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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ETERNAL KINDNESS.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto.

"The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."—Isaiah 54: 10.



It is written of Jesus, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." And the world has not made his acquaintance yet. No one was ever so misunderstood, so misrepresented, so grievously misjudged as He has ever been. We ourselves, though we have been introduced to Him, do not know Him very well. He might well say to us, as to Philip, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?"

And because we misunderstand Him in Whom "all things consist," we fail to recognize that all the details of our life are so related to each other and to our life as a whole that they "work together for good"; and thus we fail to see "things which are temporal" in their correct proportions and true perspective; and life becomes a tangled skein, a medley, a veritable Babel. While we misunderstand Christ we cannot understand ourselves, our circumstances, our lot in life.

"What think ye of Christ?" is the test
To try both your plan and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him."

You see, then, how this ignorance of ours robs Him of praise and deprives us of peace? There is, therefore, no holier or happier ministry than to help some one to know the Lord Jesus Christ better. It glorifies Him; it gladdens His friends. This is to have "the tongue of the learned," and to "know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." I have therefore this purpose this morning, to teach you to call the "gardener" to whom you have offered your complaint, by his proper name, "Rabboni," which is to say, "Master;" or,

finding some Hagar fainting in the wilderness, to point out to her a well of comfort, that she may fill her bottle, that she and the lad may go on their way refreshed.

This is the Lord's word to His people, "My kindness shall not depart from thee." It mentions a divine attribute that we may know Him better; it suggests a common need, that we may seek His help, and supplies in the promise a ground of perpetual comfort.

I.

Let us contemplate this DIVINE ATTRIBUTE, that we may refresh ourselves in the knowledge of God's kindness.

The works of God declare that God is kind. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Before it was stamped with Caesar's image and superscription, the gold of the world was made, in nature's mint, to bear the impress of God's tender care. The silver and the copper, the tin, the iron, and the lead, these are but bells which call us to worship in His temple Who is pleased to inhabit the praises of Israel. Hundreds of fathoms deep, where sunbeams never fall, where coal is mined to warm the feet of little children, to cook dinners for a million mouths, to supply power to a million hands, to annihilate distance, to bridge the oceans, and span the continents, and make men five thousand miles apart the neighbors of each other—a hundred fathoms deep a collier's lamp will show you the kindness of God. We are indeed only beginning to learn that the Niagaras, the lightnings, all the great forces of nature, are our Father's horses, which, though running wild in His world, were meant to be our servants, to drag our carriages, to carry our messages, and to do for us what our fathers called impossibilities.

All nature is vocal with the truth of the text:

"So soberly and softly
 The seasons tread their round,
 So surely seeds of autumn
 In springtime clothe the ground,
 Amid their measured music
 What watchful ear can hear
 God's voice amidst the garden?
 Yet hush! for He is here!

No mere machine is Nature
 Wound up and left to play,
 No wind-harp swept at random
 By airs that idly stray;
 A spirit sways the music,
 A hand is on the chords,
 Oh, bow thy head and listen,
 That hand, it is the Lord's!"

And if your ears are trained to catch the music of love's message, you may hear it thundered by the waters as they break upon the bound which God hath set that they turn not again to cover the earth; you may hear it carolled by the springs of the valleys as they run among the hills, and give drink to every beast of the field; you may hear it above you, in the trees of God's planting, where the birds make their nests, where they sing among the branches; you may hear it echoed from the high hills where the wild goats find refuge, and from the rocks where the conies dwell; it is borne upon the breeze which plays upon the grass which groweth for the cattle; it is wafted by the wind which is perfumed

by the flowers, and by the herb, designed for the service of man. God's loving kindness shimmers in the dewdrop of the morning, it shines in the shadowless noontide, it is painted on the rainbow, in the storm, and when wrapped by evening shadows you may read it in the crimson of the sunset, while at night the stars bear witness to the everlasting truth. The kindness of God! The seasons sing it in their march, the years echo it in their flight; the generations write it as they pass; the centuries engrave it on their monuments, to speak when they are gone. On the great and wide sea where go the ships, on harvest plain, in flowered dale and on the highest sun-kissed mountain peak, there is left the impress of a loving hand. Once deluged in vengeance, this earth is now flooded with the kindness of God, so that, as then with wrath, so now with mercy, the tops of the highest hills are covered.

"And he whose eyes the Lord anoints
His tender love may see
In radiant hill, and woodland dim,
And tinted sunset sea:

For not in mockery does He fill
Our earth with light and grace.
He hides no dark and cruel will
Behind His smiling face."

And there are many who accept this teaching and at certain seasons of the year absent themselves from the house of God, to commune with nature. "The plain of Jordan was well watered everywhere . . . even as the garden of the Lord. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." If, where there were no thorns or thistles, in Eden, nature's witness failed to preserve the link of communion unbroken, is it likely that, beyond the gates and the flaming sword, where sin's discordant and deceitful voice disturbs, by contradicting the harmony of nature's testimony to God's goodness, is it likely that under these less favorable circumstances nature can restore what she failed to preserve? Environment cannot save. Poor Byron sang:

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

But he did not find in "the pathless woods," the path that leads to God, nor in "the rapture on the lonely shore" was his soul caught up in heavenly communion; and in solitude's society he seems never to have found the society of angels nor to have made the acquaintance of God.

But this divine attribute is *more plainly expressed in God's Word*. I cannot tell you half the written Word has said of God's kindness. I must be content with this, it is a loving Father's letter to His children. It is a tale of matchless kindness; it tells of God's desire to deliver our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. Nature's witness is made clearer by the Word.

"What sacred emphasis
The word on nature's loveliness has thrown,
And how the world by Christ's face lighted is!
As if new sunshine burst into the air,
As if fresh odors burst from everything!
This Book is a wide window opening fair
Into the splendors of immortal spring."

But, notwithstanding, the god of this world hath so blinded men's minds that they are few who really believe that God is kind.

You have seen, perhaps, a "blind man's Bible"? Because his sightless eyes leave him in perpetual night, uncheered by nature's smiling face, untaught by the page that speaks of God, he must have a Bible specially made to meet his peculiar need. And you have seen him reading the raised letters, not with his eyes, but with his fingers, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." And God has given to a blind world a blind man's Bible. John speaks of "that which our hands have handled of the word of life." On the eighth day after His resurrection, when the disciples were gathered together, Jesus appeared in their midst. And He said, in effect, to one of them: "I have been a long time with you, and yet thou hast not known Me. And now poor, blind, unbelieving Thomas, I have brought to thee a blind man's Bible, the truth is written in My hands, and feet, and side,—come near, and read it with thy fingers, 'God loves the world.'"

And ever since that day this music has been sounding from the Cross and echoing from the empty grave, and ringing round the world, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

III.

And now, further, the text suggests A COMMON NEED. Heads and hands are more plentiful than hearts. There is nothing the world needs so much as kindness. And that is what God promises.

His kindness is promised to the *undeserving*—"My kindness shall not depart from thee, saith the Lord, that hath 'mercy' upon thee"; and mercy is for the guilty only. You may have kept a part of the law in the letter of it; you may, I say you may possibly, have acted as though you loved your neighbor; but "the first and great commandment" we have all broken both in spirit and in letter. You, personally, have not loved God, you have not been kind to Him. On the contrary, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Hell would be justice, and everything short of that is mercy.

But I speak to those who have accepted that mercy in Christ Jesus to remind you of your perpetual need of the kindness of God.

God speaks in our text to the "afflicted." The sick child in your home receives more attention than all the others, and our Heavenly Father is especially kind to His afflicted children. I know that their very affliction may seem to contradict that saying, but our text declares that from His afflicted people His kindness shall not depart. If you are not afflicted to-day, perhaps my message will fall upon indifferent ears. But you will be wise to store your memory with it, for you will need it by and by. We in the city do not appreciate the moonlight. Our streets are always lighted, however dark the night. But it is different in the country. There they learn to be thankful for moon and stars. And before your pilgrimage is over your weary feet will walk the lonely, unlighted country road of sorrow, and in the darkness of the hour of affliction you will be glad of a light which shines from the skies. Travellers know, when they see the lamps burning in a railway car in the daytime, that there is a dark tunnel somewhere on the way. And this promise, if you will hang it up, will serve as a lamp in the tunnel by and by.

And until you need it yourself you may lend it to others. Some of the Lord's dear children are sick to-day. Go and tell them of His kindness. Perhaps they have forgotten it, or find it hard to believe it. Go, and take them this text. Perhaps the sermon is not worth carrying, but I am sure the text is. Make thy feet beautiful to-day by carrying good tidings and publishing peace. Take this bunch of heavenly forget-me-nots gathered from the garden of God, and

make the chamber of the afflicted sweet with their hope-bringing fragrance. You know how people who are ill, lying idle all the day, count the figures on the wall-paper, take mental measurements of the pictures, and of the furniture, and of all that is in the room? As a traveller wearily waiting at a cold and cheerless station for a train to take him home, reads the advertisements, and the timetable, and everything in sight a score of times, so do the Lord's afflicted children waiting for the coming of the home-train often suffer for the want of some worthy subject of meditation. Will you, therefore, take some such this promise? Hang it up before them. Tell them it is written in the gold of God's faithfulness upon a background of crimson—dyed with blood. Show them that it is hung in a frame, as the context says, that is set with sapphires, and agates, and carbuncles, and all pleasant stones; and let them measure, if they can, the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love which it reveals.

Some sufferers to-day are trying to rest their throbbing heads upon pillows filled with doubts and fears which are harder than Jacob's stone. Go, take to them this comforting word, and bid them rest their aching head upon this downy promise-pillow, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

This kindness is pledged to those who are "tossed with tempest and not comforted." Life is often compared to a sea-voyage; and we shall all be tossed with tempest before we get to the farther side. Experience with the winds and waves of life produces a kind of sea-sickness which makes the kindness of God very necessary to our comfort. Who does not know the utter hopelessness of that—I had almost said "eternal",—hour of real sea-sickness? And so it comes to pass on life's long voyage. A tempest suddenly breaks, and the sea is angry, and all ills are forgotten in that one bitter, helpless, almost hopeless experience. Some bring themselves into the storm, like Jonah; and some, like the disciples on Galilee, encounter the "contrary" winds just because they are obedient to the Master's will. But they are not forgotten in either case. God's kindness ever remains. His way is in the sea, His path is in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known. And if He takes us ashore in a whale or in a boat, if some great sorrow should swallow us up and teach us to pray, and come back to God, or if, by gentler methods, He should make the waves be still, it will be in the end alike good, and we shall have to sing—

"With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted by His love;
And e'en my murkiest storm-cloud
Was by a rainbow spanned,
Caught from the glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land."

III.

And last of all, here is A SURE GROUND OF COMFORT. "My kindness shall not depart from thee, saith the Lord." There is the ground of comfort, "saith the Lord." It must be true.

Nothing can change the mutual relationship of Christ and His people. His kindness means His kinship, and that forever remains. He is still the Son of Man. He will never cease to be our Brother. We are bone of His bone, members of His body. He is our Head, we shall never be cut off from Him; He is our Husband, we can never be divorced from Him. Our divinity is conditioned upon His humanity; our God-likeness upon His being found in fashion as a man.

This promise derives its value from the Cross. "For this," says the ninth verse, "is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would no more be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee." And you will find it in the record that when Noah went forth out of the ark, "he built an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings upon the altar. And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." It was when the smoke of sacrifice ascended God smelled a sweet savor, and swore He would curse the ground no more. It is the sweet savor of Calvary that secures the kindness of God to you and to me. The stroke that fell on Jesus has removed all but God's kindness from us.

And, brethren, this text puts beneath the feet of faith the oath of God that cannot lie. And that is more enduring than the everlasting hills. David, you remember, sang his new song when he felt his feet upon a rock. The "horrible pit" is a poor place for singing; you can keep neither time nor tune in "the miry clay." If you want to sing in the choir you must come up on the platform of God's oath-bound promise. You will find no better standing place in heaven itself than that. Stand by faith upon it, and sing this song, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee." Sometimes your Master will set its music in a minor key, and then you must keep very near to the Leader if you would not make a false note. Can you sing it?

"I dimly guess from blessings known
Of blessings out of sight,
And with the chastened Psalmist own
His judgments too are right.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fringed palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

Hush! heaven and earth are vocal with His praise,—angel choirs are singing it, and all the earth is echoing it—"My kindness shall not depart from thee."

Let me entreat you to take my text with you. As Obed-edom received the ark of the covenant into his house, so do you take this covenant-promise home to your hearts. You will find that, like the ark, it contains manna for food, a law for instruction, and a rod upon which the weary may lean. Let this promise be as a rock beneath your feet, as a song in your mouth, as an angel singing a song of the shadowless land. "The mountains shall depart." The Moriahs with their trials, the Nebos with their unknown graves, the Carmels with their conflicts, the Horebs with their sharp rebukes, the Tabors with their transient joys,—the mountains of trial and of triumph, with their cloud-capped summits of mystery, and their deep valleys of shadow, shall depart; "and the hills be removed"—the Mizars of littleness and comeliness, the Olivets of weeping, and the Calvarys of bitter pain,—the hills of difficulty and discipline—saith the Lord, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

I want to hang this promise as a silver bell in the tower of the temple of thy heart, where the hand of faith may pull the rope and ring its merry chime; or as an aeolian harp upon which the heavenly wind which bloweth where it listeth, may play and make the perfect harmonies of heaven. And while amid earth's Babel crowds, the clash of arms, perhaps, the crash of crumbling fortunes, the sigh of disappointment, the wail of pain, the whispered farewells of the dying—when mountains of friendship melt away, and hills whereon you worshipped are dissolved, then listen! listen! to the music of this song of everlasting friendship, falling from the sapphire throne and breaking through the clouds, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

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EDITORIAL

UNUSED PATHS TO THE SHINING LIGHT.

Where the golden grain is waving, or the luscious fruit hangs in clusters, or the garden is painted and perfumed with floral beauty, ordinary eyes can discern more wealth than where only bleak, barren, inhospitable rock appears. Not very long ago the price of a peach orchard in the Niagara Peninsula would have purchased perhaps hundreds of acres at Cobalt. "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for the gold where they find it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone . . . But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" Is contentment learned only by considering the lilies? Are lessons of trust instilled nowhere but in those fair fields where we may behold the fowls of the air? May we not be instructed by the great and wide sea, where go the ships? Is it useless to examine the refuge of the wild goats in the high hills? Are we so "modern" that we may give ourselves to the study of spiders in kings' palaces, and fear to fare forth into the wilds to learn from the conies, the feeble folk, who make their houses in the rocks?

In that great continent of truth we call the Bible, there is an infinitely varied topography, and a variety of climates and products suited to every degree of spiritual health. It is not every one who can live in the hill country, and there are many who are constitutionally unfitted for life on the plains. Perhaps if it were remembered that the Bible was designed to minister to the spiritual needs of that multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, we should be a little more modest in estimating those parts of the Book which we cannot understand. The editor of the latest edition of the "Encyclopedia Britannica," in a speech said, "No editor could possibly have all the knowledge to control all the departments." The Bible is incomparably a greater book than the "Britannica," and it is not easy to admire the modesty of those gentlemen who, after the contributors have been dead, all of them for centuries, and some for thousands of years, profess to know all that may be known about the whole Book.

Walk, if you will, as did the disciples anciently, through the corn fields in company with the Master on the Sabbath day, and pluck the ears and eat. But do not suppose they are spending their time to no purpose who choose instead to explore what you regard as the barren tracts, the rocky wastes, of Scripture. Remember, He has promised "honey out of the rock," as well as "the finest of the wheat." If the two explorers lovingly share their experiences, each will have bread and honey. This is the purpose of the "diversities of gifts" in the church of Christ.

It is written of Israel, "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ." The natural man of Gentile birth enjoys

no advantage over his Jewish brother in this respect. In his case, too, the veil is only done away in Christ. The Old Testament can be appreciated only in the light of the New Testament. The Bible is not a book which can be read and understood by the light of a study lamp. It is a wide and wealthy, immeasurable continent of Truth, which can be explored only by the light which God hangs in the heavens.

Do you ever venture into the "backwoods" of Scripture? Do you ever go "prospecting" among the chronological rocks whose strata, according to the wise, are so strangely tangled and inverted, as to defy all possibility of their being framed into a consistent building? Among the stones which modern builders have rejected for their stratigraphical "discrepancies" faith may find the keystone for the arch of the bridge which you must throw across some turbid stream for weaker souls to cross by. Who knows but that this way lies, for you, the path, which no fowl knoweth; and which the vulture's eye hath not seen; but which, traversed by faith, must lead to that treasure which cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire, whose price is above rubies, whose way God alone understandeth, whose place is known only to Him? Even the desolate wastes of Leviticus, with their altars of alleged uncertain date, to which some have not yet learned to go for refreshment, may fulfil to you the promise, "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." We gratefully acknowledge that we have found great personal profit in some of the less trodden paths of Scripture. To us there is a mystic charm about the solitary places of the Bible. One feels something of the freshness of Enoch's communion, something of the directness of God's way with His saints of ancient times, when he is able to make a path to the place where the voice of the commentator is silent. We have found instruction for the soul among the graves of Old Testament saints,—*"Then Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age . . . and his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah."* *"And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."* We have learned of the Redeemer's kinship with all nations, of His being made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and of His ultimate, universal glory from a genealogical table—*"And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age, for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, there is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed; he is the father of Jesse, the father of David."*—*"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, the Son of David."*

But what shall we learn from the Bible? How to come to God, how to become like Him, how, at last, to dwell with Him. But whence, or from whom, does the Bible derive its authority to teach us? Is it the story of the building of a tower from earth to heaven, or of a ladder let down by the angels from heaven to earth? Does it tell how man, little by little, has evolved a way of approach to God; or is it a record of divine revelation of the way God has ordained for us to come? Is it the story of the upward climb of man to God? Or is it the story of his fall, and of how God came down to lift him up? There is a world of difference between these two contrasting points of approach.

The moral laws of God are not subject to change or amendment. The first saved soul which entered into the heavenly rest, entered upon exactly the same condition as shall determine the home-going of the last of the redeemed: the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

There was a divine revelation long before there were any Scriptures: they are but the record of that revelation. The first human worshippers of God came to Him with sacrifices. Much that was communicated to Moses of the divine will may have been given to the patriarchs in earlier days. Was Judaism a composite of what was best in heathen religions? Doubtless there were points of resemblance between them, but which was the original? An old lady, whose pastor had been one of Mr. Spurgeon's students, went once to hear Mr. Spurgeon preach. She was asked afterwards what she thought of the great preacher, and she replied she should have enjoyed hearing Mr. Spurgeon more, if only he had not tried to imitate her dear young pastor so much. Those whom history, observation, and experience, have taught that tower-building ends in Babel, and that ladders, let down from heaven by the angels, make inhospitable, stony places into Bethels, where God is known and worshipped, can afford to smile at the dear old woman's imitation theory, as applied to the Bible.

Other religions of pre-Mosaic times had altars and altar-fires. Was there anything about the Hebrew altar-fire which defied imitation? If it could be shown that the Semitic mode of worship generally, and the Mosaic cultus in particular, were of the same genus as some common Egyptian or Babylonian bush, would it not still be worth while to turn aside and see this great sight, why the Hebrew bush, unlike all others, burns with fire and is not consumed? What was the inimitable quality of this fire which was ever to be burning upon the altar, which was never to go out?

"IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN".

When a famous preacher or lecturer is heard for the first time, there are few of his hearers who are not disappointed. They expected to hear him say something new. They had pictured him as a sort of Columbus discovering to an enraptured audience new worlds of thought. They came away saying the sermon or lecture was full of commonplaces. They had heard less famous men say much more striking things. But suppose you have gathered a handful of pebbles somewhere, pebbles which a little child could quite as easily have gathered. They are in a drawer or a cupboard which is unlocked because its contents are unvalued—any one can gather pebbles! And what if a visitor—let us say the King's jeweller, were to come to your house; what if he were to take those pebbles in his hand and say of one and another, "That is an opal, and that is a carnelian, and that is an onyx, and that an emerald,"—would that be a commonplace? Yes, and no. Anybody could say that of your pebbles. But if a mere "anybody" were to say it the saying would be valueless. It would be the jeweller's expert knowledge enabling him to recognize unidentified gems among your pebbles which would give his saying value. And they are always great men who are able to take from beneath men's feet the commonest stones and show that they have in them the quality of which the foundations of the Eternal City are made.

D. L. Moody was the simplest preacher in the world. Anybody could have said much that he said. But it was because Moody was not "anybody" the multitudes listened to him. It is the great body of water still in the reservoir, not the little which is drawn from the tap, which gives you your tea or coffee

in the morning. Our streets in Toronto are ablaze with light supplied by power, not from Niagara, but from the great lakes which lie behind it. It is what the preacher could say if he would, and what he would say if he could, quite as much as what he actually says, which stirs his audience, if it be stirred at all.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." They felt that His simple words had the pressure of an unseen reservoir of power behind them; behind His elementary teaching was the weight of the "many things" which He had to say, but which, as yet, "they could not bear." The value of a cheque is determined by the signature upon it. You must not divorce the teachings of Jesus from Himself, and say it does not matter who He was. If you can prove that it is not true that "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," you have robbed His words of their authority. The fire cannot be ever burning upon the altar, unless there be somewhere an inexhaustible source of power which "cannot go out." He is "the light of men" because "in Him was life."

His miracles were the "signs" that in Him were all the reserves of Deity. Jesus said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And there were some who reasoned in their hearts saying, "Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sin but God only?" And in their second question they spoke wisely: who but God can forgive? "And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned with themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

If the miracles of Jesus can be "accounted for" or "explained" on purely natural grounds, does it make it easier to believe in Him? I venture to say it makes faith in Him as Saviour impossible. The supreme authority of His words is attested by His supernatural works, and together they proclaim His fitness for the work which makes it possible for God justly to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." "Anybody could say that!" Yes, it is "easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee," than to make the palsied walk. Indeed it is ever "easier to say" than to do.

Is there any value in this saying of Jesus? It all depends upon what reserves are behind the saying. If it be true that "in Him was life," that He had "life in Himself," that His life was of a quality which "no man could take from Him," that He had power to lay it down and power to take it again; if He "was made after the power of an indissoluble life," and if that was the life which He laid down for His sheep, then the Cross has meaning, and the message of Calvary offers life to the world. For behind it all are the balances of God, the meeting of mercy and truth, the kiss of righteousness and peace, the commission to the creative Spirit, in a word, the stupendous work of redemption accomplished by the substitutionary sacrifice of a Lamb "made after the power of an indissoluble life," and offered "through the eternal Spirit"; and "it is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee," than to "finish" that work!

All that "the Holy Ghost signified" by the tabernacle is realized in Christ.

Whosoever worships in this Temple, and bows at this Altar, who looks to this Sacrifice, and seeks the presence of God by this Door, "shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson LXXIII.

February 22nd, 1925.

THE WORD OF GOD—Psalm 119.

To attempt to cover this Psalm in one lesson, or even to glance at it, is like attempting to see the British Museum, or the Louvre in Paris, in an hour. This is a summary of all the Psalms, a condensation of the wisdom of the whole book. The Psalm is alphabetically arranged, according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Its subject throughout is the Word of God. His Word is spoken of as, "His law," "His precepts," "His statutes," "His judgments," "His commandments," "His testimonies," "His way." These various designations of the Word of God are in themselves instructive. But whatever the name by which it is set forth, the Psalm aims to magnify the Word of the Lord. Its alphabetical arrangement is most suggestive. The final and complete Summary of all that God has said is to be found in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is called "the Word." He says of Himself, "I am Alpha and Omega," that is, the "A" and the "Z," the first and the last letters,—and all the letters between. His Word, His Law, He Himself, are the Alphabet, without which no word of righteousness can be spelled, no life of holiness can be written. Therefore, we should learn the Law of God, for it is the alphabet which is fundamental to all right thinking, and speaking, and living.

It is impossible to examine the one hundred and seventy-five verses, or even the twenty-two sections, in detail. We therefore suggest some of the ways by which this Psalm may be used. (1) It may most profitably be memorized. The similarity of some of the verses make it, perhaps, the most difficult portion of Scripture to commit to memory. Notwithstanding, it is possible. Moreover, the Psalm itself suggests what use should be made of it: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (2) We have here a profitable subject for meditation. We cannot exhaust the meaning of these brief verses by merely reading them. We should, indeed, follow the Psalmist's example: "I will meditate in thy precepts" (v. 15). The blessedness promised in this Psalm will be experienced by the man who obeys the admonition of the first Psalm: "In his law doth he meditate day and night." (3) The Psalm may be used as a laver, or as a fountain wherein we may wash. Even though one's hands do not show any need of cleansing, the application of water will generally find something to remove. So, if we steep ourselves in the law of God, we shall be made clean. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (v. 9). (4) Again, this Psalm may be used both as a telescope and a microscope. It will reveal to us many things which our own reason cannot discover. We may well pray, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (v. 18). (5) The Psalm, moreover, is useful as a telephone, as a vehicle of expression. Its words may be used to express the deepest sentiments of the soul. We may find, indeed, in these verses a means of expressing feelings, for the expression of which we can find no words of our own. (6) The Psalm, too, is useful as a harp; for it will express our praises, our wondering admiration of the law of our God. Verses 46, 47, 89-91, 103, 129 and 156 are examples. (7) The Word of God, also, is an encyclopaedia, an ever present and unerring teacher (97-104).

(8). We may come to this Psalm, also, as a hungry man to a banquet: here we may find food for the intellect and for the heart. (9). We may use it, also, for purposes of illumination: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (v. 105). (10). We have here, also, a richly furnished wardrobe; here we may find garments for all occasions. (11). It may be described also, to use another figure, as a casket of jewels. Some one has said, not a chain of golden links, but a collection of golden rings. The prodigal's Father has commanded, "Put a ring on his hand". Here are many rings set with many precious stones—jewels of truth of incomparable worth upon which we may gaze for our own delight; and which we may appropriate to ourselves for our soul's adornment. (12). It may be regarded, also, as an alabaster box of ointment, very precious. There is here a balm for every wound, a medicine for every ill; but they use it best who devote it to the same purpose as Mary's ointment: finding within these words of grace that which may be employed to express our heart's devotion to Him Who is the Living Word.

"I WANT TO GO WITH MY PAPA."

Thus spoke the beautiful four-year-old baby girl of a big, strong railroad man last Sunday morning, as he walked out of his pew into the long aisle and up to the altar to make confession of his Saviour, and to put Him on in baptism. He was the last one of a long line of converts. Dr. Norris plead with unusual earnestness, even for him. He paused just before the last verse of the invitation hymn, and said in subdued and tender voice: "There is yet another soul that should come, some trembling soul is now saying, 'Go thy way and a more convenient season'. But listen to the divine voice and harden not your heart."

It was enough. The great audience, notwithstanding the blizzard of sleet and snow, that filled the huge auditorium, was tremendously moved to tears as they saw this strong young man going at a quick pace down the aisle to surrender and make his public confession of Christ, and to be followed by his precious four-year-old baby girl. Doubtless, she knew not what it all meant, perhaps only just following her papa. Dr. Norris called attention to it and said: "My friends, after most of us are dead and forgotten, that child will remember when her dear papa was converted and joined the church. The glorious thing about it all is, that on the preceding Sunday the wife and mother was converted and united with the church."

Truly, the revival fires are burning in the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth. Blizzards do not affect the attendance to any extent. Two great audiences filled the largest church in Texas or America. Already the talk is heard on every hand, "The First Baptist Church needs twice the seating capacity of the present." How appealing is the simple story of the Cross when told in a straightforward manner in every-day language, not in the language of the scholars, but in the speech of the common people!

The Searchlight, Fort Worth.

ANOTHER SPECIAL GOSPEL WITNESS OFFER.

Our offer of *The Gospel Witness* for three months for 25c, from the first issue of February to the end of April, was such an overwhelming success that we are encouraged to make a further offer. The offer of 25c for three months involves a considerable financial loss for the present; but we are confident it will come back to us in increased subscriptions. We say to all our readers who are receiving *The Witness* under this offer, that we sincerely hope that *The Witness* will become so necessary that you will become regular members of

The Gospel Witness family at the expiration of the special subscription; and that you will be, like so many of our readers, a self-appointed agent for the paper.

We have just received a letter from a certain Canadian city, enclosing eighteen new subscriptions with a cheque for \$50.00, requesting us to put the balance over and above the cost of the subscriptions to the *Witness* Fund. To this brother we send a very hearty, "Thank you!" (May his generous tribe increase)!

We now make another special offer, namely, *The Gospel Witness* for four months for 50c. This, of course, is not as good an offer from the subscriber's standpoint as three months for 25c; but our first offer met with such a tremendous response that we are not in a position at present to renew it. The new offer will extend from the first issue of March to the last issue of June. But this applies to new subscribers only. We want all our subscribers clearly to understand that even at \$2.00 per year it would be impossible to publish *The Witness* were it not for the generous support of the members of Jarvis Street Church, who underwrite the deficit. To reduce the subscription price to \$1.50 would only increase that deficit, and make a larger draw upon the Jarvis Street reserve fund. This, we are sure, our *Witness* readers would not desire us to do.

We ask our friends to regard this paper as a missionary enterprise. In these days when so many are departing from the faith, we believe there is a special mission for a paper that will stand foursquare for the "faith once for all delivered to the saints". This is what *The Gospel Witness* is trying to do. If any of our readers are in doubt as to where to put some of the Lord's money, we would suggest that they help us to circulate *The Witness*. The paper is meeting with such favour, and its circulation is increasing with such phenomenal rapidity, that we feel confident if we only had the money to let the people know about the paper, its circulation would soon equal that of the largest religious journal in the country. However, the things that grow are the things that last. *The Witness* is making new friends every day. Only last Sunday two brethren came in from the country in order to spend a Sunday in Jarvis Street Church. They are readers of *The Witness*; and in the after-meeting testified to the great blessing God was giving them, and through them many other friends, through the pages of *The Witness*.

Who will be the first to send us some 50c subscriptions? Remember, this offer is for a stated period: from the first issue of March to the last issue of June, and is for new subscribers only; the object being to introduce *The Witness* to those who do not know it.

Our readers will be interested to know that in addition to the hundreds of new subscribers through the twenty-five cent three months' trial offer, we received from five to seven thousand names for sample copies of *The Witness*.

TO OUR ONTARIO AND QUEBEC BAPTIST READERS.

We would call the attention of our readers within this territory to the item in last week's *Witness*, where it was explained that *The Canadian Baptist* had refused to accept our advertisement, thus making it impossible for us to reach, through the denominational organ, our Ontario and Quebec Baptist constituency. We renew our request that our readers will assist us to do this by making *The Gospel Witness* known; and by sending us hundreds of Baptists' names, preferably heads of families, whom they think would be interested in *The Witness* message, and to whom we may send a free sample copy.

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Children's Corner

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A DOG IN A PIT.

By William Luff.

Someone had thrown a poor dog into a disused pit in Staffordshire, England; the animal was not killed by this cruel treatment, but was crying in great pain for one of its legs was broken. The pit was deep and the dog was helpless; so there was no hope of the poor creature getting out by any effort of its own.

Cruel sin has cast all of us into a pit of hopelessness—a deep pit, from which it is impossible for us to escape. Even our crying will not deliver us; but it may bring One who is both able and willing to help. A cripple youth, named George, heard the sad cries of the prisoner, and though it was not his dog, he could not bear to think of it suffering and dying alone in the dark: so determined to try and rescue it. A rope was found and he was lowered down, down, down to a level with the object of his pity. Just as the Lord Jesus pitied us in our dreadful pit, and descended to our low estate. What a descent for Him, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."—Phil. 2: 6-8.

Of course the poor dog welcomed his would-be deliverer with joy? No, he misunderstood his intentions, and misjudged his motive, and thinking he had come to injure and destroy, snapped and snarled, and was so vicious the lad was afraid to touch him.

This was how Jesus the Lord was misjudged: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1: 10-11). Do we refuse the Son of God, because we think He will do us harm? This was how the demons spake, "And when He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8: 28-29).

The lad had come to the dog to seek and to save, but the vicious animal would not be saved: so his would-be saviour had sorrowfully to leave him to his fate, recalling the words of our Saviour, "Wherefore behold, I sent unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify: and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye

shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23: 34-39).

Instead of being saved, the dog had to be killed: but the lad was awarded the bronze medal of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: so the dog was the loser. The unsaved are the losers: not the Saviour, who says, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord" (Isa. 49: 5).

From *The Reaper*, Auckland, N.Z.

LAST SUNDAY.

Sunday was another day of high-tide in Jarvis Street. The morning congregation, beyond all question, must have been the largest Baptist congregation assembled anywhere in Canada at that hour. The great Bible School, with the rest of the congregation, practically filled the great auditorium of Jarvis Street.

In the evening another great congregation assembled; and in response to the invitation twelve came forward, among them a ripe saint and his wife, with their grand-daughter. The grand-father is eighty years of age; and has been an elder in three churches. He, his wife, and their grand-daughter, with a large number of others, will be baptized together the first Sunday in March. A few weeks ago it was our privilege to baptize a man and his wife who for years have been members of another denomination. (He plays the bass horn in the orchestra). A week ago his youngest daughter was converted, and last Sunday evening another daughter, two sons, and a daughter-in-law, came forward together and yielded themselves to Christ. These five will be baptized the first Sunday in March.

DR. GABRIEL MAGUIRE IN JARVIS STREET.

Dr. Gabriel Maguire, pastor of Westmount Baptist Church, Montreal, will supply Jarvis Street Church, February 22nd. Dr. Maguire will teach the Pastor's Bible Class Sunday morning, and will preach both morning and evening. Dr. Maguire is a great-hearted man of God, who preaches the old-fashioned gospel of the grace of God; and Jarvis Street will be highly favoured by having his ministry for this Sunday.

THE PASTOR OUT OF TOWN.

Dr. Shields left Monday night for a three weeks' trip to the Canadian West. As we go to press to-night (Wednesday) he will be speaking in Elim Chapel, Winnipeg; leaving there in time to arrive at Vancouver for the services on Sunday in the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. Dr. Shields will speak twice daily during the entire week in Mount Pleasant, and in one of the large theatres three times Sunday, February 22. On the return trip, he will stop off at Calgary, where he will deliver an address Tuesday evening, February 24, in the Crescent Heights Baptist Church. We expect the Pastor will be home for the prayer service Saturday evening, February 28th.

MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE.

A true minister of Christ will make every effort to teach his people to do without him; and to depend wholly upon the Lord. It is one of the joys of the Pastor's life, that when he goes away the work in Jarvis Street does not in

any sense slacken. The prayer meetings are usually just as largely attended; and the work of conversion goes on. The Apostle Paul urged the Philippians to do much more in his absence than they had done in his presence; and the Pastor would send out this word before leaving for the West to every member of the church, urging that at this time when the tide of blessing is at the flood, every member of the church should do his utmost to make the most of it.

Dr. Hoyt and Dr. Maguire are great gospel preachers. The blessing of the Lord has attended the ministry of each for years; and nothing would delight us more than to hear that the cloudburst of spiritual blessing for which we are waiting, had come in the Pastor's absence. We trust every member will pray that it may be so.

To all the officers, teachers, and scholars, in the Bible School, the Pastor sends this urgent appeal, to spare no effort to make the Bible School break all records during the two Sundays of the Pastor's absence.

JARVIS STREET PULPIT TO-DAY.

As announced last week, Dr. J. W. Hoyt, of Belden Ave. Baptist Church, Chicago, will preach in Jarvis St. morning and evening. The Pastor and Dr. Hoyt have for many years had sweet fellowship in the things of God; and we expect great spiritual blessing to accompany his ministry.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

T. T. Shields, Pastor, 21 Scarth Road. Tel. Randolph 1540.
 George Greenway, Treasurer, 28 Broadway Avenue. Tel. Hudson 0910.
 Violet Stoakley, Church Clerk and Office Secretary. Tel. Randolph 8366.
 W. J. Hutchinson, Sunday School Superintendent, 295 George St. Tel. Randolph 0339.
 C. Leonard Penny, Director of Music, 36 Earls court Ave. Tel. Ken. 9175W.
 William Fraser, Pastor's Secretary, 394 Bloor St. West. Tel. Trinity 7505.

The Church Calendar

Sunday. For the week beginning February 15th, 1925.
 9.45—Bible School, with classes for all.
 11.00—Public Worship. Dr. J. W. Hoyt, of Chicago, will preach.
 3.00—Chinese School.
 6.00—Prayer Meeting in the Church Parlor.
 6.30—Communion Service for Immersed Believers.
 7.00—Public Worship. Dr. J. W. Hoyt, of Chicago, will preach.
 Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday—8.00—Prayer Meeting.
 Wednesday—3.00—Women's Gospel Service
 7.15—Junior Gospel Service.
 Thursday—8.45—Bible Lecture in the Auditorium by Dr. Hoyt.
 The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. Sunday: Bible School,
 3.00. Evangelistic Service, 7.00—Mr. Wm. Fraser.
 Monday—7.30—Young People's Meeting.
 Wednesday—8.00—Prayer Meeting.
 Friday—7.15—Junior Gospel Service—Mr. F. Turney and Mr. W. J. Hutchinson.