

# The Gospel Witness

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PASTOR AND EDITOR

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE BAPTIST BIBLE UNION AT NEW YORK.

An Address by the Pastor.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, Dec. 9th, 1923.

(Stenographically reported).

"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."—Jude, 3.

I HAVE a double purpose in speaking on the subject that will engage our thought for a few minutes this evening: first, I want our own people, members of this church and congregation and others who worship with us from time to time, to know something of the movements of the times in which we have some humble part. Another thing is that I want to speak in this way to a great company of people who are not here to-night, but who will read this message as it is printed in *The Gospel Witness*. I want in this way to speak to all the Baptist ministers of these two provinces, and to hundreds of Baptist ministers throughout the United States, and to tell something of what we have seen of the hand of God during this last week in New York City. And if you will allow me just to say this to my own people: I think it is well when the Pastor goes away that his people should know what is engaging his energies in his absence. I rejoice that the prayer-meetings go on just the same whether the Pastor is here or away. I have long desired to have a church that gathered about the Lord Jesus instead of gathering about the Pastor—a church made up of people who will attend to the Lord's business seven days of every week whether the Pastor is at home or not; and I am looking forward to the time when this will become a mighty hive of industry, where we shall be working day and night for the Lord. And because I have many outside calls, far more than I am able to accept, and because, of necessity, I shall have to be away occasionally, I shall make it a practice to tell the people something of what goes on where I am permitted to minister away from home.

There are unconverted people here; and before I close this evening I shall have a message for you, growing out of this testimony which we offer in His Name.

We have had during this last week a great conference of the Baptist Bible Union of North America in New York City. I must give you some information about the organization itself. The Baptist Bible Union is a great fellowship of old-fashioned Baptists—that is to say, of Baptists who believe the Bible to be

the Word of God—scattered all over the American Continent. The sphere of its operation is, the Southern Convention, in which there are more than three million white Baptists, and, I believe, about two million coloured Baptists; the Northern Convention, where there is a great brotherhood of perhaps a million and a half church members, or more; and the three Conventions in Canada—the Maritime Provinces, the Convention of Ontario and Quebec, and the Baptist Union of Western Canada.

Now, why this Baptist Bible Union at all? This context which I have read this evening tells us of a day when certain men would creep in unawares, would get into the household of faith, and within its ranks would find a place and deny the Lord that bought them. And that is what has happened in our day to all denominations. The Presbyterians have had their difficulties in the United States, and have had to protest against the apostate Baptist, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, preaching in a Presbyterian pulpit in New York and using it to deny the Lord that bought him. There have been similar incidents among the Methodists and Episcopalians, notably the case of Dr. Grant, of New York. But the Baptists, I think, have a little more than their share in the North. The Southern Baptists are much freer, although they are not absolutely free from this spreading plague. But, among the churches of the Northern Baptist Convention, Modernism has wrought great havoc, and especially in the schools of the North—the colleges, and universities, and theological seminaries.

The Baptist Bible Union originated with a group of men who said: "We are Baptists who stand for the old faith—the faith once for all delivered to the saints—and we had better form a basis of fellowship and invite our brethren in all the Conventions of America to unite with us in order that we may, within the boundaries of our respective Conventions, heed the divine admonition, and contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." And that fellowship is increasing every day. To show you the necessity for this organization, I want to tell you that in the Northern Baptist Convention there has grown up a great ecclesiastical machine. You who are not Baptists may not quite understand that each Baptist church is a self-governing body. We acknowledge no over-lordship of any sort. This church, for instance, is a body of baptized believers who come together for the worship of God, for the preaching of His Word, for Christian testimony in general, and for the observance of the ordinances. But there is no ecclesiastical body on earth with authority to command us. We are an independent people. We have a place in the Convention of Ontario and Quebec in order that by association with our brethren we may co-operate with them in missionary endeavour and in our educational enterprises. But our Conventions are purely advisory; they have no legislative power whatever. They may pass whatever resolutions they like; and it still remains for the churches to decide whether they will be guided by them or not. The decisions of a Methodist Conference are binding upon the Methodist churches which compose the Conference. In a lesser degree, but still in a very real sense, the decisions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church are binding upon the Presbyterian Church. But so far as Baptists are concerned, we insist that the local assembly is its own master, and we refuse to bow to any outside power whatever. There was a time when, though I believed that our church polity was scriptural, it really seemed to me, in my inexperience, to have some practical disadvantages. But I now think this church itself is an outstanding illustration of the value of that principle. If authority to mould the affairs of this church had resided in certain Convention officials, certainly this Pastor would not be in the pulpit. But we are here still. We are here because we decided to stay—and frankly, I intend to stay a little longer, whether anybody likes it or not! In the Northern Baptist Convention the same church polity is held in principle; but in practice it has, in many instances, been departed from, because the Modernists have built up a great machine for the purpose of controlling the churches and penalizing the ministers who refuse to obey the mandates of the machine. There is in the Northern Convention a great ecclesiastical machine that aims to crush the life out of every orthodox pastor in the country; it is built on the same principle as the Rockefeller trusts, and behind it there is much of the Rockefeller money. The University of Chicago, so largely endowed by Rockefeller millions, is one of the centres from which that machine is operated.

The Baptist Bible Union is a fellowship of Baptists who refuse to be coerced, but who are resolved to stay in the denomination, to contend within the

denomination for the faith, and so far as possible to purge the denomination of the things that would corrupt and destroy it.

In this Convention—I do not want anybody to think that the Pastor of this church would say in New York what he is afraid to say at home—here in this Convention we have had the same thing. Only a small group of men, but men who are animated by exactly the same spirit that forbade the preaching of the resurrection in Jerusalem, and stoned Stephen to death; and these, in season and out of season, conspire to turn away the people from the faith. They are not numerous, thank the Lord; they would have been more numerous if some of us had not been constantly on guard, determined that our Baptist institutions should not be prostituted to the purposes of Modernism. I am glad that in our own University we have a Professor of Hebrew who believes God's Word: I refer to Professor Kerr. And there are others who are equally sound.

The membership of the Baptist Bible Union is rapidly increasing. At the New York meeting we had representatives from many States in the Union, and several from the Dominion of Canada; and all these brethren went home fired with great enthusiasm. In New York City there is a very active Fundamental-ist organization, of which my friend, Dr. John Roach Straton, is the President. It is one of the most vigorous Fundamentalist organizations in America. At our meetings last week this organization became a unit of the Baptist Bible Union of North America. For the present they will retain their name—the Baptist Fundamentalist League of Greater New York and Vicinity—but they are now affiliated with us, and to all intents and purposes constitute the New York branch of the Baptist Bible Union of North America.

There are not wanting those who have said: "Why do not you Baptists run away? Why disturb the peace of the denomination? If you are not satisfied, go and worship where you will be comfortable, and leave other people alone." That sounds very plausible; but suppose some man here, who owns his own house, who built it and furnished it and paid for it all—suppose you, my brother, the owner of that house, were to wake up in the early hours of the morning and find a burglar going about the premises and possessing himself of your property? What would you do? Would you meekly say to him, "Well, sir, I built this house with the purpose of living in it myself, and here making a home for myself and my family; but, of course, if you want it, I shall have to retire and leave you in possession." Is that what you would do? I see your answer on your faces. What, then, shall we do with these men who have crept unawares into our schools, into our missionary societies, into various official positions in the denomination? Are we to run away and leave the burglar with the spoils? Not a minute! We intend to fight for that which lawfully belongs to Baptists.

At New York I had occasion to say something about Dr. W. H. P. Faunce, President of Brown University. I referred to the letters published in *The Gospel Witness* a week or so ago, and expressed to my hearers the view that it is necessary that Fundamentalists should cease to fraternize with the enemy. I said that so long as the Russian army continued to fight, the Russian Empire was secure; but in the day that they crossed No Man's Land and shook hands with their enemy, the fate of Russia was sealed. I said I felt compelled to refuse to sit on the same platform with a man like Dr. Faunce, by whom all the fundamentals of the faith are denied; and in this I believe my course was in accord with the teaching of the New Testament, which says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The New York papers published what I said about Dr. Faunce, and the press the next day published his rejoinder, in which he declared that the Fundamentalists represented a very small minority of the Baptist Denomination, that we were proposing to establish new schools, and new missionary organizations; and that after a while we would be likely to slough off from the denomination and form a denomination of our own in sympathy with the Second Adventists. My

answer to that is, that we do not intend to do anything of the kind. It is our purpose to show whether we are a small minority or not. We are planning to spend years, if necessary, to mobilize the Baptist conviction of the Continent, in order that we may demonstrate the loyalty of the Baptist Denomination as a whole to the great fundamentals of the faith. For we are convinced that the great majority of Baptists on the American Continent are still true to the faith; and we are resolved not to allow a little body of theological Bolsheviks to take possession of the institutions of the denomination. It is our intention to stay in the denomination. We do not propose to build new schools, nor establish new missionary societies apart from the present Conventions; but rather Baptist Fundamentalists intend to cleanse the schools that belong to them and to purge the missionary organizations which are the property of true Baptists. And as for the Bible Union sloughing off, nothing could be farther from our thought. We have a strong Baptist Bible Union organized in the State of Iowa; and I received a letter some time ago from a friend there saying that it was being reported that I had withdrawn from the denomination, and was no longer a Baptist. I wrote that brother to say that the wish was father to the thought. Personally, I have no intention of withdrawing from the denomination. Dr. Faunce and those who share his views would be delighted to have all Fundamentalists withdraw and leave the denomination with all its institutions to the Unitarians. This is the one thing we are resolved not to do; and for the benefit of the brethren who will read these words when they are printed, I want to lay special emphasis upon that principle. The Baptist Bible Union is not a divisive movement. It would be little short of criminal for us to run away from duty. Not unless nor until it shall be demonstrated that the rank and file of our Baptist church members throughout the Continent have abandoned the position historically held by Baptists, and have joined the Modernists in denying the faith of Christ, could separation be justified. The growing ecclesiasticism in all Conventions, which aims to prevent the expression of the convictions of the people, is designed to force Fundamentalists out of the denomination. But for Fundamentalists to separate from the Conventions to which they belong would be to play into the enemy's hands, and would be tantamount to absolute surrender. The Baptist Bible Union, therefore, sets its face like a flint against every suggestion of separation. It will spend years, if necessary, in cultivating the churches until the churches rise up and smash the ecclesiastical machines which seek to control them, and reassert their independence. *We would venture to urge all our brethren throughout America to put far from them the thought of separation. Our business is to purge the denomination, and not to run away from it.*

Let me now tell you in a few words something of the great meetings held in New York. They were held in Calvary Baptist Church, of which Dr. John Roach Straton is the Pastor. On the Sunday we had a great Mass-Meeting in Calvary Church, addressed by Dr. J. Frank Norris, of Texas, who spoke on "The Infallibility of the Bible." At the same hour Dr. W. B. Riley, of Minneapolis, addressed a great meeting in Brooklyn, in the Greenwood Baptist Church.

Before I go farther, I may pause to remark on the large space given to the meetings by the New York papers, every one of which for several days reported the meetings on their front page. This was most unusual; but there was a reason for it. The fact is, this is the greatest issue before the people of America to-day. *The World's Work*, of New York, has been carrying for some months a series of articles on "The War in the Churches." If you read such periodicals as *The Literary Digest*, *The American*, or almost any of the larger magazines, you will be almost sure to find an article bearing on the conflict between Fundamentalism and Rationalism. It is everywhere coming to be recognized that this great conflict is one of the most important movements in the thought of the day. For, little by little, men are coming to see that this great war is related not only to the distinctively religious realm, but that it has to do with the State, and indeed, with the very foundations of civilization itself: for Modernism is, in fact, reactionary; it is really the twin-brother of Bolshevism; it denies all objective authority; and, in principle, would reduce both church and state to a condition analagous to a period of Israel's history, of which it is said: "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Whoever destroys men's faith in the Word of God, and propounds a philosophy which robs God of personality and power, and leaves men without the fear of God before their eyes and with no sense of responsi-

bility to Him, is not only an enemy of the souls of men, and of the Church of Christ, and of religious faith; he is an enemy of society itself. Fundamentalists are convinced that this malignant thing which masquerades in the name of "scholarship" was hatched in the Pit, and is begotten of the spirit of Antichrist.

Although some of the New York papers were not particularly complimentary, we welcomed the publicity they gave to this great Movement, a publicity which enabled every speaker who spoke at the Conference literally to address millions each day. True it was made possible for us to put this great issue before the people of America in a very large way. I have no time to go into particulars this evening; but I must give you one or two illustrations of the tendency of the times.

On Monday afternoon Dr. Pettingill, of Philadelphia, gave a magnificent address on "The Deity of Christ," professing his belief in the virgin birth and the physical resurrection, both arguing the essential Deity of Christ; and that perfectly orthodox address brought a storm of protest. Apparently there is nothing some men hate so much as the truth that Jesus is God. I had the privilege of speaking Monday evening on "The Liberty of Faith vs. The License of Infidelity"; and *The New York World* the next morning devoted its leading editorial to these two addresses. The title of the editorial was "With All Uncharitableness." Of course, it was anything but complimentary; and the writer seemed especially indignant because we had dared to insist that belief in the essential Deity of Christ must ever remain a condition of Christian fellowship. It complained in bitterest speech of our want of charity, affording itself a most striking example of the spirit it affected to condemn. In this *The New York World* is not alone. Modernism attacks the very foundations of faith; it attacks even the Person of Christ, denying His Deity and His infallibility, and repudiating His atoning sacrifice; it endeavours to convert every Christian institution into an instrument for the furtherance of its own ends, and in doing this it holds every believer up to scorn and ridicule; it calls us "reactionaries," "unlearned and ignorant"—and what not? but the moment Fundamentalists assert themselves, and boldly avow their faith in Christ and their determination on no condition to surrender, we are accused of showing a bad spirit. Recently I received a copy of our booklet, "A Call to Arms," returned to the office by a modernist minister. It was accompanied by a letter in which the writer declared his belief in Evolution; and after several pages of the worst sort of vituperation, he informs me that if I would send him a copy of the thirteenth chapter of II. Corinthians, he would be glad to read it! This, I say, is by no means unusual. We are expected to allow the enemy to pull down the house over our heads, to destroy the foundations of faith, and leave us without hope for this world or the next—and all this without protest.

On Tuesday we had a great address from Dr. Neighbour on "The Atonement," which lifted us all into the seventh heavens—an address which magnified the Cross and glorified the risen Christ. And this address called forth the same sort of objection that had been registered against Dr. Pettingill's assertion of the Deity of Christ. The Blood Atonement seems to be another doctrine which is especially obnoxious to Modernists. Dr. Riley spoke on "The Present Hierarchical Tendencies Within the Denomination Intolerable to True Baptists"; and in this address showed clearly that Baptists were being robbed of their heritage of liberty, and were being brought into bondage to an ecclesiastical machine. We had great addresses also from Dr. Norris, on Wednesday night; Dr. Morris, the coloured Baptist orator; Dr. Van Osdel, of Grand Rapids; Mr. William Jennings Bryan, Dr. Swope of Philadelphia, and Dr. A. C. Dixon. One of the strongest sessions of the Conference was that which was addressed by Dr. John Roach Straton on, "The Duty of Awakenning the Denomination to the Menace of Modernism on Mission Fields." It is impossible to review the address here with any degree of thoroughness; and I must be content to say that Dr. Straton's address, when published, is bound to shatter the confidence of every believer in the Bible in the Foreign Mission Board of the Northern Baptist Convention. When that address is published we venture to believe that no one who accepts the Bible as the Word of God can with a clear conscience contribute another dollar to the funds of the Foreign Mission Board of the Northern Baptist Convention until it is purged of its modernist directors. Beyond all question, it is a Modernist organization, existing, not to give the gospel of God's grace to the

heathen, but to propagate the principles of Modernism. The story of the betrayal of the orthodox French Baptists by the Foreign Mission Board of the Northern Baptist Convention must surely be one of the saddest chapters in all missionary history.

In view of these facts, what are we to do? What can we do, if we would be loyal to Christ, but heed the admonition of our text, and "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." I know such contention is not pleasant. I trust we are all lovers of peace, and ready to heed the admonition of the scripture: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." But surely it is not possible for one who has been bought with blood, who has passed from death unto life, and who knows Whom he has believed, to witness this terrible departure from the faith without protest.

One brother came to me in New York and said he had read letters I had printed in *The Gospel Witness* in protest against the action of McMaster University in conferring a degree upon Dr. Faunce. He said he had showed a copy of *The Witness* to one of his deacons, and that the deacon had said in effect: "I agree that it was a mistake to recognize such a man as Dr. Faunce. I am shocked by the exposure of his principles, by his open denial of the faith; and I would have no fellowship with him in any of these things. But," said he, "why was not Mr. Shields present at the meeting when it was decided to confer the degree? Why did he not make his protest before the Senate instead of making it publicly?" My answer to his objection was this: "Why should it be necessary for Mr. Shields, or anybody else, to attend a Baptist meeting to protest against a group of Baptists conferring an honour upon an infidel? Why should it be necessary for any one to stand with a drawn sword in order to prevent a group of men who call themselves Baptists from honouring one who denies the fundamentals of the Christian faith?" If there is a newspaper reporter here, I ask you to report these particular words. For myself, I will have no fellowship with one who denies my Lord; and, as to the spirit of our protest, any sort of protest that is effective will be construed as harshness. But if one of us were to see some madman running down the street, plunging his dagger into the breasts of men and women and little children, and leaving a stream of blood to mark his track, should we be disposed to offer a mild and amiable objection to so murderous a course? Is there one of us with a spark of manhood in his breast who would not immediately rush to the rescue, and deal with such a villain in a way that would be appropriate to his crime. How, therefore, can we witness the murder of human souls without indignation? When I observe men poisoning the springs of our educational life, spreading the germs of a deadly plague through institutions and periodicals; when I hear them denying the authority of Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the Blood Atonement, the personal return of the Lord; I am not ashamed to say that I feel like fighting; and I pray God, the Judge of all, to unsheath His mighty sword against the enemies of truth. I would seek God's grace to enable me to love them as poor deluded sinners who need the saving grace of God; but I will never recognize them as Christian teachers, or honour them as distinguished scholars, while they engage in the diabolical business of destroying the souls of men. What I said in New York I say here: *It is time the Christian Church awakened to a recognition of the perils of the hour, and refused absolutely to compromise with the enemy. For Modernism is not a modification of the Christian religion, it is positively antichristian, and that is why we are at war against it.*

It was most significant that insistence upon the fundamentals denied by so many who call themselves Baptists, and the fire directed against positions held by such men as Dr. W. H. P. Faunce and Dr. H. E. Fosdick should have been answered by a New York Unitarian minister, who, in defense of his friend Dr. Faunce and his friend Dr. Fosdick, as he described them, challenged Dr. Straton to a series of debates on some of the fundamental doctrines expounded at our meetings, a challenge which Dr. Straton joyously accepted—and in his privilege is envied by not a few of his brethren.

On Friday afternoon the meeting was addressed by Mr. William Jennings Bryan. He told us that a very careful analysis of the situation had been made in certain colleges, with the result that it was found that a comparatively small proportion of college students in their first year were without religious faith; in the second year the proportion increased; in the third year there was a still larger proportion; while in the fourth year, in American colleges, more than

fifty per cent. of the students were without faith in God at all. My brethren, we had better face the facts. Some of the colleges are the Devil's instruments for the destruction of the souls of men. The colleges and the universities are the places where Satan's seat is. That is why some of us are resolved to do our utmost to preserve our own institutions from that corruption. They have been preserved in large measure; but they are what they are, not because there has been no tendency in the opposite direction, but because some men have stood guard and have determined that when the faith is departed from, the defection shall be exposed. I am hoping for better things. Personally, I am ready to co-operate with all heartiness in the work of our educational institutions, as I told Chancellor Whidden in Montreal; but only just so long as our institutions remain true to the great principles written into their trust deeds. But when a Baptist University confers a degree upon such a blatant infidel as Dr. Faunce, we are bound to protest against it; and I am glad to have been given the privilege, through the press, to tell millions of people in America that there are some people who will never agree to honour any man who dishonours Christ.

I want now to speak a word for the Baptist Bible Union of North America. There is no fee; but if you stand four-square for the "faith once for all delivered to the saints," we want you to enroll as a member. I speak to every Baptist Pastor who will read these words, and urge him to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Send for a copy of our Confession of Faith, if you have not received it. It is a revision of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, and is a truly Baptist statement of the principles for which Baptists have always stood. And when you have read it, if you are in agreement with it, we ask you to become a member of the Union, and then to endeavour to persuade your church to adopt the Confession of Faith as its doctrinal basis.

And now in closing, just a word to the unconverted who are here. Someone will enquire, "Do you expect to have conversions following an address such as you have given this evening?" I answer, "I certainly do." A man told me at our prayer-meeting last night that it was the first time he had been inside a place of worship for twenty years. I found a number of people in New York, who were sceptics out and out, but who were attracted to our meetings by the positive messages which were delivered. One newspaper man who came every night, and with whom I had a long conversation one evening about the things of Christ, told me that he wished he could believe these things to be true. I believe he is feeling after God, and had been attracted by the fact that there was a company of people who declared some things to be true. I promised to send him *The Gospel Witness* weekly for a while. I hope you will pray for that man, you who know how to pray, that God will lead him into the light. And if there are unconverted people here this evening—and I am sure there are many—I have this to say to you: There is a "faith that was once for all delivered to the saints," in spite of all that the modern infidels may say. There is a revelation from God. It is true that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." The Lord Jesus certifies to the infallibility of the Bible. He has put His imprimatur upon the Old Testament Scriptures; and the New Testament has been given to us in fulfilment of His promise; while all the books of the Bible are bound together by His matchless Personality. And the testimony of that Book is that we are all sinners, in need of a Saviour, in need of an atoning sacrifice, in need of regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit; and the reason we are contending for the faith is that we want you who are unsaved to know that it is a terrible thing for a man to be deluded, to be persuaded that he is not a sinner when he is really under condemnation, to be told that he has no deadly plague when the Word of God declares that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Let there be no mistake. We have no fear for the Word of God. For ever God's Word is settled in heaven. All the infidels in the world cannot change a single word that is written in this Book. Our only concern is that lest, in the meantime, generations of men should be led astray, who need to be warned to flee from the wrath to come. And I tell you this evening that I am surer that this Bible is the Word of God than of anything else on earth. I am positive that it is "the Word of God that liveth and

abideth forever." I am certain that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I am sure that He died at the place called Calvary instead of you and me; and that the old truth your father believed, and the truth your mother taught you, is the truth which you must believe in order to be saved. Blessed be God! We rejoice in this gospel that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; that Christ Who died for our sins according to the scriptures was raised again, and ascended into heaven; and that He will come again in the clouds of heaven to receive us unto Himself.

We offer you this gospel; we offer you this salvation in His Name. And I beseech you who are Christians to be out-and-out for Christ. It is useless for you to say you are in sympathy with us in this great conflict, that you admire courage, and wish us success. In the days of the Great War, we needed something more than sympathy; we needed fighting men. And the Church of Christ needs fighting men to-day. I beg of you to abandon your neutrality—if there are any neutrals here—begin at once; join the army, that you may worthily fight the battles of the Lord. Let us have done with this so-called "Middle-of-the-Road" policy. The man who keeps to the middle of the road in these days is the man who causes all the accidents. Get to your own side of the road, and let all the world know in which direction you are travelling. I trust that some neutral Christian will take unto him the whole armour of God this night; and that you who are not Christians will yield to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; and that together we may bear the banner of the Lord to victory. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

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## THE WHOLE BIBLE S.S. LESSON COURSE.

### LESSON XII.

DECEMBER 23, 1923.

#### JACOB, THE SUPPLANTER—Gen. 32, 33.

##### Lesson Exposition by the Editor.

Our lesson to-day gives us a view of the development of Jacob's character in his later years. We may learn here how a crisis long postponed is reached, and how God compels a decision.

I. The angels of God met him. And when they met Jacob—They Met a Man With a Record—and it was a record of which no one could justly be proud. If divine grace, at last, made a prince of Jacob, changing his name from Jacob to Israel, there is hope for the very worst of us; for it would be difficult to find anyone whose moral future was less promising than that of Jacob the supplanter. Society is organized on the assumption that men are liars. That is a strange thing to say, but it is true. All the checks and balances of business are provided to prevent the modern Jacobs from taking advantage of the modern Esaus.

Furthermore, Jacob was actuated by dishonest motives.

Perhaps these biographies are intended to serve as advance notices of the stories that will be read on the day when God shall open His books. For, remember, we are speaking now of a single act in Jacob's history; and it is unfair to judge a whole life by a single utterance, when the man is in a bad mood.

When we say that Esau "for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," we must never forget that the "morsel of meat" for which he sold it, was Jacob's, and that he bought it at the highest possible price.

II. "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." When Jacob Met the Angels of God, He Recognized Them, and Made Response to Their Appeal. And this is true of every man—that as we go on our way the angels of God meet us. The Bible is full of the stories of the ministry of angels. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Angel means messenger. And we all meet messengers from the other world. Not that they necessarily appear in any supernatural way. The messenger of God may be a godly mother, or a godly father, or a pious wife, or a spiritual husband, etc.

Jacob's family history had been written by the angels of God. His grandfather Abraham, had "entertained angels unawares"; and ere they left his



tent they made him a promise that a son should be born. Jacob's history had been written by the angels of God—and so has yours. Have you recognized the angel? Have you listened to God's call? Have you made any response to the appeal of the spiritual world? Have you any ear for the heavenly music?

But when Jacob listened to the angels of God, and recognized them as such, he began to part company with Esau. His face was set toward the things of Heaven in the day that he met and recognized the angels of God. And that is the day in which we all begin to be different; when first we make response to the light, the appeal, the call, of the spiritual world.

Where Jacob first recognized the angel: He was going away from home, and he had a dream. Do you ever have dreams? And what do we see in our dreams? What picture do we conjure up before the mind? What castles do we build? What do we see in these experiences? Is it a dream of greater conformity to the image of Christ? Is it a dream born of an earnest longing to be God-like? And out of that, do you imagine the possibility of ascending the skies? In his dream he saw "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." In his dream Jacob saw this world related to another. If you have seen heaven open; if you know the way to God—that is conversion; that is the beginning of a new life; the angels of God have met you; and you have recognized them as divine messengers.

III. The Angels of God Never Left Jacob, Until They Had Brought Him to the Angel—the Angel of the covenant; none other than the Lord Jesus Himself. And they never left him until that Angel, who is the Angel, had had His way, and had changed him from the wretched, ignoble, supplanter, into a prince, who had power with God and with men.

Conversion is not the end—it is the beginning. When the angels met Jacob, the nett result of their first meeting with him was to secure a promise of the tenth. Follow him to Padan-aram yonder; study the story of his years with Laban; and until he comes back again to meet his brother Esau. Through all those years Jacob has been really a different man. And there comes a time when Jacob, in response to God's call, turns his face homeward. "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." They have not left him. O, the marvel of it! They never left him. "And when Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's host; God is with me still." And grace has done something for a man who thus recognizes God.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him (not he with the man) until the breaking of the day." And the Man was the Angel of the covenant—none other than the Lord Himself. And the limping Jacob prevailed! "And now," said the Lord, "I will change thy name. Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince, hast thou power with God, and with men and hast prevailed." The way to be sovereign in the spiritual realm is to surrender to the only Sovereign; the way to be a conqueror is to be a subject; the way to be a king is to be obedient to the King of kings.

I am not surprised that Jacob should send presents to buy favour with Esau! He knew how purchaseable he had always been. But that is not the line of the story I want to emphasize. Rather, it is this: "And he urged him." Did anybody ever before know Jacob to urge anybody to take anything from his hand? But now that God has conquered in his life, his hand is open, and his heart begins to love somebody else than himself; and generously he wants to share his wealth with another.

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### LAST SUNDAY.

Last Sunday was another hilltop experience. We have referred elsewhere to the great service of the morning. In the evening there was an enormous congregation. Although no subject had been advertised, it was evident that the growth is steady and permanent. Some who had expected to be baptized were unable to be present; but eight believers—four men and four women—were buried with Christ by baptism. The attendance at the Communion Service following was the largest we have ever seen in Jarvis Street. Seventy-three names were on the list to receive the hand of fellowship, making a total of one hundred and seventy-one additions since the fourteenth of October. Beyond question, the year now closing has been the most fruitful in conversions and additions to the church of any year in the long history of Jarvis Street Church.

THE publication of this paper as a missionary enterprise is made possible by the gifts of members of Jarvis Street Church and others, and is sent to subscribers by mail for \$2.00 (under cost) per year. If any of the Lord's stewards who read this have received blessing, we shall be grateful for any thank-offering you may be able to send to The Witness Fund at any time; and especially for your prayers that the message of The Witness may be used by the Holy Spirit for the defence of the Faith, the salvation of souls, and the exaltation of Christ. As our funds make it possible, we hope to add to our free list, from time to time, the names of ministers at home and missionaries abroad.

## EDITORIAL

### THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET.

The true prophet, like the true pastor, is the father of his people. When Joash addressed the prophet Elisha as his father he did more than employ a formal term of respect. The king was greatly moved (II. Kings 13:14) and "wept over his face" as he said, "O my father, my father"; and no doubt meant what his language implied, that Elisha had been the father of his people.

There is a common mental attitude which is inhospitable to the parental word, or to any word weighted with time and experience. There is a quality of mind which, though it may enlarge with the years, does not mature: it is a house with an eastern prospect and no back window, which sees the sun rise, but never observes its setting. It lives in the present and the future, and is without even a nodding acquaintance with the past. Such a mind develops a temper like Rehoboam's, which welcomes only the counsel of youth and inexperience. It assumes that life is one long, unclouded Saturday afternoon. It is a mental garden in which there are no perennials, and in which that which grows grows quickly because there is no depth of earth. The spirit of such a life is characterized by an enthusiastic readiness to manufacture things quickly, but is impatient of everything which requires time to grow. The only heavenly characteristic of such a life is, that it will have nothing to do with any kind of tree which does not yield its fruit at least every month.

To all such—and who of us does not recognize some aspects of his own disposition in the picture?—the prophet must come with the enlightening, steady-ing, experimental word of a father. He must set the segmentary and incidental events of the individual life in the light of universal experience. He must bring the present into the light of the past, and throw the light of the eternal upon the temporal, and thus give to life a true perspective. He must be a father to the orphan mind, which, child-like, is so engrossed with its temporal toys, it has never enquired whence it came, and therefore is ignorant of its true relations.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." So perished Pharaoh and all his hosts. "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph." Had there been an Egyptian prophet to bridge that gap, and to inform the king of his indebtedness to the past, he had been worth more to Pharaoh than the chariot of Egypt and the horsemen thereof. And the true prophet must be a father to the new kings which know not Joseph, to teach them not to contend against, but to ally themselves with principles which climb from pits through dungeons to a throne.

As years are multiplied and experience is deepened and extended, a man may summon courage to offer counsel to his juniors. But it is not of naturally acquired wisdom we speak; for the richer his own experience the less inclined a wise man is to obtrude his advice upon others. Nor was it superior natural capacity or widely varied knowledge which made Elisha a father to his nation.

A man who had known Spurgeon well, told us that as he reread his early

sermons he was led to marvel chiefly at the maturity of their thought and the wealth of experience they implied. He said he could not understand how so young a man as he then was had attained the mental stature of a sage.

We ventured to reply that we believed there was but one explanation, and quoted the psalmist's saying: "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts." For it was on this ground that Elihu presumed to speak. He said: "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, 'Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, Harken to me. I also will shew mine opinion.'"

The prophet is a messenger. In the New Testament meaning of the term he must be an expositor of the great principles of the Bible. And the expository preacher may come to his congregation with the authority of years, and the benefit of unlimited experience. He is wisdom's mouthpiece, saying: "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?...Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man....The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandments: when he appointed the foundation of the earth: then was I by him as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways."

The prophet is a father to his people only as he votes the ageless message of this Book, and speaks the word of the Eternal Father. Then, without apology or presumption, he may cry in the hearing of the world: "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not."

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### THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

We are continually hearing from different parts of the country of blessing received through the pages of *The Gospel Witness*. It is safe to say that the printed sermon reaches at least three or four times as many people as the utmost seating capacity of Jarvis Street Church. From ministers and laymen, as well as from shut-ins, and those who are deprived for other reasons of the privileges of the sanctuary, we are receiving testimony to the blessing received through this paper.

A suggestion respecting Christmas: In response to the suggestion in *The Witness* of last week that a subscription to *The Gospel Witness* for a year would make a fine Christmas present, subscriptions have been pouring into the office. We repeat the suggestion here. Next week we shall publish a special Christmas number with some Christmas features; and we suggest that you send your subscriptions to the office in time for that number to be sent as the beginning of your Christmas gift.

And what about a Christmas present to the Lord? The possibilities of *The Gospel Witness* are just beginning to dawn upon us. If only we had a little capital we might widely extend its usefulness. Its publication at its present rate is made possible by the liberality of many Jarvis Street members. But many outside of Jarvis Street will read these words. If you have some of the Lord's money which you would like to invest for the good of men, and for His glory, we suggest that you remember *The Gospel Witness* Fund. Money is always needed, and will be gratefully received.

## THE BIBLE SCHOOL.

The work of the Bible School continues to prosper. Where the majority of people are unaccustomed to attending an early morning school, it is not easy to get people to change their habits. For this reason our growth has been slower than in some places. Notwithstanding, real progress is being made, although we are as yet only in the beginning.

Last Sunday the attendance in the various departments was as follows: Cradle Roll, 5; Beginners', 33; Primary, 63; Junior, 116; Intermediate, 82; Young People's, 94; Adult (including officers), 112; a total of 505. This is the attendance of an ordinary Sunday, and is far in excess of the highest ordinary attendance recorded in the last fourteen years, even when the Boys' Home and Oakham House were counted in.

And practically the entire school remained to the close of the morning service. Several came forward in response to the invitation, and the whole service was one of much blessing.

What this principle of having over 500 young people in the morning service promises for the future, it is impossible to forecast. It is training the young people and children to attend church, and provides the Pastor with a great evangelistic opportunity every Sunday morning. We shall be greatly disappointed if our school attendance does not reach the 1,000 mark before the end of our church year, March 31st.

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## THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

On Wednesday, December 19th, there will be a Christmas Festival for the Cradle Roll, Beginners' and Primary Departments of the Bible School. Tea will be served at 5.30 p.m. for both children and their mothers; after which the young folks will entertain the older ones with carols, recitations, etc. Following this, gifts will be distributed from the Christmas Tree. It is rumored that a great and popular friend of all the children will appear during the proceedings. Can the children guess his name? It is hoped that the mother of every scholar of these departments will be present with their children.

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## NEWS ITEMS OF THE WEEK.

**Tuesday Evening.** The Lecture Hall was filled for the prayer-meeting and Bible lecture. It is abundantly evident that the Bible is the most popular book in the world, and that nothing interests people like its exposition. Many strangers were there, and of our own people, some living 24 miles apart.

**Wednesday Evening.** The Young People's Department of the Bible School had a Christmas banquet. One hundred sat down to the tables, in addition to the large number of waiters. It was an evening of spiritual refreshment with the Lord Himself consciously in the midst. How the Superintendent of this Department, Miss Violet Stoakley, our able church Secretary, manages to crowd so much work into the day is a mystery to ordinary folks. This Department has an enrollment of 136 under our new plan, of whom only 16 were in the school when our morning school began in October, an increase of 750 per cent. in about two months. Of course this does not represent all our young people, for our teaching staff represents about 130 more, besides some whom we have not yet built into the school. But these young people include many students from the University and from several colleges in the city, as well as many in business life. Watch this department grow several hundred per cent. more in the next three months.

**Another Meeting.** While the Young People's banquet was in progress the Junior Gospel service was being held in the Lecture Hall. At this service there were 326 Juniors present. The divine blessing is resting upon this work of Brethren Hutchinson and Turney on these Wednesday evenings in Jarvis Street, and Friday evenings at the Branch. Conversions take place weekly.

The Branch Festival will be held Friday, December 28th, when a hot dinner will be served to the school, to be followed by a Christmas entertainment. Donations in money and provisions are earnestly solicited. Please leave them at the church office or hand to Rev. W. L. McKay.

Also Christmas dinners for two families of 7 and 9 respectively are asked for. Address the office.