On Tuesday, August 1st, the dear body was laid away in the cemetery at Hamilton, overlooking the beautiful Dundas Valley, beside her husband, who had gone home twenty years previously. The services in the home and at the grave-side were conducted by the Rev. W. W. McMaster, Pastor of James Street Baptist Church, Hamilton, where the family attended. He was assisted by the Rev. C. M. Carew, of Fenelon Falls, and the Rev. C. J. Cameron. A large number of friends from Jarvis Street were present. Tender words of appreciation were spoken of the one who had gone, and the grace of God was magnified as mention was made of all she had been to her family, and to all who knew her.

In her experience it was blessedly true—

"E'en down to old age, all My people shall prove
My Sovereign, Eternal, Unchangeable Love."

"Till the day break, and the shadows flee away" there will be a great sense of loss to those left behind, but

"Why should our tears run down,
And why our hearts be riven?
There's another gem in the Saviour's Crown,
And another soul in heaven!"

—Geo. Greenway.

THE PASTOR EXPRESSES GRATITUDE.

The Pastor feels that he would be very ungrateful were he to fail to express for himself and his brothers and sisters, the deep sense of gratitude they feel for the many expressions of sympathy received from Jarvis Street

We are learning in some small measure to follow the guidance of the Spirit of God in these services. No special subjects for prayer are mechanically announced; but week by week God's people are led out in earnest intercession for such objects as they feel led of the Spirit to pray for. Last Monday evening's meeting was practically given up to earnest intercession for God's blessing upon our great missionary enterprise in India, and this was as it should be. We hope that as opportunity offers from time to time, Jarvis Street will not be found wanting in generous financial support of all our denominational missions. But what if the visit of all our various missionary representatives should have the effect throughout all our churches of calling the people to prayer; what revivals we might then hear of in India, and Bolivia, and Grande Ligne, and in all our home mission fields! We are grateful to Mr. Smith for his messages, which have already been fruitful in summoning us to a more earnest ministry of intercession in behalf of India. This the people felt was the Spirit's call. Jarvis Street hopes to have the great privilege of hearing Mr. Smith again before he returns to India in the fall.

Postponed Business Meeting. On account of the Pastor's absence, the business meeting of Wednesday evening, July 26th, was postponed for one week.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

T. T. SHIELDS, Pastor, 72 Lowther Avenue. Tel., Hill 563.
A. W. RECORD, Treasurer, 41 Victor Avenue. Tel., Ger. 5273.
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W. J. HUTCHINSON, S. S. Superintendent, 295 George Street. Tel., M. 3321.

The Church Calendar

For the week beginning Sunday, July 30, 1922.

SUNDAY

- 10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.
- 10.30—Communion Service.
- 11.00—Public Worship. Rev. Harrison Roe will preach.
- 3.00—The Bible School will meet.
 Lesson for the day: The first return from exile. Jeremiah 29:10-11
 Ezra 1:1-11.
- 2.30—Open-Air Work with the Gospel Car, starting from Jarvis Street Church.
- 3.00—The Parliament Street Bible School, at 250 Parliament Street.
- 5.30—Open-Air Service on Gerrard Street.
- 6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.
- 7.00—Public Worship. Rev. Gypsy J. Hawkins will preach.
- 7.00—Service at Parliament Street Branch.

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY—8.00—Prayer Service
THURSDAY—8.00—Open Air Service, Gerrard St. gate of All Gardens.