

# The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHAT GOD CAN DO WITH STONES.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 9th, 1925.  
(Stenographically reported).

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."—Matt. 3: 9.



JOHN has been preaching to a company of very religious people. They are proud of their religiousness, they assume that they have a monopoly of the knowledge of the Lord, they glory in being Abraham's children; but John tells them very plainly that they have need to repent and turn to God. This text is an exhortation to them not to depend upon their natural religion; for he says that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham",—spiritual children, better men and better women than they are. I want to turn

over that text with you this morning, with the prayer that the Holy Spirit may lead us to the principles which it involves.

I.

Our first lesson is this, THAT NATURAL RELIGIOUSNESS IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR VITAL GODLINESS. There are, as you know, many people who are naturally religious; the people to whom John spoke were naturally religious; they were Jews, they belonged to a religious race. The tradition of every family, of every tribe, of the race as a whole, was a religious tradition. To them in time past had been committed the oracles of God. Undoubtedly they had been a people of special privilege. They knew much of the Word of God; they were versed in the Scriptures of truth. But John emphatically declares that such natural religion will not pass with God, that they need something more than a religion which is due to a natural birth.

In our day there are very many people who boast, just as did the Jews, of their early religious advantages. I have heard people say, "I am a Presbyterian of many generations." I have heard some Baptists, indeed, boast of their Baptist forebears; and scores of people when approached with the claims of Christ, have responded by saying, "I know all that, sir. I was brought up in a Christian home, my parents were Christian people. The things of the Bible and

of the Christian church have been matters of daily conversation from my earliest recollection." That may all be, but we need something vastly more than that if we are to be saved. "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

I want to point out, first of all, *some of the characteristics of a natural religion*. In the first place, *it is not easily abashed*; it is very proud of itself. Generally speaking, it is a stranger to humility. The man whose religion is of a natural order is disposed to boast of it, of his connection with the church, and of his family history. The religion that is from above is a delicate exotic; it is not indigenous to this earthly clime; it is not accustomed to the rough blasts of earth; it is supernaturally begotten, and supernaturally nourished. And very often a really spiritual person is very reticent about baring his heart, and even about making known his religious experience. It is characteristic of the man who is naturally religious that he has no hesitation in declaring it. He is proud of it. Isaac is invariably a shrinking soul, and is much disturbed by Ishmael's mocking. There are many people here who have had a real heart experience of the grace of God, who have found the greatest possible difficulty in bearing witness for Christ; and, indeed, sometimes they have written bitter things against themselves because of that fact; and sometimes they have wondered whether they had a real experience or not. My observation is, and I think it is in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, that the spiritually religious soul finds it not easy at any time to witness, but witnesses only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am not providing an excuse for people who never testify for the Lord; but I do offer encouragement for those who find great difficulty in doing so; because we are babes in Christ, and we need to be helped and nourished and protected in this life of the Spirit which is foreign to this world, which comes from above, and which is not naturally born, and is exposed to all the fierce blasts of earth. On the other hand, I would say this to those who find no difficulty, to those of you upon whose tongues religion is an easy message, who have no reticence, no reluctance, who feel no obstacle in the way at all, examine yourselves that you may be sure that part of your enthusiasm is not to be accounted for on natural grounds, rather than supernatural; for if that be so, your testimony will probably have but little effect. Remember, therefore, that it is characteristic of a natural religion, that it is proud, boastful, Pharisaical in its quality; it is never a religion of the heart; it is invariably rather of the intellect, a theory rather than an experience; it is something external to the life itself, rather than an inherent quality wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God.

And I must speak this *word of warning to you against offering encouragement to creeds and systems which minister to the self-confidence of the natural man*—I would not be offensive, and I do not want you to be offended; but I must bear my testimony. One reason why we Baptists so emphatically witness against infant baptism is because of this very thing: first, because it is absolutely without Scriptural warrant; and especially because it ministers to carnal confidence, because people who have been baptized in infancy, and who have been brought into the church because of that, often rest upon a false security. Were they not so taught? "What is thy name?" the Catechism asks. And the answer is given. Then again: "Who gave thee this name?" "My godfather and my godmother in my baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The only fault I have to find with that is that from the first word to the last it is absolutely untrue, even if it is in the Catechism! No one was ever made a member of Christ, a child of God, or an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, by any kind of ceremony. That is a religion all on the natural plane.

Another reason why Baptists bear their testimony to the necessity of a regenerate church membership, is that certain bodies hold that the church is composed of "believers and their families"—(You friends of the United Church, will find it incorporated in your basis of doctrine). Is that true? The true church is made up of people who have been individually regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, and no one else has any right to membership in the church but those who have thus been made new creatures in Christ. Infinite

harm has been wrought to children and young people when they have been taught from infancy that by a mere ceremony they may be made children of God. When once you get them into the church it is exceedingly difficult to bring them to Christ.

I remember some years ago when I had not been very long Pastor of this church, we had a great evangelistic campaign in prospect. Chapman and Alexander were to be here; and I happened to be a member of the Central Committee,—it was a simultaneous campaign, there were to be nine or ten centres throughout the city, and we at Jarvis Street were joined with the Massey Hall meeting at which Dr. Chapman was to speak. In arranging the meetings before I came to the city, there had been an understanding that there would be no evening meetings in Massey Hall. The pastors did not want the evening meetings, because they were rather afraid of their own congregations. I said, "I do not care whether you have evening meetings or not, but had you not better keep to your engagement?" However, the chairman of the committee, a very excellent man, was determined to have an evening meeting, if not at the regular hour, then afterward. To make a long story short, I urged that they had better keep to their contract to avoid any misunderstanding. The chairman said, "Mr. Shields does not seem to understand. Dr. Chapman's idea is to leave behind him a great band of trained workers who will be of use to the churches long after he is gone." I said, "That may be possible, but it is rather an ambitious programme to raise up and train a great army in four evening services." "Oh but," said this brother, "you do not understand, sir. We all know that we have a great many people in our churches, church members, and church officers, who have never been converted; and these are the people we want to reach." "Oh," I said, "that is another matter. Do you mean that you want to get your own church members converted?" "Yes, that is what I mean," he said. I was looking at it from an entirely different standpoint: I assumed they were converted before they became church members.

The point is this: the idea still obtains to-day, that believers "and their children" should be included in the church and trained up in the way that they should go. John said, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." That will not do you any good. Your father may have been the greatest preacher on the earth, he may have been a most devout man; your mother may have been a praying woman; you may have been baptized into the church, brought up in the church, trained at your mother's knee; you may have attended Sunday School, and become familiar with the letter of the Word of God itself, and yet you may have no part nor lot in the religion of Christ. You may be just as far away from God as if you had been born in the heart of an African jungle. It is something more than a natural religion we need if we are to be saved, more than Abraham to our father; we must be begotten of the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born"—not of Abraham, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man—"except a man be born again"—born from above—"he cannot see the kingdom of God." That is our message, that mere natural religiousness is no substitute for vital godliness: "Ye must be born again."

## II.

In the second place, SPIRITUAL INSENSIBILITY IS NOT AN INSUPERABLE OBSTACLE TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD: "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Once again let me lay down the principle that I bring to you, I hope, every time I preach, that the religion of Christ is supernatural in its origin and in its continuance all the way through; and that what we must look for is not capacity here, but of ability there: "God is able"! But for that great truth, my friends, I, at least, should be willing to close the doors of this and every other church. There is no reason for keeping them open, no reason for your sitting there or for my standing here, or for anyone else taking our place, unless it be for ever true that our "God is able" to do what human power never can do, to do what is utterly beyond all human ability to accomplish. I desire again this morning to direct your thought to the enabling God, to Him Who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us."

Very well, then, salvation begins with God. He is "able of these stones to

raise up children unto Abraham." A great many people need to learn that lesson. If a man is religiously inclined, if he is going to Sunday School or church, some people will say we had better begin to pray for him: he has a religious inclination, he seems to be religiously disposed. By all means, my friends, pray for him; but he needs vastly more than a "religious inclination." But what of the man who never goes to church, what about the people who are outside, who have no religious interest whatever? Do you know that there are tens of thousands of people in this city who never darken the doors of a place of worship, who never come under the sound of the gospel, who never come under any kind of religious influence at all? "Well," you say, "what can we do for such? I would rather give my attention to the people who show some interest in the church, in religion, than to waste my effort on people who are utterly unresponsive." That is our weakness, rather, it is our sin, that the modern church has fallen into the habit of confining its ministry to religious circles.

I went to a place some years ago to help a pastor in that town of two or three thousand people in evangelistic services, and there were four or five churches there at least. I suggested to the pastor that we go visiting from house to house. He had been in that town ten years—he was a true man of God. "Well," he said, "I do not know what the people will think of it." I said, "Never mind, just let us go. We will carry a simple gospel message to each home; and where we have opportunity we will read the Word of God and pray. But let us go into every single house in this town, and carry the gospel, and pray with the people where they will let us. Afterward, we can at least pray that God will bless our efforts." We went into every house in that town. I remember we came upon the parsonage of the Catholic Church where the priest lived, and my friend said, "What shall we do here?" I replied, "I do not know anyone who needs the gospel more, we will go in and see the brother." And we did. He was not at home, but we left him a cordial invitation to come to our services. But in that small town we found scores of homes into which no Christian minister ever entered, and whose representatives never went inside any place of worship. Here was a little town of two or three thousand people, and a large section of the population utterly irreligious and absolutely neglected by the five churches in the town—and nearly all of them complaining that they had no opportunities, while opportunities were thronging their doors. "Oh, but," they said, "they are dead as stones; they are not religious. There is no use wasting your breath on stones." But if they had believed my text, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham", they would have given their attention to the stones.

I want to say this to you Sunday School teachers, and you Christian scholars in the School, let us give our attention very specially to people whom no one else is looking after. It is well enough if some people already saved are sent into our fellowship; but I would far rather build this house of new material. I rejoice when people come to us by letter from other churches, if they come of themselves and feel that the Lord is calling them; but I always remember when one comes to us by letter that our gain means someone else's loss. But if we can go out into the highways and hedges, and find the stones—people who are utterly dead, who never pray, nor read the Word of God, nor hear a sermon—if we can get them by the power of God, we are really building a house for God; and every bit of that work we do is a nett gain to the church of Christ.

My word to you this morning is that we take hold of the gospel afresh, and, believing that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, let us go after the hardest cases in the city of Toronto—men and women, boys and girls, for whom no one cares. Let us resolve that by God's help we will go and gather stones, in the confidence that our "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham". Then we shall praise Him for ever more.

If there is an unconverted person here this morning, I want to tell you of a great salvation. I know what you will say. Perhaps there is someone here who will say this: "Well now, Mr. Preacher, don't waste your time on me. I dropped in this morning for no particular reason. I was not busy, just passing through town, and did not know what else to do. I had heard about Jarvis Street Church and the terrible man that preaches here; but I did not expect to receive any help from the message. I am not a religious man; you had better

give your attention to someone else, to some of your regular hearers." My friends, the wonder of the work God is doing in this place is just that: I have seen many people who have been here Sunday after Sunday for years, yet they are the most difficult people to reach; while others who have not been inside a place of worship for many years, the very first time they cross the threshold they are saved? Why? Because our God is able. And it may be, my brother, that although you thought you were planning to come to Jarvis Street Church just to spend a Sunday morning when you had nothing else to do, that the Lord God from all eternity planned to meet you here, and to save you by His mighty arm, bringing you in humble penitence to the feet of Christ.

There may be another man here not like that; but he says, "I am afraid, sir, there is not much religion in me. I have tried to be religious, and I have almost despaired of ever being a Christian. I should like to be. I have at least a growing dissatisfaction with the things of this world, and if there be anything else better I should like to have it; but I cannot say that my heart is tender toward Christ. I do not know anything about Him. I have occasionally rebuked myself for my hardness of heart; but I am here this morning almost a religious derelict, just tossed about by the waves." Oh, if I had to argue with you this morning, if I had to convince your judgment, and by some psychological process unlock your darkened understanding and get the truth of God inside,—if I had to do that it would be an impossible task. But I come to you as to one who may be as cold as a stone, and as hard as a stone, and, perhaps, as dead and as unresponsive as a stone—with no spiritual life at all. But "God is able", He is able! If you will but breathe a prayer to Him now, He will save you. If there be, indeed, but a spark of desire, it is an evidence that God is already working; and if while I am speaking to you your heart shall cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner", God is able of that stony heart to raise up a child unto Abraham.

I want to use this text this morning, just for a sentence or two, to urge upon you who pray a still fuller consecration to the ministry of intercession. "For what am I to pray?", someone may ask. Pray for the improbable, pray for the impossible. If I were to ask how many wives there are here who are praying for their husbands, I expect I should get a great many hands raised this morning; if I were to ask how many parents here are burdened for their children, I have no doubt many would respond. I was talking to a father who was with me on the train this last week—a Baptist minister, a man of God. He said, "My boy is twenty-two years of age, a fine, clean, young fellow, a really splendid boy, attending university; but in spite of all his mother and I have been able to do for him, he is not saved." I wish you would pray for that boy when you pray, will you? There are many fathers like that.

I remember a dear sister who once said to me, "I prayed for my husband for thirty years; and I promised the Lord that if He would save him I would go to the church he wanted to attend." "Well," I said, "that is fine, but why did you make that promise?" "Because," she said, "I know he will never attend my church." "Well," I said, "it is not half such a miracle for the Lord to make a Baptist of him as to make a Christian of him. You believe it is possible for the Lord to save your husband, but quite beyond the Lord's power to make him go to a Baptist church." She replied, "I had never thought of that." That man had been a saloon-keeper, and he was noted as the most profane man in the neighborhood. The one thing he hated above all things was the church his wife attended, the Baptist church—not for his wife's sake; he was quite devoted to her—but he hated the Baptist church. He never had gone to it—he vowed he never would go. This woman came to me in her distress, and I said to her, "Suppose we pray for him?" "Well, but what if you cannot reach him, what then?" "Well," I said, "the Lord can reach him; we will pray for him."

God can reach people that you cannot, and our object is to get people saved whom we cannot reach, who are as hard as stones. We prayed regularly for this husband. I think I never bowed my knee but that man came before me. I had a Bible class at the time, and after a while I learned that he would sometimes come and sit on the steps outside, because he could hear through the window. He would not come inside; he would not break his vow; but he got just a little bit of the Word as he sat outside the window. After a while he came with his wife one Sunday evening, but did not come again for some time. Then he came

back again; and after some time he became a regular hearer Sunday nights. Nothing could bring him Sunday morning, but he came Sunday evening. He was the sort of man you could not touch: he was as hard as a stone. Everyone was afraid of him, he was so rough, so uncouth in his speech; but he came down the aisle with his wife, and always sat in one particular place. He was out like a shot after the benediction, no one could get a chance to reach him. After a while he began to come Sunday morning, and at last became a regular morning and evening attendant,—but the same man with a fence all around him.

One December evening when his wife was out-of-town I saw him walk into prayer meeting. No one had invited him—we were afraid to invite him to prayer meeting—except that we had sent him a great many invitations over the Mercy-seat. He came into the prayer meeting, and I met him at the close. I gripped him by the hand, and said, "I am so glad to see you here to-night, Mr. So-and-So." And he said, "Oh, the wife was away, and the house had to be represented." (Laughter.) He just came as his wife's representative. The first Sunday in the new year he was there. And as he went out from the service I met him at the door, and said, "Well, Mr. So-and-So, what about you?" He snapped back as though he would like to bite my head off, "I am thinking about it," and away he went. I heard afterwards that he went home and to bed, but not to sleep. About four in the morning he rose and went out to his stable—it was before the day of motor cars—and there in the early hours of the morning, he was saved. His wife had confidentially told me that every Sunday when he got home he would say—his wife's name was Kate—he would say, "Now look here, Katies, don't you dare ask me to go with you to that church again, for I won't go. I will never go to hear that man again; he just hit me all over to-day". He would storm and walk up and down, vowing he never would go back to that church,—but the next Sunday he was there just the same. On this particular Sunday he did not sleep at night, and at four o'clock in the morning he got up and went out and settled it with the Lord, or, more correctly speaking, the Lord settled it with him. The next Sunday night he stayed to the aftermeeting; and I gave an opportunity for testimony. This hard man got up near the front, and turned around to the people and said, "I tell you, men"—he was a very unlettered man, although he had made a lot of money—"I tell you, men, I wrestled with the Lord"—he did not say "wrestled" but "wrastled"—"for many years, but the first Sunday of this year He was one too many for me, and he downed me." That was his conception of salvation, that he was absolutely conquered by the Lord.

Our "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Therefore, my dear friends, let us continue to pray. We have plenty of stones in Toronto, abundance of material for building a great spiritual house if only God the Holy Spirit will take the contract. And that is what He wants to do, and waits to do. Let us pray unceasingly that we may see multitudes of people brought from darkness to light.

How many of you here this morning are going to show that you are not stones but children? Stones do not speak, stones do not pray, stones do not confess their faith. Some of you have been as stones for a long time, but if the Lord has given you a heart of flesh, has touched you by His Spirit so that you are able to say, "I am a poor sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all", then you may be saved this morning. By the way, I think I will tell you that old story that I have told many times before, one of Spurgeon's stories, about "Jack the huckster".

Jack was simple-minded. Some people said he was "half-cracked"; and I rather think he was, because he was accustomed to tipping a little bit and sometimes had more than was good for him. He had a barrow which he used to wheel around the village, selling vegetables,—potatoes, cabbages, and other things. Nearly always as he went on his way when anything happened, he swore. He was a very profane man. But as he was wheeling his cart one day he heard a woman in a basement singing as she stitched with her needle:

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Jack caught the words and the melody; and as he went on he began to sing it over to himself:

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

He sang that, on his way until, little by little, by the blessing of God, the great truth of that couplet sang its way into simple Jack's understanding, and his heart was opened, and he said, "That's true. Praise God!

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

After a while he thought he ought to join the church, so he went to see the minister. Jack was a notorious character, everyone knew him; and the minister was surprised when he said that he wanted to be baptized and join the church. He said, "Why do you want to join the church?" "Well, sir, because

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

"Well," said the minister, "that is a fairly good reason, Jack; but it means a great deal, you know, to join the church. You need to be instructed on the duties of church membership, and what it means to be a Christian. And that is all you know?" "Yes, sir, that is all I know:

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

"Very well," the minister said, "I will have the deacons come together, and you must give your testimony to the deacons. They will ask you questions, and find out if you are ready to join the church."

So Jack came singing along at the appointed time.

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

The minister explained the case to these grave men and said, "Now, brethren, you may ask Jack any question you want to." One said, "Well, Jack, when were you converted?" "I don't know, sir; I don't know anything about conversion." "You don't know anything about conversion? Why do you want to join the church?" "Because," said Jack,

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Another deacon said, "You know, Jack, sometimes I make great progress in the Christian life, and I feel that I am really gettin on; and then something happens and I get set back a bit. Supposing you had an experience like that, what would you do?" "Well," said simple Jack, "I don't make any progress; I am always just a poor sinner and nothing at all, and I never go back because Jesus Christ is my all in all: He won't let me go back." Then another deacon staggered Jack by saying, "Jack, sometimes I lose my evidences; sometimes I have strong evidences that I am a Christian; but sometimes I lose my evidences, and I am not so sure about it. What would you do if you were to lose your evidences?" "Well," he said, "I have no evidences. I told you that I am a poor sinner and nothing at all; having nothing I have nothing to lose; but Jesus Christ is my all in all, and I cannot lose Him." They all had a try at him. They tried in every way to trip him up, at least, they tried to find out what he believed; but, far more consistently than most preachers, Jack stuck to his text and insisted,

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

After they had heard his testimony, the minister and deacons said, "Well, Jack, we think you had better come into the church, for that is what the church is for: for poor sinners who are nothing at all, to whom Jesus Christ is all in all."

Now, I have made the gospel plain to you, have I not? Then, we will sing,

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

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 TORONTO BAPTIST PASTORS' COLLEGE.

The title of this article is likely to startle many of our readers. It is written to inform them of a plan which we hope soon to realize. We believe never a week passes that we do not receive enquiries from young people, or their parents, as to what educational institution we can recommend that will give the student a sound, thorough, and practical training for Christian service. Although many educational institutions have greatly departed from the faith, we rejoice there are still many in which Christ is magnified, and in which care is exercised to lead the students into a fuller knowledge of Him.

But many of these institutions are far away. A very large number of our own young people in Jarvis Street have set their minds upon obtaining a college course which will adequately prepare them for Christian work; and many have asked why such an institution could not immediately be established under the direction of Jarvis Street Church. The Editor of this paper is not so foolish as to suppose that he has the qualifications to undertake such a task himself; but he has observed that leaders in industry, commerce, and finance, invariably discover other men more gifted than themselves whom they can organize for their purposes.

#### An Educational Ideal.

We have long cherished an educational ideal whose practice we have never seen really tested. We therefore want, first of all, to state that educational ideal. It is found in the New Testament, in the third chapter of Philippians, eighth verse: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." The Apostle Paul was a gifted man by nature. He was a man of keen, vigorous, massive intellect. Moreover, his natural powers had been developed to the full through the highest culture which the schools of his day could provide. Even an enemy recognized that he was a man of "much learning." But when this great scholar was converted, he joyfully laid all his great abilities at the feet of Christ. He implicitly declares that even his every thought was brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and in the verse we have quoted he discloses the great motive and aim of his life. He esteemed the knowledge of Christ to be the most excellent of all sciences, and tells us that it had become the rule of his life to subordinate every consideration to this one supreme end, and to count everything "but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

We believe, therefore, that this represents the Christian ideal of education: Christ must be put first; the end of all education must be to know Him better. If we study languages, or mathematics, or literature, or philosophy, or any of



the sciences, it must be with a view to obtaining a better knowledge of Christ.

The pursuit of such an ideal can be maintained only in a healthy spiritual atmosphere. A man is not likely to develop an aesthetic taste in a coal mine; it is not probable that one would grow as a musician amid the din of a boiler-making establishment. So to keep always in view this worthiest of all ideals, one must not only be possessed of a vigorous spiritual health himself, but his soul must breathe the atmosphere of the heavenly places in Christ. Hence we believe that such an ideal is most likely to be realized in association with a New Testament church, founded upon New Testament principles, surcharged with the power of the Holy Spirit.

### God Always Has a Reason.

There is always a reason for what God does. He established the New Testament church because He knew it to be a necessity to the fullest culture of the believer's life. The pastors and evangelists and missionaries of New Testament times were not trained in institutions separate from the church. We have sometimes had occasion to criticize educational institutions; but as we have carefully thought these matters through, we have reached the conclusion that such institutions are the inevitable product of an inadequate educational ideal combined with a defective principle of church relationship. Any company of men who shut themselves up to the realm of theory are likely to atrophy their spiritual muscles by disuse; for to divorce theory from practice invariably tends to the formulation of theories which are impracticable.

Beside all this, the faculty of a college or university, unless directly and vitally related to a great spiritual body, will, in their educational ministry, find their spiritual powers taxed to a degree which is likely to result in exhaustion, unless those powers are replenished and reinforced by the prayers and inspiration of a spiritual people whose intercessions generate spiritual power "enough" for themselves, "and to spare" for others. Thus from long thought of the exactions of an educational ministry, we have become more charitable in our thought of heretical personalities, while still compelled to combat the erroneous principles to which their merely philosophical dreams give birth.

### A Great Experiment.

We believe, therefore, if we had smaller colleges, and each one a part of some vital New Testament church, we might still hope to produce flaming evangelists and prophetic pastors who would wax valiant in fight, and turn to fight the armies of the aliens. We have a conviction that God is leading us in Jarvis Street to try this great experiment. While our accommodation is taxed to the utmost on Sunday, we have a building which even in its present state could be utilized for educational purposes during the week. With no man's planning, the Lord has graciously developed in Jarvis Street a prayer life which we have nowhere seen surpassed. This has resulted in the conversion of hundreds of young men and women, large numbers of whom are consumed with a passion for witnessing for Christ.

The writer of this article finds his hands already nearly full. With a large and rapidly growing church, with the weekly demands of this paper, the duties which his official relation to the Baptist Bible Union of North America involves, and the thousands of miles of travel it necessitates, he has felt it unwise to assume additional burdens. Notwithstanding, we feel that it is quite within our powers to call to our help strong men who can do far more ably than we could hope to do, what is necessary to be done. We therefore venture to set out in this article a plan which we have in mind for a pastors' and missionaries' college under the direction of Jarvis Street Church.

### A Baptist School Needed.

First of all, we believe there is need for an essentially Baptist institution of this character. We have observed that many of our so-called Baptist educational centres do not produce Baptists, but destroy in their students

whatever Baptist loyalty they have. There are many Bible Colleges which are doing excellent work. Most of them, however, are undenominational in character, which means that in these institutions the great principles for which Baptists have stood are not emphasized. Moreover, in some of the Bible Colleges the general educational standard is not as high as we believe it ought to be. We have long felt the need of a Baptist institution that would magnify the Bible as the Word of God, giving its students the most thorough possible instruction in the English Bible, at the same time, combining with it, a broad and thorough general educational course; and also providing an ecclesiastical laboratory in which everything may be tested by practice.

### A College a Department of the Church.

The educational experiment we hope to attempt, therefore, conceives of a college wholly under the direction of a local New Testament church. Its Board of Directors will be the Deacons of that church; for the same spiritual qualifications necessary to the administration of the affairs of a church, are necessary to the administration of what we may call, for the purpose of the moment, a gospel college. We would then have a Superintendent skilled in administrative work, who would be responsible for the management of the material interests of the institution; while, in the beginning, at least, he would, of necessity, have to render some service as a teacher. We should then hope, in addition, to have a Dean of the institute who would be the recognized head of the teaching department of the college. For this position we have hope of obtaining the services of a man of recognized scholarship, and of proved devotion to Christ and to the inspired record which God has given to us of His Son.

In the beginning, the other instructors would render gratuitous service; but would be selected, not only for their ability, but for their known loyalty to the Word of God. And we venture to believe that such instructors often have a great advantage over full time professors, for the reason that, in the nature of the case, such men are practical men. Being themselves pastors daily engaged in the work of the ministry, they will know how to help those who hope to become pastors.

### An Eight Months' Course.

The plan we have in mind contemplates an eight months' course—from October to May, with the month of June for vacation; and a special course of three months, July to September, in evangelism. We should endeavour for the eight months' course, to bring once a month to the College a great outstanding pastor, teacher, or missionary, with a record of successful service. We should hope to have the services of such a man for one week each month throughout the term, a different man each month. He would deliver public addresses in the evening, and lecture to the students in the day-time. Students would thus be brought into contact with the great generals of the Lord's army who are leading the hosts to battle.

### Special Course in Evangelism.

For the three months' special course in evangelism, the services of evangelistic pastors would be secured. There would be lectures on evangelism during the day, and open air evangelism each evening. The object of this special course in evangelism would be to provide opportunity for pastors and others on vacation to find inspiration in actually participating in evangelistic work.

### The Bible the Principal Text Book.

As to the courses: The Bible will be the principal text book. Students will not come to study about the Bible, but to study the Bible itself. But combined with that, we should hope to provide facilities for a general education. Provision will be made to make it possible for students who have been deprived of early educational advantages to obtain their matriculation, both by day and night classes.

### Religious Clinics.

In addition to this part of their course, students will be required to render service in the Bible School, in prayer meeting, house-to-house visitation, and general mission work. For this purpose other Baptist churches who share the ideal of this church and college would be invited to associate themselves with us, in order that their young people attending the college might work in their own church; and that students from out of the city might be assigned to various churches, so that all co-operating churches would fully share the benefit of the students' ministry.

### Biographical Studies.

We should also arrange courses of biographical study in which the student would get the inspiration of the lives of great preachers and missionaries. Instead of studying homiletics from a text book, or perhaps in addition to such study, students would be required to study the sermons of the world's great preachers, ancient and modern.

Attention would be given also to instruction in principles of Bible School teaching and organization in its relation to the church's evangelistic and teaching ministry.

### Christian Residences.

In addition to this, we plan a music course, which would aim to instruct the students in church music and in the general conduct of public worship.

We should also gradually seek to develop a Christian residence system by which students would be enabled to live, during their college days, in a Christian residence. Students would be encouraged not only to take the courses open to them in our own institution, but to obtain matriculation, and then go on to university. We should endeavour to work out a plan of aiding students not only through college, but through university. The condition of giving such aid, however, would be that the student should live in some Christian residence, and combine with his university course certain practical duties.

### What of the Money?

What do our readers think of this plan? We believe we can put it into immediate operation. There is but one thing necessary, and that is—what do you think? Just a little money! We do not need at the moment money for buildings, nor for many salaries; but we do need a few thousand dollars to begin the work, so that we can engage the services of a competent educationist as Dean, and of a practical man as Superintendent.

### The Confession of Faith.

The general basis upon which this institution will rest, will be the Confession of Faith of the Baptist Bible Union of North America. Every instructor in the school will be required to subscribe to the great fundamentals therein expressed, not only when he begins his duties, but publicly at the beginning of each term, he will be required to declare that he still holds the Bible as being the Word of God, and still subscribes to the great essentials of evangelical faith. In order to keep the institution in vital touch with the church itself, it will be a constitutional requirement that the Pastor of the church, whoever he may be, will be President of the college. He would naturally be a regular lecturer; but the supervision and general direction of the work as an educational institution would, of course, be in the hands of the Dean.

### Christian Education.

We do not ask our readers to send us any money. This paper will be read by thousands who are stewards of the Lord's goods. Many of them have had a desire to give to Christian Education, but have been at a loss to know where to put their money with a guarantee that it would be used for that purpose. We invite correspondence with those whom the Lord has entrusted with some of His property. Of course, we should be glad to receive promises for large amounts, but we should be grateful for pledges of amounts down to five dollars, or even a dollar, from those who feel led of the Spirit of God to

promise. We have no doubt that any coming to our help in this matter will take this proposed venture upon their hearts as a subject for earnest prayer. With even ten thousand dollars guaranteed for the year beginning October 1st, we believe we could open our college with one hundred or more students. We should not be surprised if we were able to begin with twice that number.

We need hardly say that while this work would be subject to the church, it would be organized as a separate department within the church, and all its funds would, of necessity, be separately kept and administered.

### THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS

Are there not some among our readers who could send us a promise for one thousand dollars for Christian Education for the coming year? May there not be some who could send us five thousand? Are there not others who could send us twenty-five, fifty, one hundred, up to five hundred dollars? It may be there are some of the Lord's rich stewards who have still larger amounts to invest. When millions are given to institutions which destroy the faith of their students, why should not thousands be given to train men, not only to preach, but to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints? Why are so many college and seminary men "middle of the road" men, who may always be depended upon to take a neutral position respecting the great religious issues of the day? Is it because they have not been trained for heroic service? Does not the church militant need a training school of a militant spirit, to meet the aggressions of present day modernism? Send us in your pledge at once, but no money; and we will immediately correspond with you, and give you the names of some of the men we have in mind, and whose services could, we believe, be immediately secured as teachers.

### EVERYTHING BY PRAYER.

The proposals contained in the editorial of this issue, and which, it may almost be said, grow out, of the demand of large numbers of our young people, call for serious consideration. God has often used poor people to accomplish His great work. Neither Mueller, nor Moody, nor Hudson Taylor, were men of wealth; but they cast themselves upon God, and He accomplished through them what was never done through millionaires. In view of our building enterprise and all the growing demands of our own work, we would venture to urge all our people afresh earnestly to pray for the church treasury, that the Lord will graciously send in the tens of thousands of dollars that could so advantageously be used in this expanded work.

In addition to this, we ask our friends, not only members of the church, but all our readers, to earnestly join us in prayer that if this project be of the Lord, He will remove all hindrances and find both the men and the money necessary to carry out the plan.

We are confident the proposal contained in this article will be realized; if not this year, we shall try to realize it next.

### A CONVENTION ORDINATION COMMITTEE.

We are informed that at the coming Convention it will be proposed that an ordination committee be appointed by the Convention. This will not be the first time that such a matter has been considered. It is, perhaps, not surprising that from time to time this question should come to the front. No one of any extended experience in the Denomination will question that many men through the years have been ordained who, for many reasons, were not qualified for the work of the ministry. The principle of the absolute independence of Baptist churches, like other good principles, is liable to abuse. We have seen many church situations in which we could not help feeling that if there were some extra-church authority to handle the matter, the difficulty might be overcome.

It is probable that many of the ecclesiastical systems against which Baptists have protested, and under whose authority they have often suffered, ori-

ginated in an honest desire to correct abuses of sound New Testament principles. Democracy itself in the political realm is often abused. People are enfranchised according to age, not according to the degree of their intelligence. Hence it sometimes happens that people are entrusted with the responsibility of the ballot who do not know how to use it. Notwithstanding, the democratic principle of government is the best we know; and if there are evils, the remedy is with the people themselves, and in due time they may be trusted to correct them. So with the church. Baptists cannot be too jealous of their independence. And in this connection it is necessary to oppose, with our full strength, any proposal which would infringe upon the freedom of the local church.

It is true that many men have been ordained without adequate preparation for the important work of the ministry. On the other hand, it is indisputable that not a few who have had every advantage the schools could give them, and who have been graduated with high honour and enthusiastically recommended by their professors, have turned out to be absolute failures in the ministry. Our observation is that such committees as that proposed are invariably made up, for the most part, of representatives of the theological seminaries; and they are used to keep out of the ministry all but those who have received the schools' certificate of efficiency; and the entire Denomination is made an organization to bring grist to the seminaries' mill.

For a number of years the writer served on the Home Mission Board of this Convention, for a good part of the time acting as Vice-Chairman. An Examining and Stationing Committee was organized for the purpose of examining those who sought service under the Home Mission Board; and for the purpose also of sharing with the Superintendent the responsibility of sending students to their summer fields. McMaster University vigorously protested against the action of the Board, and the writer had many interviews with the officials of the University on this subject. The constitution of the Committee, in consideration of the University, was amended to admit certain members of the Theological Faculty as advisory members of the Committee. In the nature of the case, the professors of the University have more time at their command than busy pastors. The result of this has been to make the Examining Committee of the whole Board practically a committee of the University, so that without election to the Board by the Convention, they very largely influence the action of the Board. We feared the result of the constitution of this Committee at the time, and we plead guilty to having been weak enough to consent to the concession which the University demanded.

If a Convention Ordination Committee were appointed, the balance of power would be put in the hands of professors of the University who are not pastors, and whose judgment on practical matters is certainly not superior to that of men who are daily faced with the demands of the pastoral office. The frog at a railway junction point is very sharp and the piece of steel that turns the train from one track to another is very thin, so that the wheels pass over it so smoothly that the sleeping passenger is unaware that the train has changed its direction. Thus the slightest departure from the principles of the New Testament inevitably leads to a position widely separated from the teaching of the Word of the Lord.

A resolution respecting this Ordination Committee was submitted at the Toronto Association and, as we think, was wisely laid upon the table. If any such proposal is made at the Convention in October, we venture the opinion that all ministers and churches who would guard their freedom should vigorously oppose it. It is far better that we should suffer from a few mistakes in ordination than that we should submit to any kind of extra-church authority.

#### BAPTIST LIBERTY.

A brother writes us suggesting that the Baptist Bible Union Conference to be held in Jarvis Street next week might profitably discuss the question of Baptist liberty. The brother who makes this suggestion thinks he is a Baptist. We have no doubt whatever that he is a good and sincere man; but his view of the content of the word "Baptist" is far removed from that name's historic significance.

Our brother seems to imagine that a Baptist church is some sort of investigation society in which a number of people are joined together having only this one point of agreement, that each will search for himself and do that which is right in his own eyes. Our idea of a Baptist church is that it is founded upon the revealed Word of God, and that it is made up of people who have reached a measure of agreement in respect to what the Bible teaches. In our view, the supreme authority of the Scriptures as being the Word of God, the virgin birth of Christ, His essential Deity, His substitutionary death, His physical resurrection, His session at the right hand of God, His coming again; as also the fact of sin, the necessity of the new birth in order to salvation, justification by faith, the eternal security of the believer, immersion of the believer in water as the only baptism—we supposed that among Baptists these were no longer debatable subjects, and that the Baptist church is organized, not to discover whether these things are true, but because they are known to be true, to publish them to the ends of the earth.

But what is meant by Baptist liberty? Simply that Baptists have ever contended that no civil or ecclesiastical authority has any right to fetter the conscience, but that every man has a right to believe what he will. But this surely does not mean that a man who becomes a member of a Baptist church, knowing the faith that church professes, can be justified by any true ethical standard in continuing in that church when he ceases to believe the faith that church professes. He has full liberty to believe what he likes, which ought to include liberty to withdraw from that church and hold fellowship with those who share his views. We believe in absolute soul purity, not only for Baptists, but for Roman Catholics, and Unitarians, and modernists, and agnostics, and infidels. We believe a man ought to have liberty to eat onions if he likes them; but if he is a gentleman he will confine his indulgence to his own home and not inflict his peculiar taste upon other people. And how deniers of the Word of God and of the essentials of the Christian faith should claim the right to place and position in a Baptist church in the name of Baptist liberty we have never been able to understand.

We would fight for the liberty of a Fosdick. He ought to be permitted to believe as he likes without let or hindrance from anyone. But that does not mean that he should be permitted to impose his teachings upon a Denomination which has no agreement with him. It should ever be borne in mind that such a love of liberty as refuses to compel, insists also upon the right to refuse to concur. We would fight for the liberty of a church, Park Avenue Baptist Church of New York, for example, to call any man they like to be their pastor, and to change both their creed and their polity as often as it may please them; but when such a church surrenders everything distinctively Baptist, it ought in simple honesty to surrender the name, and to withdraw from the Denomination.

The correspondent to whom we have referred has written us many letters; and we are grateful for his occasional appreciation of what *The Witness* contains. But we have never been able to agree with his peculiar conception of what constitutes "Baptist liberty".

#### THE ARIZONA BAPTIST.

We were of the opinion that the Baptists of Arizona were out-and-out fundamentalists. We have just read an account of the Northern Baptist Convention, appearing in *The Arizona Baptist* for July of this year, written by Richard E. Day. The writer of this account, it would appear, knows very little of the recent history of the Northern Baptist Convention; or otherwise, he is scarcely less expert as a color photographer than the Baptist Munchausen who edits *The Baptist* of Chicago.

The account we have read in *The Arizona Baptist*, we are constrained to say, does not fairly represent the facts of the case. We should fear after reading this account that Arizona fundamentalists need expect little help from *The Arizona Baptist*. There seems to be growing up among Baptists everywhere a disposition to justify almost anything that is done by the Baptist powers that be.

## The Jarvis Street Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson XXIII.

September 6th, 1925.

### THE MUTUALITY OF LOVE.

In these chapters we have a further record of the occasional interruption of fellowship between lovers,—if not exactly an interruption of fellowship, it is at least a record of the withdrawal of the presence of one or the other, and of repeated renewals of their love. Theoretically, this ought not to be; but actually, it finds a parallel in the experience of most believers.

#### I. The Lover Comes Into His Garden to Share His Fruit With His Beloved.

1. Christ does really come into His garden; He is not absent from the church: where two or three are gathered in His name, there He is in the midst of them. 2. He comes with a desire to share His abundance with others. It is thus love always desires to communicate itself. In His great prayer He said, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." He calls us to a more abundant life; He does not desire that we should live on meagre fare.

#### II. The Church's Answer to Her Beloved.

1. No sleep can render a true believer wholly insensible to the voice of the Beloved: "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved." How often we are overtaken with sleep! How often do we become insensible to many of our surroundings. But the voice of the Beloved will always awaken the sleeping Christian; there is no alarm to the truly renewed soul like the Word of the Lord. 2. He called her by many endearing terms: "My sister", of his nature; "my love", the object of his affection; "my dove", for purity; "my undefiled", indicating her separation to him. 3. He bids us open the door to Him. In this connection, read Revelation 4: 20. It is His appeal to the church to admit Him to His proper place. 4. He represents himself as shut out in the night: "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." What a picture of the waiting Christ! 5. She makes excuse for not opening the door: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" She has retired and is reluctant to allow herself to be disturbed. How many a Christian has said the same! The coat has been put off; from a sense of unpreparedness, our Beloved is kept without. 6. Notwithstanding she responded to his touch when he put in his hand by the hole of the door. Not alone the voice, but the touch of God is possible to us. 7. With all preparation she opens to receive him (v. 5). She had taken time to prepare herself with myrrh. So do we foolishly postpone obedience, forgetting that to obey is always better than sacrifice. 8. We may wait too long and only aggravate and extend the time of our separation (v. 6). When she opened to the beloved, he had withdrawn himself. So now she must seek him and call him.

#### III. The Virgins Who Observe Her, Challenge Her Testimony.

"What is they beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" That is ever the question which believers are called to answer: What is Christ more than others? In what respect is He superior?

#### IV. The Church Describes the Glories of Her Beloved.—Verses 10-16.

1. He is the Chiefest among ten thousand. True faith can never admit that there is another comparable to Christ. He is the Standard-Bearer; He must in all things have the pre-eminence. 2. Under the figure of physical strength and beauty, she describes his excellencies: "His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven", etc. When talking to an aged minister in California, he said something to this effect: "Through a long life I have found my Lord Jesus to supply my every need, to meet me in every emergency in life, and to be to me all that I have needed at all times. When

I was a young man I used to glory in the fact that "his locks are bushy, and black as a raven"; but now that I am growing old, I delight to remember that when John saw Him 'his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.'" So this striking description of a strong man's excellencies is full of suggestion of the glories of our divine lover. 3. She sums up his graces in the 16th verse: "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." Many may be lovely in some respects, but our Beloved is "altogether lovely". If this be true, how ready ought we to be to introduce Him to others saying, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

#### V. Such Glowing Testimony as This Inevitably Awakens a Profound Interest in Others.

1. When thus we speak of Christ others will enquire about Him (chap. 6: 1). 2. It is well that we should be able to direct others where to find Him: "My beloved is gone down into his garden." In our reaction from the idea that the Lord is confined to temples made with hands, we may go to the extreme of failing properly to magnify the institution of public worship and the privileges of church fellowship. We have the Lord's specific promise that He is to be found where His people assemble in His name. It is ever true that He feedeth among the lilies and that He may be found there by those who seek Him with their whole heart. 3. The note of perfect assurance is most effective in Christian testimony (v. 3), "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

#### VI. Again the Divine Lover Magnifies the Beauties of His Beloved.

1. He sees in her a combination of beauty and strength—beautiful as Tirzah, terrible as an army with banners. This ought to characterize those who know the Lord. 2. Like the descriptive passage in the former chapter (vs. 10-16), verses 5 to 9 describe the beauties of the spouse. 3. There is a striking figure descriptive of the church in verse 10: she is as "the morning", for hopefulness, she looks toward the day. She is as "fair as the moon", but her fairness, like the light of the moon, is not her own. It is a reflected glory. But she is as clear as the sun also, and gives warmth as well as light—and terrible as an army with banners. 4. In the remaining verses of the chapter he prays for the return of his beloved.

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#### LAST SUNDAY'S SERVICES.

Last Sunday the weather was warm, but it was a perfect summer day. The attendance at the Bible School in the morning was eight hundred and eighty-seven, at the morning service the church was practically filled, in the evening the building was crowded, with some standing. Five were baptized in the evening; several came forward both at the morning and evening service. At the close of the evening service the Pastor preached to a great congregation out of doors. There must have been an aggregate at all services in Jarvis Street, including the Bible School, of between four and five thousand people, nearer five thousand than four.

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#### THE BAPTIST BIBLE UNION CONFERENCE.

Dr. W. L. Pettingill, of Philadelphia, will speak Friday evening, August 28th. The service will begin at eight o'clock. Dr. Pettingill will also preach at both services on Sunday. Monday evening, Dr. J. Frank Norris; Tuesday evening, Dr. W. B. Riley; Wednesday evening, Dr. J. Frank Norris; Thursday evening, Dr. W. B. Riley; Friday evening, Dr. J. Frank Norris. This announcement will be of interest to many visitors to Toronto who are hereby heartily invited to all these services.