

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A SOCIETY WOMAN'S FOLLY.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 22nd, 1924.
(Stenographically reported.)

"Remember Lot's wife."—Luke 17: 32.



HIS is one of the short and pregnant verses of Scripture. The text is in the New Testament, but its historic setting is in the Old. The Scripture tells us that the wicked cities of the plain were "set forth for an example." But our Lord Jesus singles out this one character for special mention, charging us to remember, and by implication diligently to learn, the lessons which are taught by this sad example.

You are familiar with the story of how, because of the abundant prosperity which God had given both to Abraham and to Lot, there arose a strife between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. And Abraham, who had learned to let God choose for him, and to accept that which God had planned for him as the best,—Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."—"I will take what is left; you make your choice."—"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord. * * * Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom". You will remember how later the judgment

of God fell upon the wicked cities of the plain; and two evangelists from heaven—two angels, were sent of the Lord: "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed". And they began their progress in the direction divinely given to them. They came, indeed, into the little city of Zoar; but Lot's wife turned back. She did not retrace her steps; she just turned back with her eyes. Instantly the judgment fell; and she was transformed into a pillar of salt. And our Lord, centuries later, declared that conditions similar to those obtaining at the time of Lot would prevail at His coming: "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot * * * even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." And in that connection, He bade them, and bids us, "Remember Lot's wife." The principles wrapped up in this tragic story are principles which have application to every human life to-day; and we shall do well to study them diligently.

I.

I shall begin by saying that Lot's wife provides a striking example of **The Folly of Choosing One's Portion in Life by The Sight of The Eyes**. Lot and his family lifted up their eyes: they formed their own estimate of the value and possibilities of the land before them; and made choice of that which was pleasant to the eyes. It is a repetition of the still more ancient story: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof." It is interesting to observe that, in the Old Testament, with the exception of the record of the fact that Lot's wife looked back, we are not told anything about her. She seems to have been rather a silent partner in the firm of Lot & Co. But if she was silent, she was not unimportant. I dare say Lot may have been under the delusion that he was making his own choice, and that he was his own master; but our Lord analyzes the story and shows us that his wife had very much to do with it. Beyond question, she was a tremendously influential factor in the life of that household, as most women are—and as they ought to be, for that matter. The Scripture abounds with illustrations of the tremendous power for good or evil, which is wrapped up, not only in the life of men, but in the life of women, too. I remember some years ago taking an Old Testament story of a woman who had walked in the ways of evil; and I had some stinging letters afterward for daring to assume that women could ever be anything other than angels. I do not know who those writers were; I do not know where they had lived; but I have lived long enough to have observed that much of the influence exerted in family life, and in the life of individual members of the family, comes from the women in the household. And no minister can be true to his trust, who does not faithfully and searchingly preach to the women of his congrega-

tion; for the truth, "Ye must be born again", applies to women just as it does to men.

Here is an instance of some who made choice of their portion in life wholly on the ground of external appearances—by the sight of the eyes. Lot's wife and her husband chose that which seemed to be materially profitable, irrespective of its relation to moral and spiritual values. It is amazing how many people there are, who seem to think that success in material things covers a multitude of sins. There are poor fellows who go wrong, and who appropriate a small amount of other people's money, and who get into the police court, and into jail, and perhaps into the penitentiary; and there are other men who plunge more deeply, and gamble on a wholesale scale, and ruin innumerable families, and rob people right and left, and who pass as respectable members of society. Very often men are led on in that kind of extravagant enterprise, because they are moved with a passion to give their wives and families the luxuries, the material comforts, which other people have. Toronto is not exempt by any means. We have had plenty of examples in this city of people who are supposed to be respectable members of society, who seem to think if only they can succeed anything may be justified.

Now, my dear friends, I remind you that this terrible story is designed to teach us that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." It is not sufficient that we should do business and profit ourselves; we must do these things on a basis of righteousness. And, in many cases, the women of the household are greatly to blame. I remember a case, some years ago, of a man who was plunged into the greatest financial difficulties. He made several desperate efforts to extricate himself from his condition, but only went from bad to worse. And when at last he broke the news to his wife, she said: "Why did you not tell me that things were as they were?" The fact of the matter was, he knew her tastes; he knew her ambitions; he knew her passion for material comforts, and for position in life: he was devoted to her; and he was determined, by some means or another, to give her what he knew she wanted; until at last he found himself at the end of his tether, all but ruined, with only a few dollars left. And this passion for getting on, for keeping up with the set in which we move, and to which we imagine we belong, is the cause of no end of difficulty. I shall show you presently that the root of the whole matter lay in the fact that this woman was not rightly related to God. But I am dealing for the moment with the external symptoms of that fatal malady, which the Bible calls sin.

They made choice of the material. I say, irrespective of its relation to moral and spiritual values. They made choice of that which was pleasant to the eyes, and profitable, without regard to the will of God. As a matter of fact, it was an absolutely godless choice. If you read the story you will see that Lot did not lift his heart to heaven to ask for divine guidance. It does not appear that he depended upon divine wisdom to make the choice for him: he felt competent to choose his own lot in life. And do you know that there are many professing Christians who live utterly godless lives—I mean in the

practical way—who do not take God into partnership in the affairs of the home, in the affairs of the business. I have known scores and scores of men and women, who have changed their places of abode, who have bought a house, or engaged in business, and embarked upon some new enterprise, without ever first of all seeking the judgment of God on these matters. It may be there are some here this evening, to whom it has never occurred to bring all the details of life into the light of divine wisdom, and to make our choice, in respect to the daily task, in the light of the teaching of God's Word. Here were people who ruled God out: they lived—even Lot himself; and Lot was a better man than his wife a woman—they lived on the low carnal plane of human judgment, unenlightened by the wisdom of God.

II.

Lot's Wife Chose the Temporal, at the Expense of the Eternal.

There is a Scripture which says: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Somebody quotes that text, and says: "That is fine. When I am ill, I like to turn that over in my mind, and say, 'This light affliction won't last very long; and it will do me a world of spiritual good while it lasts.'" That is not what the text says at all. It says: "This light affliction—the limitations, the disabilities, the incapacities, of this mortal life—this light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"—on this condition, "while we look not at the things which are seen"; while our eyes are not turned to the well-watered plains of Jordan; while we are not concerned about the standards of the men and women of the world; while we are unmoved by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, and all that is in the world,—while we shut our eyes to that, and look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, and which are eternal, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"—but only as our eyes are turned beyond the stars, and toward the eternal future, and life is viewed, and measured, and valued, in true perspective, and in its relation to the things that are to come. And, my dear friends, it is a trick of the Devil, I am sure, to persuade ministers to lay emphasis upon the life that now is in subordination to the life that is to come. I heard a man say some years ago—he was an intimate friend of mine, he was true to the great fundamentals of the faith; and yet he was mistaken in his emphasis,—I heard him say one time that when he was a boy, he was accustomed to hear preachers exhort men, because of their relation to the eternal future, to come to Christ, in order to be forgiven their sins, and saved from hell to heaven. But he said that he was glad that that emphasis had been changed, and that to-day we emphasize the profitableness of godliness to the life that now is. I assert that that change of emphasis often amounts to a misrepresentation. Our Lord Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world." He bade us,

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth;" "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

But what has followed this change of emphasis? Multitudes of people who are called Christians make exactly the same choice as Lot and his wife made. They argue, "We ought to be better off as Christians; we ought to live in bigger houses; we ought to live more comfortably; we ought to ride in more luxurious cars." And so they grasp, and grasp, and grasp, and pitch their tent toward Sodom. But that is not the teaching of Scripture, my friend. This woman made her mistake with her husband because she set her mind upon the things which were visible,—the things which were seen, and which were only temporal.

I remember when I came to this city, about fourteen years ago, going to a certain place, and seeing the foundation of a great building. Some one drove me around, and I said: "What in the world is this for? Are they going to build a great hotel up here?" But I was told it was to be a private residence. In due time the mighty pile was reared upon that foundation; and everybody, I suppose, who toured the city drove around that great pile, and wondered at the folly which had built a house like that. Oh, the folly of it! I saw in the paper the other day that the mistress of the house had died, and that all its contents were being sold by auction, because there was nobody longer to enjoy it. In the short space of fourteen years, a great fortune invested in a great house; and now the owner of it—not even the landlord, but only the tenant of a six-foot grave.

III.

Lot's wife is an example of the **Power of Worldly Allurements**. When they made their choice to part company with Abraham, they had no intention of going to live in Sodom—not for a moment. They knew that Sodom was a wicked city; they knew that it was a godless place. "But between us and Sodom," they argued, "there is a well-watered, fruitful, beautiful land: and we can occupy that space between us and the wicked city without going the whole length. Certainly, we have no intention to try to bring up our family in a city like that; among people who have no fear of God before their eyes. But there is plenty of room between us and them, and we will stop short of going to the extreme." And so they pitched their tent toward Sodom.

I have been long enough in the ministry to see many professing Christians drift like that; to see a great many people who, in humble circumstances, with comparatively little of this world's goods, seemed to serve the Lord with all their heart. But, in order to advantage themselves just a little, in order to improve their worldly situation just a little, they pitched their tents in that direction—that was all; only a short step toward the forbidden thing! "Oh, no," a mother says, "I would not think of encouraging my children to do the things which some children do. For instance, I would never have a ball-room in my own house; but I think it wise to endeavour to keep

the children at home, and amuse them a little, so we have a parlor dance occasionally. I am entirely opposed to bridge parties, to playing gambling games in the name of—well, in order to keep up with the Joneses. I am entirely opposed to that; but we must not be fanatical, we must make some concessions to social customs. You know what the spirit of the times is. I am disposed to allow my children a little more latitude than my parents allowed me. Of course we do not believe in going the whole length. But we ought to make a little concession to the young people to-day. We will stop short of Sodom; don't be afraid of that." Beware of the first wrong step, my friend! Look at this story. We are not told how they got there. But when they pitched their tent toward Sodom, they had other neighbours; they found themselves in another kind of society; and they began to be influenced by the company they kept, as people always are. We have a proverb to the effect that, "A man is known by the company he keeps"; that "Birds of a feather flock together". And I suppose it is true.

I read to you this evening a brief, inspired catalogue of blessed negatives, describing the blessedness of men who do not do certain things. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly"—blessed is the man or woman who refuses to receive counsel from ungodly neighbours, and ungodly associates. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners,—that is another step—nor sitteth—established—in the seat of the scornful." The allurements of the world are so powerful, my friends, that if we fraternize with it, and receive counsel at its lips, we are tempted to walk in the counsel of the ungodly; and, as sure as we do, we shall soon be standing in the way of sinners; and that is only a further step in the direction of sitting down in the seat of the scornful.

At last, at last, the record tells us that they are living right in the heart of the city. They pitched their tent toward Sodom. When they got down to Sodom, they did not live in a tent, they lived in a house; they found permanent quarters at last right in the heart of that godless city. And that is ever the course of compromise and expediency; to move in the direction of evil is to almost certainly arrive at last at the end of it. How foolish this woman was! No wonder our Lord bade us, "Remember Lot's wife."

IV.

But I have this other word: Our story illustrates **That the Fascination of The Things of The World for a Worldly Mind Is Fatal**. I said, the allurements of the world were very powerful. There was something about life in Sodom which exercised a marvellous influence over this woman. Lot is one of the most difficult characters in the Scriptures, in my judgment, to interpret. He seems to have been a man of little decision of character—a weak man who was unable to stand for principle. And yet the Spirit of God discerned in him something, which perhaps we could scarcely credit him with; for in the New Testament we are told that Lot was a "just man." I think that Lot is a type of that sort of professing Christian, who has been

really saved by divine grace, but who has lived all his life on a carnal plane; and who will come at last to the judgment-seat of Christ, and have all his works burned away, and yet himself be saved so as by fire. Lot, I say, is described in the New Testament as a just man. We are told that he "vexed his righteous soul" by the lawlessness about him. Lot never favoured the doings of Sodom. Lot was never at home in Sodom. I think Lot was never comfortable—I know it on the authority of God's Word—Lot was never comfortable among these ungodly people of the wicked cities of the plain. And yet, in spite of that, he lived there; in spite of that, he made his home there. Why did he not separate himself from the people of Sodom and Gomorrah? Why did he not say to his family: "We will turn our back upon all this; and we will return to the life of faith which we learned from Abraham?" I do not know why: I only know that he went on living at that poor dying rate in Sodom. So far as he was concerned, he was a man without a testimony; he was a man who never led other people to God; he was a man who was never used of God to lead others to safety. And when at last the angels from heaven laid their gracious hand upon him, and said to him: "Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and they sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place," he went to those who were betrothed to his daughters, and he said: "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." But they looked at him, and laughed, and they said: "What has happened to him? What in the world has happened to our future father-in-law? Has he suddenly become religious? He is concerned about our future; and we have never heard about it until to-day:"—"He seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law."

I know why some people do not go home and testify to their children. I know why some professing Christians do not have family worship. For the simple reason, they cannot pray in the presence of their families. The man's children would all but mock him, unless, indeed, he were to go to them and confess as Lot ought to have done: "My children, I have been all wrong. I have been living in Sodom against my conscience. I ought to have been out of it. I have asked God to forgive me; and I come now to ask you to forgive me." But instead of that, without any confession at all, on the top of an inconsistent life, he began to try to testify for God. You cannot do that. You cannot divorce yourself from the past without confession of your wrong-doing. Unless we get ourselves right, we shall be but mocking witnesses; we shall have no power to lead other people to Christ.

And yet how marvellous is the grace of God! How marvellous it is that, in spite of his worldliness, in spite of all his vacillation, in spite of his weak yielding to the influence of his wife, and daughters, I suppose—in spite of it all, God did, by sovereign grace, deliver that man out of the city; and he was saved! All his property gone—his flocks and his herds, and all his wealth—he left it all behind him, and came out empty-handed at last, "saved; yet, so as by fire."

If there is anybody here this evening, who has been a church member these many years, a professing Christian, but trying to serve

God in Sodom, I want to tell you, you have been in the wrong place. You will not accomplish much by that means: "You cannot serve God and mammon." It cannot be done. But if, indeed, you trust in Him in your heart; if, indeed, you are a new creature in Christ,—though your growth has been stunted; though your development has been stayed; though when by reason of the time you ought to be teachers, you are still in the kindergarten class—our Teacher is infinitely patient! He will set the lesson all over again for you; and you may begin to-night where you ought to have begun twenty-five, or thirty, or forty years ago. You can be out-and-out for Christ if you will.

I wish I could stop there. But there is that other character—Lot's wife. So far as I can see, she never knew the Lord; and, perhaps, if we knew the inside story of Lot's life, we might be more sympathetic toward him. I know, of course, the Spirit of the Lord knew more than we; and, perhaps, He knew that Lot's greatest difficulty was an unconverted wife—a woman who did not know God; a woman who had never beheld the King in His beauty, nor seen the land that was very far off. Oh, just look at the picture! What is it? It is the fascinations of the flame of worldliness for a worldly mind; and this human moth flying round about the flame. And when at last the angels came, "while he lingered,—poor Lot was always lingering; he always did things reluctantly—while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." And then comes the strange story. Behind, this worldly woman had left her beautiful home; and she could not bear the thought of leaving it, with all its luxurious comforts within and without. There were some neighbours very probably. She could not see the moral quality of their lives, but no doubt she would have told you: "Well, I suppose they are not godly people exactly; but they are very fine people. They are so nice. They call on me so often; and I have called on them. They are most agreeable; they are so broad-minded, and I cannot bear the thought of leaving it all." But the angels from heaven said: "Look not behind thee. Do not turn your eyes upon it. It is fatal even to look." Thus by the might of omnipotence, they are led along; until at last, although she did not turn herself, she simply turned her head and glanced toward the forbidden thing; and instantly the heart ceased to beat; and by some strange miracle of judgment, she became a sacrifice salted with fire, a pillar of salt, an everlasting monument to the folly of looking upon things forbidden.

What is the remedy? I stopped in the midst of my quotation just now: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful". But the Bible never says "don't" alone; the Bible never tells us not to do one thing without telling us to do something else; the Bible never gives us the negative without the positive. He brought them out that He might bring them in. Always you have the two things when God deals with a soul. So the blessed man does not find his blessedness in not doing these things: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate."

day and night." And what is the law of the Lord? It finds its complete exemplification, its perfect incarnation, in the Person of Jesus Christ. And the only way to be saved from the allurements, from the fascinations of the world, is to be wholly taken up with Christ; the only way to be saved from the attractiveness of Jordan is to get a view of the celestial City, of the Lamb in the midst of the Throne; the only way to be sure of being weaned away from all that is in this earth, that is temporal and perishing, is to have a clearer view of the eternal City, to set our affection on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

And so, my dear friend, whether you are a man or woman, whatever your situation, we come back to the everlasting gospel, to the same old story: "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good." There is no other way. "Well," you say, "it means much to be a Christian; it means giving up a great deal." No; it means giving up your sin. That is the only thing that we leave behind. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." To keep company with Jesus Christ; to hear His Word, and to know that His Word is true; to hear Him saying, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven"; to be sure that all the record of the past is blotted out, and that I am washed in the blood of the Lamb,—that is abundant compensation for all the pleasures of sin.

A man said to me one day that he felt a little more respect for himself when he had a new suit of clothes on. He said: "When I am shabbily dressed, I do not feel comfortable." And I have seen some ladies walk as though they found a great deal of satisfaction in a new hat. On more than one occasion I have seen people tripping to church on an Easter Sunday morning, when I have had a suspicion in my mind that it was something more than a desire to worship that was leading them so gaily and merrily along. But there is a real and abiding joy in being well-dressed in the spiritual sense. It is a great thing to be well dressed. It is a great thing to feel, "I could stand in the company of angels to-night, and be unabashed with this coat on; that I could go into the presence of God, and be able to sing:

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully, through these, absolved I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame."

It is a great thing to be well dressed, and to have some of the luxuries,—“Put a ring on his hand”; to have some of the jewels of His grace ornamenting us, enabling us to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”; to be able to read our title clear to mansions in the skies. That is a joy that is unspeakable; and it is for you, this evening, to “Remember Lot’s wife.” There she stands— an example of the folly of turning one’s back upon God. May He lead us everyone in simple faith to look to Jesus!

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 CANADIAN BAPTIST.

One of the most important of our denominational interests is our Publication work. *The Canadian Baptist* is the organ of the churches of the Convention of Ontario and Quebec. For that reason it ought to be in every Baptist home in every church in the Convention. *The Canadian Baptist* ought to be a zealous advocate of the great principles for which the Baptist Denomination stands. Every issue of the paper ought to be representative of some aspect of the Baptist position. It ought to be an unfaltering, dauntless, champion of the "faith once for all delivered to the saints". Beside this, it should be the impartial but earnest helper of every denominational interest. It is the only regular medium of communication between the churches of the Convention. Its circulation ought to be as the circulation of the very life-blood of the Denomination. The meetings of the various Associations, and the Annual Meeting of the Convention, afford opportunities for the public discussion of denominational questions. But, between these meetings, *The Canadian Baptist* is our only forum. In its pages it ought to be possible to discuss, fairly and frankly, the great problems related to our united service. The Editorial pulpit of *The Canadian Baptist* is incomparably the most influential pulpit in the Denomination. We have not the exact figures; but we suppose the circulation of the paper to be eight thousand or over. It is fair to assume that its pages are read by from twenty to thirty thousand people per week. What pastor among us has an opportunity comparable to this? Taking all these things into account, we can think of no department of our work that is of greater importance, or of larger influence, than *The Canadian Baptist*.

The present Editor has improved *The Canadian Baptist* in some particulars. His experience in newspaper work has enabled him to display his goods to fair advantage. And when one receives *The Canadian Baptist*, and turns its pages, he at least gets the impression that it has something interesting to say. The Editor, we believe, is a most amiable gentleman; and we have no doubt that he is thoroughly devoted to his work. It is somewhat unfortunate, however, that he has been placed in so difficult a position. He was graduated from McMaster University in 1901. Most of the twenty-three years that have passed since then have been spent in secular newspaper work. He was, therefore, unknown to the Denomination during that period as a leader in any department of its work; nor, so far as we know, was he in any respect an influential factor in its life. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to expect him to be conversant with the great matters which are so vitally related to our denominational prosperity. Of necessity, his mind must have been occupied with other matters more directly related to the interests of a daily newspaper. It would be unfair, therefore, to expect that one so limited in theological knowledge, and in actual experience of denominational work, should have any competence to give direction to a great Denomination in relation to its attitude toward the tremendous religious issues of the day.

We admire the hands of *The Canadian Baptist* which write the headlines, and arrange the type, and are responsible for its mechanical form. It is, however, a matter for profound regret that the denominational paper, in such strenuous and perplexing days as these, should, perforce, be editorially dumb on all matters of importance. We do not blame the Editor for this situation. He accepted a position to which he was invited by the Publication Board; and he is eminently wise in refraining from discussion of matters which he may feel he has no competence to deal with. Silence is not always desirable; but

it is better not to speak at all than to speak unwisely. It is, however, a pity that a paper, with such potentialities as reside in *The Canadian Baptist*, should be without a strong hand to direct its course. We appreciate the genial spirit of the Editor, and his mechanical skill, and journalistic taste, manifested in the paper's make-up. For these are as important to a paper as window-dressing is to a store. Once we challenged an editorial utterance of *The Canadian Baptist* on the floor of the Convention. We struck hard at the time, as we felt the offence demanded. We had no intention, however, to strike such a blow as would render *The Canadian Baptist* editorially dumb. We hope it will soon find speech again. We are sorry to have to write of *The Canadian Baptist* in this way, but to read the paper as at present edited is like going to church and listening to the announcements read by a layman while the collection is being taken, with no sermon and nobody in the pulpit. There is nobody in the editorial pulpit.

INFIDEL AND ATHEIST.

A letter from a friend informs us that one of our readers was shocked by our use of the term "infidel". We entitled our address on the Dr. Faunce incident, "McMaster's Approval of Dr. Faunce's Infidelity." We have frequently referred to Modernists as "infidels"; and such, beyond peradventure, they are. It would save us all much trouble if we knew our Bibles better; and we venture also humbly to suggest that, it would be an advantage for many people to know the dictionary better. We will not here take time to discuss the difference between an infidel and an atheist; but content ourselves with giving the definition of these words as found in the Standard Dictionary.

[The adjective infidel is defined as follows: "1. Lacking the true faith; disbelieving; specif., rejecting the Christian or some other religion: often an opprobrious epithet; as, to the *infidel* Turk the Christian is the *infidel*. 2. Caused by, manifesting, or characteristic of unbelief, especially in the religion of the Bible; hence, disloyal; recreant." The noun infidel is defined: "1. One who denies the existence of God; in a narrower sense, a disbeliever in the religion of the Bible; a skeptic. 2. One who has not the faith; an unbeliever, as viewed from the standpoint of a believer in any particular religion; as, formerly a Jew was an *infidel* in the view of a Christian. 3. A disbeliever in something specified; as, an *infidel* concerning astrology." The definition of infidelity is as follows: "1. The state of being an infidel; lack of belief, as in the accepted religion. The word is used loosely as a synonym of *atheism*, and includes in general all forms of religious unbelief, as agnosticism, skepticism, deism, and rationalism."

Atheism is defined as: "1. The denial of or disbelief in God, as a First Cause, or Ground, of the universe. 2. Disregard of God; godlessness in life or conduct." An atheist is defined as: "One who holds or advocates atheism in any sense."

Thus it will be seen that *atheism* involves the denial of the existence of God; whereas *infidelity* means etymologically that which is without faith, or faithlessness. If those who deny the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, His essential Deity, His physical resurrection, His vicarious sacrifice, His promised, personal return—if such are not infidels, where can infidels be found? We confess to a reluctance to employing the high-sounding name of "modernism" to designate that which is nothing more nor less than rationalistic infidelity.

We read in the second chapter of the Bible: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field". Thus, the first science in which the first man became expert was the science of nomenclature—the science of calling names. We believe that as the professing church returns to sanity and orthodoxy, it will return to the practice of calling things by their proper names. That is why we denominate such men as Dr. Faunce, Dr. Fosdick, Dr. Shadler Mathews, Dr. Vedder, and others of their school, as infidels. Any one who will carefully study their writings and compare them with the definition given above, will recognize the accuracy of the appellation.

THE WHOLE BIBLE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON COURSE.

LESSON XLI.

JULY 13th, 1924.

DAVID'S EXILE—I Samuel 22-24.

A careful study of these chapters will disclose something of the secret of the popularity of the Psalms of David. He fathomed the depths, explored the remotest bounds of the wilderness, and scaled the loftiest mountain peaks of human experience. He is everybody's companion: hence his psalms, which are largely biographical, are perceptive revelations of every shade of human experience.

I. His Successes React in Severe Adversities.

Most of David's troubles were born of his triumphs, His victories made him the victim of Saul's jealousy. His driving the Philistines from the field drove him ultimately into the cave. Thus every spiritual triumph inevitably reacts in a counter attack by our spiritual foes. Triumphs are related to trials, and victors are often victimized.

II. A Victorious Soul Inspires the Spirited With Courage.

David's hiding-place became a training school for other battling spirits (22:2). Our adversities, providing we meet them in faith, enable us to become pathfinders for others who are oppressed of the devil. Thus the Man of Sorrows who was acquainted with grief opened a cave of Adullam for all the hunted souls of men

III. Wicked Men Reveal Their Own Characters by the Character of Their Opposition to the Righteous. (22: 7.)

Saul implicitly offered a bribe for faithfulness to him in his opposition to David. Men often impute motives to others which imputation is only a revelation of the motives from which their own actions spring.

IV. The Devil Is At No Loss to Find An Instrument for His Purpose.

There is always a Doeg to report the kindness of a Ahimelech, and to shed the blood of those who are true to their God. So too faithfulness to great David's greater Son is sure to bring upon the faithful the vengeance of the spiritual Saul.

V. There Is No More Bracing Employment For the Persecuted Than to Fight Others' Battles.

Thus David kept his own spirit strong by fighting the battles of the oppressed (23:5.) There is no safety for the soul like seeking the salvation of other souls. Even though such service meets with the basest ingratitude (23: 7-12), we must render it for our own soul's sake.

VI. A Friend in Need Is A Friend Indeed.

Jonathan again proves his loyalty (23: 16-18). How like the ministry of a Greater than Jonathan who "strengthens our hand in God," just when we need Him most.

VII. Multiplied Opposition Is the Lot of Those Whom God Has Ordained for a Kingdom. (23: 19-26).

We must count it not strange concerning the fiery trials which come to us. The Ziphites are sure to follow the example of the men of Keilah. It is abundantly evident that it is easier for men to do evil than good.

VIII. David Is a Fine Example of How to Keep One's Heart Pure and His Conscience Tender.

1. Goodness and mercy find their opportunity as well as envy and hate. David's enemy was delivered into his hand, as is always ultimately the case with true men. Let a man cultivate goodness and mercy in his heart, and he will not want opportunities for their exercise, even as those who nurse within them evil passions are sure to find occasion for their expression.

2. Walking with God keeps one's conscience tender. "David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt." Saul could have slain David outright without any prickings of conscience, but David was troubled because he snipped off a bit of his enemy's skirt.

3. David's noble speech to Saul (24: 9-15) showed that his generous conduct had developed a noble soul within him. To act ignobly means to become ignoble. When one does an injustice to another he does a still greater injustice to himself. In sparing Saul David spared himself. Hence every sinner, though he sin against God and his neighbors, is chiefly a "sinner against his own soul." In our next lesson we shall see that we can well afford to leave our enemies to God. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord." Rom. 12: 19-20.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Weekly Bible Lecture. The Pastor has been away so much between Sundays that the Tuesday Bible Lecture has been often omitted. Last Tuesday the lecture was resumed. There was a crowded meeting, forty-five minutes of earnest prayer and altogether, according to the testimony of many, an evening of blessing. The subject of the lecture July 8th will be, "David in Exile."

The Dr. Norris Mission. We bespeak a special interest in our readers' prayers in behalf of Dr. Norris' August Mission in Toronto. We shall publish a Norris supplement to The Witness in due course. Jarvis St. Church will work as though all depended upon our working, albeit we know from Scripture and experience, that every thing depends upon our praying and upon the power of the Holy Ghost.

We believe there is a special Providence in Dr. Norris' coming. We see by press announcements that Prof. George Jackson of Didsbury College, Manchester, England, is to preach in Toronto July and August. Dr. Jackson is the man who did so much to put the Methodist Church in Canada on the Modernist toboggan slide that runs down to the plain of Unitarianism. We notice, too, that the Rev. F. C. Spurr of Birmingham, Eng., is to preach in Walmer Road Church. From what we have read of Mr. Spurr we fear he is on good terms with modernism. If he is not a modernist bridegroom he is certainly a friend of the bridegroom who rejoices greatly to hear the bridegroom's voice. Dr. Norris' ringing testimony to the faith once delivered will do something to neutralize the effect of these voices of compromise.