

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHAT A PREACHER DID AFTER HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 25th, 1925.

(Stenographically reported.)

"And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

"Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."—Acts 14:19-23.



T is most refreshing when on the pilgrim's highway to turn to the divine Guide Book, and to discern the things which are promised us there. It is popular now for certain people to say that religious controversy is entirely out of place—or controversy in the realm of religion—that we ought all to read the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians—and be good!—forgetting that even that chapter says that the love of which the inspired writer is speaking "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

I want you to look at this chapter in Paul's history this evening for your own inspiration and encouragement.

I.

This incident suggests, first of all, the principle that it is NOT DIFFICULT TO SWAY A MOB IN A GIVEN DIRECTION. If you read the beginning of the chapter you will find that Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra and there they preached the gospel. And there was a man who was lame from his birth who heard them preach; and Paul perceived that he had faith to be healed, and he said to him with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of

men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." They declined the honours which the world offered them in the name of religion; yet "with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them." And then there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium who persuaded the people; and over night the bouquets turned to bricks, and the people who yesterday would have honoured them as gods now hurled stones at them.

What little reliance, after all, is to be placed upon human opinion in the mass! It is like that whichever way it goes: whether they offer you flowers, or stone you with stones, it is all one. Even in secular pursuits, you have many an illustration of the vanity, the transitoriness of human favour. Only a very few years ago Mr. David Lloyd George was hailed as a superman, as the saviour of the world's liberty, as the deliverer of this Empire and its allies from the hand of the enemy; but to-day he is almost forgotten and another popular idol occupies his place. The truth is, my friends, the favour of men is not worth living for: whether they bless us or curse us, we need not be concerned about it, so long only as our hearts are right with God.

It may be that God will come into this place—as I believe He has come—and pouring out His Spirit, will bring multitudes of people to His feet, transforming human lives, changing homes, affecting all the relationships of life. But in the judgment of some people both the church and the Pastor are quite discredited, because they do not enjoy the favour of a little group of men! I have heard it all over the United States. I quite sympathize with Mr. Robertson—whom I have never met—because I am in exactly the same class: I have absolutely no standing anywhere. Very well! As long as we stand upon the promises of God we shall have a fairly good foundation; and it is a thousand times better that we should enjoy, as individuals and as a church, the favour of God than that the priests of Jupiter should come to us with garlands and sacrifices. But that by the way.

The preacher was treated to stones, and *they seemed to have made a personal attack upon Paul*. I do not know why Barnabas was immune. But it is not said that anybody threw a stone at Barnabas, although, as far as I can see, Barnabas stood exactly where Paul stood. But they stoned Paul. That has always been the way. You cannot deal with principles in the abstract, my friends; you must deal with their incarnations. Moses had to flee for his life, and wait for forty years until he found acceptance with the people whom God had sent him to deliver; Elijah was not with the majority by any means—or the majority was not with him. In a moment of depression he did think that he was all alone. He said, "I, even I only, am left." That was not true. There were several thousand others who had not bowed the knee to Baal,—but most of them were in hiding; Obadiah was a very lonely man, and would have been still more lonely had he been a little more courageous; Micajah stood alone against the four hundred prophets of Baal, and was sent to jail for his faithful ministry; Jeremiah rebuked the sin of his time, and warned the people against the folly and sin of closing their ears to the divine testimony, and the people whom he sought to save conspired to destroy him; when John the Baptist preached, Herodias did not pass a resolution objecting to John's preaching: they unsheathed the sword and cut off his head—which was more effective, in their judgment.

But always the enemy directed its attack against a man, or against men. Our Lord Jesus came to earth, lived an absolutely sinless life, and never did anyone an injury; but went about doing good. He preached the truth; He said some very hard things about the religious professors of His day when He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of

hell?" That kind of talk would not be popular in a Baptist Convention! But that is how the Lord Jesus talked: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"—have you read that chapter where again and again the One out of Whose mouth gracious words generally proceeded, and into Whose lips, according to the prophetic word, grace was poured—have you read how He dealt sternly with every kind of sin? And yet He said to men, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; and of the little children He said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And he opened blind eyes; He unstopped deaf ears; He loosed dumb tongues; He made the lame man to leap as an hart; He healed the fevered patient; cleansed the leper; raised the dead,—and for it all they took Him to a place called Calvary and nailed Him to a cross of wood. And He said to His disciples, "Behold, I send you forth"—among a lot of people in whom the spiritual instinct is natural, and it is your business just to develop it?—"Behold, I send you forth"—to minister to a lot of people who are good on the inside if they only knew it, and whose turning to God is perfectly natural? Is that what He says? "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." There is a world of difference between the nature of a wolf and the nature of a sheep; and my Lord Jesus never made a mistake in a metaphor. He told us that "if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Discussing two types of prophets, He said, "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. They will not be pleased no matter what tune we play. For," said He, "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

And so, my friends, you must not be at all disturbed by the distinguished and scholarly gentleman from across the sea who declares that some things—in perfect parliamentary language—are a lie. You must not be surprised at that, for "if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" And the apostles found it true. Read the Acts again, and you will find that every one of them found that this vile world was not a friend to grace to help us on to God. Wherever they went they got nothing but stones: Paul was stoned; others were put in prison; Stephen preached but one sermon! If he had but learned from some professor of Practical Theology and Homiletics, how to preach, he never would have got himself into so much trouble, he certainly never would. But he had not sense enough to do that!—he just preached out of a full heart the Word of God; and "they gnashed on him with their teeth," and stoned him to death for his pains.

Has it ever been different, my dear friends? Upon what days have we fallen that we should be so blind? By what analogy of history dare anyone presume to hope that a man may be faithful to Jesus Christ, and have an easy time? What about John Knox, or Calvin, or Luther, or Ridley, or Latimer, or Cranmer, or John Huss, or any of those who became martyrs for the faith? You know what a martyr is? Etymologically, a martyr is not one who is burned at the stake; a martyr is a witness. But because witnesses for Christ have had to seal their testimony with their blood, the very word "witness" or "martyr" has become a synonym for suffering and death. Turn back the pages of history; read and see whether there is anything either in the Book itself, or in secular or profane history, to justify the expectation that we shall ever come to a time when we may hope to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease?

And they stoned Paul until they supposed he was dead. The truth is, my friends, the spirit of this thing that opposes the Word of God—let me say it carefully—has murder in its heart. They said, "We will stone him to death that we may never hear from him again." I have heard again and again—I have been to so many Conventions, if you will allow this personal application of the principle, I have been to several Baptist Conventions whose special business was to "finish Shields once and for all." I remember away back in 1919, I was going down to Ottawa on the C.N.R. train, and there was a C.P.R. train beside it

loaded with delegates to the Convention. My wife and I happened to be in the other train—we did not designedly choose that as distinct from the other, but in the train beside us, as we waited in the station, there were special reinforcements for the front going down for the day; and for my special benefit they treated me to the McMaster yell! And I say to my McMaster friends, You may yell until your throats are sore; it does not mean that there is the shout of a King in the camp. At all events, we are still here. But the truth is, this thing would destroy if it could.

I am not going to ask how many ministerial students there are here this evening, but I ask all those who have the ministry in view, What do you expect? Are you going to have an easy time, my brethren? Are you going to try to keep step with those who seem, for the moment, to be in authority? Are you going to consider always on which side your bread is buttered? Are you going to get a church through the recommendation of your professor? or are you going to be one of the overseers whom the Holy Ghost shall set over a flock? Now, let me give you a little bit of sound advice: a professor can put you in a church, but a professor cannot keep you there: the Holy Ghost can put you in a church and keep you there, so that even hell itself cannot move you. So you had better get your appointment from above; you had better concern yourselves to deserve the favour of God, no matter what man may say. I do not mean that you should go around with a chip on your shoulder. Of course, they will charge you with that if you stand for the faith. I have been in this pulpit now nearly sixteen years; while my friend on Bloor Street has not been here sixteen days yet. And I expect, if God spares me, to be here a little longer, just a little longer anyhow.

Now they stoned Paul, and they stunned him so that they supposed he was dead. We are only human, and sometimes we all want a cot under the juniper tree for an hour or so where Elijah lay down. But if you study the psychology of that story you will find that Elijah was just a bit tired—and he came back again. The fact is, while the disciples stood around, Paul rose up and came into the city. A young gentleman who is not altogether favourable to us, or the things for which we stand, or, at least, the position we have taken in this matter, said to me in Hamilton the other night, "I don't quite understand you." I said, "Perhaps not. What is the matter?" "Why", said he, "nothing seems to depress you." And he referred to several of my trying experiences, and I said, "Why should that depress me? I am on the winning side: He always wins who sides with God." And I never was surer in my life that in this great conflict we have been siding with God, never was I so sure as I was last Wednesday that this thing against which we are contending is deeply rooted in our University, and far more deeply rooted than I had ever dreamed. But when the Dean in Theology takes that position—and I will give you his exact words next Thursday—of being tolerant toward these things, and can have full fellowship with men who take that position, it is time the Denomination knew it—and we are going to do our utmost to let them know.

II.

But what I want to talk about to-night is, What a preacher did after he was supposed to be dead.

As a matter of fact, they did not get rid of him at all: he rose up and came into the city,—and one of the first things he did was to *preach in the same city*: he preached the same gospel over again. It may be, dear friends, we are not competent to expound the Word of God, as Toronto has been told by our new professor,—and we frankly admit it; we frankly admit that only the Spirit of God can teach us the hidden truths of this Word. And just in the measure in which we have that Spirit shall we understand the Word of God, just in the measure in which the Holy Ghost enlightens our understandings shall we be able to bring out of its treasury things new and old. But we have had a great many experiences in this place, and it would be more becoming for this gentleman to show by his own ministry what his gospel can accomplish, before he talks to others who have been longer in the way. We intend to go on preaching in this city, notwithstanding these dear brethren.

What did Paul do? Let me say very simply that he did three things. First: *he confirmed the souls of the saints*. Now that is the kind of confirmation the New Testament talks about, not the laying on the hands of the bishop. That is not New Testament confirmation: we are confirmed by establishment in the truth. We hope to exercise that kind of ministry in this place. And, by the way, one of the advantages of the discussion of these last few years has been that the attention of thousands of people has been called to this matter, whereas before they had not thought about it at all. People are studying the question; and the rank and file of our membership by and by will awaken to a recognition of the perils of the hour—and then we shall have victory.

We need to exercise a ministry that will confirm people in the great truths of the gospel. I want you who are members of Jarvis Street Church, above all other things, to be lovers of the Word of God—to be lovers of the Word of God. I have known many a washerwoman so taught in the things of God that she could put an end to that new professor in five minutes. And that is our business, first of all, to know the Word of God. What are we here for? We are here as a fighting army. There are some of you ex-soldiers here, who had to be drilled and trained before you were fit for the firing line: so we are to be confirmed in the faith.

In the next place, he exhorted them *to continue in the faith*. I propose to keep on in that business of exhorting people to continue in "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." And the central fact of that faith is the fact that you have seen illustrated in this ordinance to-night, that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures,"—that we are saved by the precious blood of Christ. And we will hold fast to that:

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

And then the next thing is this: that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*. Paul said to the disciples, to those who were converted under his ministry, "You will have no easy time, I forewarn you that you will have to enter in through much tribulation." That was the kind of introduction he had to the Christian life himself—when the Lord laid His hand upon Ananias and said, "I will show him"—that is, Saul of Tarsus—"how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."—"I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

That was a strange introduction to the Christian life, was it not? The modern church has been tearing down, you know, lowering the standard and saying, "Come in! Come in! Let us have an inclusive membership. If you do not like baptism, then you may come in without it; if you do not like immersion, then be sprinkled; and if you do not like either, come in without either,—we will open the door as widely as we can, and lower the standard so that everyone may come in, and we will have a great church! And what have they done? They have weakened the church until the church has ceased to be even a moral force in some places. We have hundreds of visitors in this church who are visiting all week. I heard of one class—praise the Lord!—I heard of one class that made seventy visits last week. And what do they find? Hundreds and hundreds of people who were formerly attendants upon the house of God, who never darken the door of a place of worship to-day. Why? Because they say the church has no message for them, because they say the ministers do not preach the Word of God. That is why. Lower the standard, and you enfeeble the church, you have a lot of people wearing the King's uniform who, instead of being fit for the battle, are fit only for the hospital; and the poor preacher has to go about playing nurse all the time!

A few years ago I remember seeing in one of the Toronto papers portraits of the pastors of the "leading" churches—I happened to be one of them myself then! I was Pastor of the same church as I am now; but I did not have so

many people as I have now, nor so many conversions, nor so many people in prayer meeting, nor, indeed, did we have as much money in the treasury. But then we were one of the "leading" churches, and I was one of the "leading" pastors at that time. I remember they said of one gentleman, that his duties were chiefly "social." I suppose he had to go around and drink tea with the ladies! I do know this from talking with many brother ministers that a very large part of their time is taken up with keeping the dear brothers and sisters pleased. Why? Because people have been taught that there is no tribulation; that when they come into the church everyone will smooth them down and say, "Pretty pussy"! I warn you, you will not get any of that kind of treatment from me. I always say to you Jarvis Street people that if ever you get up the miff tree you had better find a comfortable seat, because you will stay up there a long time before I get a stepladder to bring you down. I forewarn you. Do not join this church unless you are ready for a fight. Not in the church! We are just the happiest crowd that ever lived. We have no contention in the church, only outside. That is how it ought to be: the church should be one, united against the world, the flesh, and the devil, pressing the battle to the gate every day. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

But you will have a hard time. I remember a dear deacon a little while ago—before our great earthquake—one day in a Deacons' meeting said, "Brethren"—I was in the Chair—"Brethren, it is getting very serious, very serious. I was at lunch the other day with some gentlemen, and they actually said to me when they found that I belonged to Jarvis Street Church, they actually said to me, 'And so your Pastor will not let you go to the movies any more.' Brethren, it is very serious when people talk like that"! Poor man! You will have many things like that to endure, you Jarvis Street folks. And so we tell any of you who are thinking of coming into the membership of this church, you had better think before you come. We want "sisters" here, but we do not want any "sissies," not a bit of it; because "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." There was a time when I did not understand that Scripture; but I think I understand it a little better now, notwithstanding my professorial friend. Tribulation does work patience; and patience does work experience; and when you have had a little experience of God's delivering grace, you are so filled with hope that you "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost," and can challenge hell to do its worst at any time. Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.

Well, there are many other things I would like to say, but I must not take the time except to point this out: they went everywhere after that preaching the Word.

And do not forget this: Paul and Barnabas—one of whom had been stoned to death, supposedly, but who did not stay dead: he got up again—were delegates to the First Baptist Convention that was ever held, which met with the First Baptist Church, at Jerusalem. And there were three men who spoke very prominently on that occasion: Peter spoke first, and Paul and Barnabas addressed the Convention afterwards. They did not argue the question—and it was a doctrinal question that was before the Convention—they did not argue the question at all; but they told what wonders God had wrought through them. That is the way to talk to a Convention. And I say to my Jarvis Street friends, our testimony will have value only as God the Holy Ghost continues to work wonders in this place. And while He does I dare to say, I challenge McMaster University and all the other organizations to unite their forces, and I dare them to stay the progress of the work of God in this place. (If there are any reporters here, put that down.) What did they do? They went to the Convention and they told what the mighty power of God had wrought through their ministry,—and they swept the Convention. That is what they did. There is going to be another Convention next year; and we shall be there, all being well!

Then let me tell you another thing: after this brother was supposed to be dead, he preached at Philippi, and founded the church to the Philippians; after

he was supposed to be dead he preached at Ephesus, and at Berea, and at Thessalonica, and at Athens, and at Corinth, and last of all at Rome; and every solitary epistle written in the New Testament by the hand of the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, was written after the Devil thought he had got rid of him! ("Hallelujah!" "Amen!").

Now, I close with this word. Somebody says, "But, sir, do you expect conversions when you talk like that?" Yes, I do; I want you who are unsaved to answer me this question: Is there any evil in your heart over which you have no power? Is the battle being lost in your circumstances, or is it being lost in your heart? Is it true that the strong man armed keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace? And is it true that the main difficulty with you is that that which is within you has a strange affinity with that which is without? Is it not your difficulty, my unsaved friend, that it is because you are too much in agreement with the world, the flesh, and the devil, that you are being defeated all the time? Is that not where the difficulty lies? Are you not conscious that if there is to be any real salvation, any real deliverance from sin, any upward climbing toward God, that some Power has got to come and take you and lift you out of the world, and make you separate and unlike the world, and set you in opposition to the world? Do you not see that? Let me give you an illustration: there may be some man here who is addicted to drink. I don't know. I remember a woman saying to me once, "I hate it as I hate the Devil. But," she said, "when once I come where it is, and I get the fumes of alcohol, I am done; I have no power whatever." Why? There was something without that was answered from within; and her only salvation was to keep as far away from it as possible.

So, my brother, I do not know what it may be, but something in your life is defeating you, keeping you out of touch with God, robbing you of joy, and peace—that thing called "sin." You know well that it never will be conquered, it never can be subdued while you walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful. You know well that this is the gospel for you; that you need to surrender to a new Master, that you need the cleansing of His precious blood for the past, for the present, and for the future—a righteousness not your own imputed to you, and a Power not your own dwelling within you, a life that is hid with Christ in God, separate from your surroundings; in the world, but not of it. Don't you know that that is the only kind of salvation that is worth anything? Why, of course it is. And that is the salvation we preach. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

And oh, what a blessing it is—what a blessing it is to keep company with Christ! I have said it so often, but perhaps I had better say it again, it is a simple illustration: the Hebrew children would not have escaped the flames of that night if they could, because through the flames the Son of God walked with them. They learned lessons in the furnace that they could not have learned elsewhere; Daniel, of whom I spoke to you last Sunday night, would never have made the acquaintance of that special angel if he had not gone into the lions' den; Peter would never have known that particular angel who came and delivered him from the power of Herod, and of all the expectation of the Jews, if he had not gone all the way with Jesus Christ. I would rather see one man or one woman cut loose from all the world and the things of the world, to give himself without reserve to Jesus Christ, than I would have a hundred people join the church on the terms that are usually offered. We do believe that there is satisfaction in Jesus Christ. We have found it true. We have found—I wish you could see our Sunday morning school. It was a very rainy morning this morning, but last Sunday morning we had nearly twelve hundred; and we have no Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, or Boys' Brigade. I am not speakin' against these things in themselves, but I think there is a better way of doing the Lord's work: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." In this church we have no entertainments, we have no amusements; we meet as a church three times weekly to pray; we meet on Monday night to pray; all the departments spend much of their time in prayer, and in planning for work, and in study of the Word of God. Then we go from house to house telling all

around what a dear Saviour we have found; and we are trying to do it in the power of the Holy Ghost.

And that is how people are saved. I told it this morning, but I think I will tell it now: I asked two sisters who were baptized to-night, How did you come to Jarvis Street Church? And one of them told me she had given up going to church altogether, she had not been going to church for several years; and her husband had also abandoned going to church, just because in so many places where he had gone he had not heard the Word of God. And I said, How did you come here? And one of those ladies said that she went into a shoeshine parlour to get her shoes cleaned, and she saw a young man and young woman there having their shoes polished. The young man asked her where she went to Sunday School; and she replied that she went sometimes in the afternoon to a certain school. He said, "Will you come to Jarvis Street Sunday School?" and she said she would some time. But he did not let her go until she promised. And so she said, "I came, and when I came the Lord met me. I went and told my friend, and she came; and the Lord met her." And then she said they were standing together as I was giving the invitation the other Sunday night and one said, "I felt like saying to my friend, I must go whether you go or not. And I looked at her, and I found she wanted to go too, so," she said, "we came together." And "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." That is your business if you are a Christian. Thousands of people in this city are broken-hearted, longing for the help which only the Lord Jesus can give. Talk about missionary service: we can be missionaries right here in Toronto,—and then, to the ends of the earth.

I am going to give an invitation to-night; I am going to give the usual invitation to those of you who are trusting Christ in your heart but who have never confessed Him, to get on the uniform, to be brave enough to step out and walk down the aisle for Christ. And there are some of you who believe on Christ, and you have never been baptized. You know you are disobedient in that respect. You say you are a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or something else. If you have not been buried with Christ by baptism I will give you another name for yourself: you are disobedient, just disobedient. Obey Him, do as He tells you; and He will give you the blessing. Then there are some of you who have been standing afar off for a while. And you say, "I have been wondering how long this thing is going to last. I have thought I would like to enter into the fellowship of the church, but I have not quite made up my mind." Well, now is the time to make up your mind. A great many people are making up their minds just now, and more are going to. We want you to help us set up a testimony to the power of the gospel in this place. We will love our brethren, but at the same time contend for the faith once for all delivered. Who will respond to Christ's call to-night?

(More than twenty came forward confessing Christ.)

LAST SUNDAY.

We had a great day in Zion last Sunday. At the morning School one thousand and two were present. At 11 o'clock the Pastor preached to a large congregation, when several responded to the invitation. In the evening there was a capacity congregation, when nine were baptized and a like number came forward confessing Christ, or expressing their desire to be baptized. At the Communion Service which followed, twenty received the hand of fellowship.

THE PASTOR OUT-OF-TOWN.

After the evening service Sunday the Pastor left on a late train for Chicago to attend the Baptist Bible Union meetings being held there November 1st to 4th. He will return in time for the Saturday evening prayer meeting, and will be in his own pulpit Sunday, November 8th

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 CHAMBERS OF THE KING.

To some of us prayer is synonymous with petition. Some prayers are merely a recitation of a catalogue of wants. Some prayers, if printed, would read like a column of want advertisements. Many of the Lord's children are disposed to regard the Heavenly Father as a Provider of bread and butter, and food, and clothes, and a Helper generally Who is to be sought in time of trouble.

Of course, He is all that, but He is more. And some members of the Bride of Christ seem to think of their divine Bridegroom as a Furnisher of supplies. And as a father may respond to the requests of his children who have no desire for his companionship, and as a husband may honour all the financial obligations of a wife who finds no pleasure in his society, so the grace of God abounds toward us; and He does hear the prayers which never rise above the low level of a child's cry for food, or a wife's desire for mere material good. But no argument is needed to prove that such prayers are not inspired by the atmosphere of the heavenly places in Christ; nor are they born of an experience of the spiritually luxurious chambers of the King.

The bride in the Song of Songs exclaims, "The king hath brought me into his chambers"; and Paul says by the Holy Spirit, "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". It is the believer's privilege to live in abiding fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Prayer is much more than petition: it is love. If we love God, we long for Him even as the hart panteth after the water-brooks. Prayer is faith. Faith is more than an element in prayer: it is prayer itself. No true believer can be absolutely prayerless. Faith is dependence upon God; and to be dependent upon Him is to pray to Him. Prayer is adoration. When we really pour out our hearts before God because He is God, we worship Him. Prayer is communion with God, the commerce of the human spirit with the Divine. Prayer therefore is less an act than an attitude; it is less an occasional exercise than a continuous experience. Prayer, in its true and full significance, is much more than a pauper's petition to a prince: it is rather a bride's communion with her beloved in his chambers; it is the resurrection joy of session in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

I.

Prayer is the response of the human soul to divine attraction. We were made for God as the rivers for the sea, and as the flowers for sunshine. True prayer is the breath of God in the soul. As vapor answers to the sun's attraction, so prayer answers the divine call: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek"; "The king hath brought me into his chambers." We pray as we respond to His constraint.

Our Lord Jesus taught His disciples that prayer is the cry of a child to its father,—"When ye pray, say, Our Father." But prayer grows from an instinctive cry of need, to an experience of parental fellowship. The infant "with no language but a cry" does really pray. We would not make prayer difficult by any elaboration of a philosophy of prayer. Let us use the language of a cry if we have no other; but let us aspire to growth in spiritual things, and desire to be something more than "an infant crying in the night". That, alas! is where we fail! We do not grow; and in nothing is our dwarfishness more apparent than in the stunted character of our prayers. We cry too long! To the growing

child there comes a time of awakening when parents become more than almoners. Crossing the ocean a few years ago, we remember to have seen a man in middle life, with his wife,—both in the full bloom of their manhood and womanhood—with two sons as tall as their father, and a daughter the image of her mother. These five were inseparable from each other; and daily walked the deck in happy fellowship, as though they cared nothing for the world without.

Nothing is more beautiful than when children awake to a realization of their parents' worth, and prefer their society to that of all others. So should we covet the privilege of residence in the King's chambers, for the sheer pleasure of being with Him. Then we should be able to say:

"That good I seek, yet not alone
The hungered heart to fill,
But as the angels nigh the throne,
Made swift to do Thy will:

"Thy will, unmingled, Lord, with mine,
That makes all service sweet,
And, charged with messages divine,
Puts wings upon my feet.

"No need to trim my taper's blaze,
No need of sun or moon;
The glories falling from Thy face
Make my unchanging noon."

But there is a still closer intimacy than that of father and child. Prayer is the answer of a maturing spirit to the love of God, the prospective bride's response to the Bridegroom's wooings. Prayer is more than a duty: if it be a privilege to answer love with love, prayer is a privilege. The path of prayer is a lovers' lane; the place of prayer is love's trysting place. The path of prayer is come to our Beloved for His sake alone? It is a higher form of prayer to seek His presence to tell Him of our gratitude for all He is, and what He has done for us, than to come only begging further mercies:

"Art Thou weary of our selfish prayers?
For ever crying, 'Help me, save me, Lord!'
We stay fenced in by petty fears and cares,
Nor hear the song outside, nor join its vast accord.

"And yet the truest praying is a psalm:
The lips that open in pure air to sing
Make entrance to the heart for health and balm,
And so life's urn is filled at heaven's all-brimming spring."

II.

Prayer is the natural employment of those who dwell in the chambers of the King. If it be really true that the King hath brought us into His chambers, when we are consciously in His presence we shall learn to converse with Him in a very natural way. Prayer is natural to the spiritually-minded. We do not mean formal prayer, nor prayer that frames its thoughts in words: we mean, rather, that "spirit with spirit can meet". The deepest communion defies expression. When the family circle is complete: father with his book, mother with her work, the daughter playing softly yonder, the other children at their lessons, and each the happier because the other is there—that is true communion. We have all heard the story—whether an apocrypha or not, we do not know—of Carlyle and Tennyson sitting an evening through in unbroken silence, one on either side of the fire; and when the evening was done and one was about to withdraw, the other said, "What a delightful evening we have had. Come and see me again." So prayer is often the silent enjoyment of the luxury of the conscious presence of God. We remember a husband saying when his wife lay

dead and we expressed our sympathy with him, that he was upheld by "a sweet consciousness of the presence of the dear Lord."

And on that Easter morning long ago, although many rumours were afloat, no one of all the disciples did really know that Christ was risen, until he or she felt His presence near. The proof of the resurrection is in our personal experience of its power; only as we sit together with Christ in the heavenly places can we be sure.

III.

Those who dwell in the King's chambers find their prayers inspired by the view of life obtained from the King's windows. We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss that we may consume it upon our own pleasures. We live on too low a level; and our desires are correspondingly mean. We pray as though we were the children of a day-labourer instead of the children of a King; we aspire to nothing nobler than a peasant's spouse could dream of; and have no ambitions worthy of a King's consort. (Swimming is learned in the water, flying in the air; and praying is learned in the presence of God. The Spirit of God is the atmosphere of prayer,—"praying in the Holy Ghost.")

When we abide in the King's chambers, we learn what to pray for. Those who dwell in the tropics do not covet costly furs; a bathing beach is an unimportant adjunct to a winter residence in northern latitudes. Our prayers indicate the spiritual latitudes and the spiritual altitudes in which we dwell. In rare moments of spiritual exaltation, desire with respect to worldly concerns diminishes almost to extinction; while the spiritual blessings in heavenly places become correspondingly attractive. We cannot carry the base covetings of this lower life up to the royal chambers on the holy mount of prayer. Such low desires are dissolved in the pure atmosphere of the heavenly places in Christ.

"Above the storms and thunder-jars
That shake the eddying air,
Away beneath the naked stars,
Rises the Mount of Prayer!

"The cumbering bars of mortal life
Here break and fall away;
And the harsh voice of human strife
Is silenced as we pray.

"And here by heaven's serener light
I see my nature true,
And all the pages, dark and bright,
Lie open to my view.

"On surface knowledge we have fed,
And missed the golden grain;
And now I come to Thee for bread
To sate the hunger-pain.

"No gift I bring, nor knowledge fine,
Nor trophies of my own;
I come to lay my heart in Thine,
O Lamb amid the throne!"

Life is never seen in its true perspective and proportion until we look from the King's windows. To one who has never had experience of these altitudes, it is impossible to explain; but those who have, even though for a short period, will remember that in the consciousness of God and of the soul's infinite relations, the things of time and sense were involuntarily subjected to a new appraisal. There is only one way for any of us to cultivate a less worldly and more spiritual view of life, and that is to live in conscious fellowship with Christ. Then the rest will naturally follow.

Prayer is never unanswered to those who dwell in the King's chambers. Unanswered prayers are letters to One Who dwells distantly from us. We wait

to hear from Him. We dare not say that such requests are not prayers; but there is a more excellent way. Prayer, in its highest exercise, is conference with the Divine,—the child talking over his desires with his father, and accepting his father's wiser plan for him; not a wife writing to her husband for a replenishment of funds, but sitting with him in his chambers, consulting with him, and learning that the resources of his wisdom and wealth exceed her most extravagant desires:

"We doubt the word that tells us, Ask
 (And ye shall have your prayer;
 We turn our thoughts as to a task
 With will constrained and rare.

"And yet we have; these scanty prayers
 Yield gold without alloy:
 O God! but he that trusts and dares
 Must have a boundless joy!"

THE PASTORS' COLLEGE.

Our announcement of this enterprise has met with a most gratifying response. We are assured there will be no dearth of students. We are now endeavouring to mature our plans so as to be able to make a public announcement. Meanwhile, we want to assure our friends that we are at work.

The Board of Governors of McMaster University have brought the Institution into such relationship to a large section of our people that under present conditions it is useless to expect united action in our educational work. We frankly say that the advent of the new Professor, the endorsement of his position by the Dean in Theology, and the attitude of the Chancellor toward the whole proceeding, make it abundantly evident that a group of men in the Denomination are determined to force upon us a moderate Modernism—and that, of course, means, ultimately, Modernism in its extreme form. Who wants a mild attack of smallpox, or of leprosy? All these things make us feel that there is nothing to do but go on with the college enterprise. We propose no big thing, but an elastic system of education which will aim to train men and women for Christian service.

One friend came forward and volunteered a contribution of \$1,000.00. We have received the following letter from Mr. Thomas Urquhart, who is a deacon of the Mount Pleasant Road Church; and has been solicitor for the Home Mission Board for more than thirty years. He has served as President of the Convention, and has lived at the heart of the Denomination and its work for years:

November 4, 1925.

"Rev. T. T. Shields, D.D.
 Jarvis Street Baptist Church,
 Toronto.

"Dear Dr. Shields:—

"I need not tell you how greatly interested I am in, and how much I appreciate the splendid work that you have done, not only in connection with Jarvis Street Baptist Church, but also in connection with your fearless and faithful preaching of the Word. I know that through your faithful preaching as well as through *The Gospel Witness* you have brought confidence and hope to many fainting hearts who were afraid of the inroads that modernism and liberalism were making. I also am satisfied that the establishment of a Bible College on the basis outlined by you will prove of great advantage in upholding and maintaining the great fundamental truths of the Gospel.

"My prayer is that God will continue to bless, strengthen and long spare you for the work you so dearly love and which you have so successfully carried on, and that He will provide ample means for the carrying out of your plans for the proposed Bible College.

"To show my interest in and appreciation of your work, I desire to

contribute the sum of \$500.00 to be used by you for your Bible College, or for such other purpose as you may deem best in connection with your work. This amount is available whenever required by you.

"Yours sincerely,
(Signed) THOS. URQUHART."

We commend Mr. Urquhart's letter to our friends throughout the Continent. We do not need a great deal of money to begin. We have buildings which are abundantly adequate for our purposes, and \$10,000.00 for the first year would see us through. When once the institution has begun, we have no fear for the future. We shall be glad to receive contributions for this work. All monies will be deposited in a separate fund; and a report of their use will, of course, be published. But we should welcome subscriptions stretching over twelve months, and payable monthly or quarterly as it may suit the donor. It is God's way to take the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.

We have not as yet approached a single person, personally, to solicit aid. We trust that many of our friends who read these words will be moved by the Spirit of God to make some contribution to the support of this work. It may be that some will feel disposed to wait until our educational ship is actually launched. We assure any such that contributions to the college will be kept in an entirely separate fund. Until we are ready to actually launch the enterprise, pledges will be just as acceptable as cash. If there are pastors who think that they could lead their churches to give \$50.00 or \$100.00 during the year— or more or less—to this important work, we should greatly appreciate their promise.

Address all communications to the Editor of this paper, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto 2, Ont., and make cheque payable to the Treasurer of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, marking it, "For Pastors' College."

VERY AMUSING.

The Canadian Baptist informs us that a resolution was passed at the Convention Thursday morning, forbidding the circulation of literature in the Convention church without the consent of the Executive Committee. Everybody knows that the literature at which this was aimed was *The Gospel Witness*. We have no doubt that certain men would forbid *The Gospel Witness* the use of the mails had they the power. Fortunately, this is a free country. We have heard much about Baptist liberty; but the spirit of McMaster University is the spirit of the Spanish Inquisition. Altogether apart from the theological aspect of the question, the Institution itself has long manifested a spirit that is as alien to the spirit of Christ as anything could possibly be. It imagines that the Denomination exists for McMaster—not McMaster for the Denomination.

It always brightens the day for us when we hear our friends insisting that they want no Baptist Pope. We would remind them that true Baptists are just as opposed to a Czar as to a Pope; and quite as opposed to a conscienceless Soviet as to either! *The Gospel Witness*, like the treasurer of Candace, having done its duty, will go on its way rejoicing. In a little while our circulation will be such that the majority of Baptists will have read *The Gospel Witness* before the Convention assembles; and we shall be most happy to find workers to assist in the distribution of *The Canadian Baptist* at Conventions—so that Baptists generally might know there is such a paper!

Come, brethren! Let us be happy together. You may not agree with us, but try to smile through your tears; keep up a good spirit. Some of you are in danger of spoiling your reputation for being nice! It is not "nice" to turn a man out of prayer meeting; and to make a general request of those assembled that all who represent a certain sister church would be good enough to leave—that really isn't "nice." That is not showing a "nice" spirit. People who act after that fashion will not be able to keep step with the new gentlemanly professor recently imported from England!

Our readers must excuse our levity. We are at war; and it will do us good to have an "Old Bill" to make us laugh. Perhaps that was the role Brother McNeill wanted to play: perhaps he was telling Brother Fraser to find a "better 'ole"! Brother Fraser's hallelujahs indicate that he found it. Let us all try to keep good natured. Otherwise, it may interfere with somebody's digestion; and there will be so many doctor bills to pay that the contributions to Christian Education will be greatly diminished!

But returning to our usual habitus in the realm of sober sense: we have spoken and written very strongly as we believe the circumstances have required. We have been criticized for our bad spirit, of which we have been quite unconscious; for we have never felt the slightest bit of bitterness toward any one of the dear brethren against whom we have had to contend. But lest we should have unwittingly erred in this respect, we have really resolved to be more careful. And now in order to carry out our resolution we find it necessary to avoid the example of our opponents. It is easy for the victor to be generous; and for that reason we propose to be generous to our opponents in the Convention. Of one thing we are certain: Modernism received its most smashing blow at the last Convention. We base that statement on the fact that the Convention constituted an X-ray examination, so that now we know where the cancer is. The next task will be to prepare the patient for the operation.

The Jarvis Street Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson XXXII.

November 8th, 1925.

DRIVEN BY DISTRESS.—Jeremiah, Chapter 21.

I. Men Invariably Think of God When They Are in Trouble.

1. A great king of superior power made war upon Zedekiah, king of Judah. Thus men may be threatened by many adversaries which come upon them like a destroying army: (a) Pecuniary loss is one. When men are stripped of what wealth they have—be it little or much, when they are overtaken by unemployment, or for other reasons suffer a reverse in fortune, in their distress they think of God. (b) Physical Disease is another king which mobilizes his army and threatens attack. (c) Sometimes men are driven to their knees by the shadow of death. 2. In such circumstances it is not unusual for men to recognize a superior Power in human life over which they have no control; and in its Presence they are disposed to "enquire" of the Lord to know on which side of the conflict that Power will side. 3. When thus pressed men pray, in the desperate hope that though they have long utterly neglected the Lord, He will yet be merciful to them. 4. At such times they are wont to seek out the despised prophet. We have known well-conditioned men who, when in desperate trouble, depended more upon the intercessions of some humble working man or woman who knew the Lord than upon any religious official. It was a testimony to Jeremiah's genuineness that Zedekiah, in his distress, sought to know the Word of the Lord at his mouth.

II. God Does Not Always Hear the Prayer of Desperation.

1. It was Jeremiah's duty to declare the Word of the Lord, no matter how unpalatable it might be. So is it every Christian's duty to deal faithfully with troubled souls. There is a disposition when one seeks our help in great distress to soften the message. Jeremiah was faithful to his trust in speaking plainly to Judah's king (v. 4). 2. The Word of the Lord will often identify our troubles as being divinely sent. Thus Jeremiah told the king of Judah that the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans were in this instance the messengers of Jehovah to chastise them for their sins. So ought we always to interrogate our troubles to find out whence they come, for it may be that God has sent them. 3. No weapons of war will avail against our enemies if God Himself is against us. What a terrible word that must have been to Zedekiah when the Lord said, "I myself will fight against you"! We are fond of quoting, "If God be for us, who can be against us"; but ought we not sometimes to enquire, If God be against us, what matters it who is for us? (vs. 4-6). 4. The Lord promises the

king of Judah a pitiless captivity (v. 7). It is important that we should show our scholars that God will not always be entreated of us, that a time may come, indeed, must come, when the door of mercy will be shut, and when no knocking will avail to open it: not for ever will the gospel be preached.

III. The Way of Life Is the Way of Death.—Verse 8.

1. In this instance, life was to be found in submission to the chastisements of God. So is it often still. We may find our salvation in trouble, and the valley of Achor (of trouble) will be the door of hope. 2. The way of life is the way of God's will. The supreme manifestation of this principle is in Him Who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This is His commandment that we should believe on His Son Whom He has sent. 3. The way of death is ever the way of self-will. Judah's king was warned that it was useless to fight against his enemies, and that if he did so it would certainly issue in his death. The wages of sin—which is another word for self-will—is death.

IV. A Special Warning to the Children of Transgressors.—Verses 11-14.

1. The house of the king was admonished to hear the Word of the Lord. We ought to profit by what we see of God's law fulfilled in others. Why should children follow their parents over the precipice? We should warn the scholars if their parents are ungodly that the children should themselves turn to the Lord. 2. Only by repentance could any escape the judgment of God. There never has been any other way. 3. There is a sense in which the punishment of sin is automatic: "I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings." What men sow, they reap inevitably.

The Jarvis Street Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson XXXIII.

November 15th, 1925.

A WARNING AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS.—Jeremiah, chapter 23.

I. There Have Ever Been False Prophets.

1. False prophets scatter the flock: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord." The true prophet warns the flock of the wolf's coming, and, like David, at all costs, keeps the Father's sheep. 2. The Good Shepherd will have pity upon His own sheep. He Himself said, "I am the good shepherd. . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep"; it is said of Him also, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." This chapter tells us of the care of the divine Shepherd for His sheep. Notwithstanding the faithlessness of their human pastors, He will not forsake them (vs. 2-4). 3. Notwithstanding, a terrible responsibility rests upon the spiritual guide (v. 2). It is a terrible offence to give wrong direction to a seeking soul in respect to the issues of the eternal future. Better that a man had never been born than that he should lead the sheep astray. 4. In His own time and way God will raise up true shepherds (v. 4). In the darkest days it is well to remember that God is never at the end of His resources: it is written of the great Head of the church, "And he gave some pastors"; and He can and will give many more, if only we pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers.

II. Christ Is the One Hope of the World.—Verses 5-8.

1. Faith may happily contemplate the righteous rule of a righteous King upon the earth (v. 5). It is right that we should do our utmost to better human society, but when men have done their best they will find that none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good: the hope of the individual, and the church, of society, and of the world at large, is in the coming of the King to sit upon David's throne. 2. There is no hope for personal salvation but in Jehovah-Tsidkenu—the Lord our righteousness. Only by a righteousness which is not our own may poor sinners hope to stand before a holy God. 3. The miracles and wonders of the past shall be out-classed by the miracles of the future. God's power in ancient time was wont to be measured by the miracle of deliverance which He wrought in bringing Israel out of Egypt; but when at His com-

ing the Lord shall bring His ransomed people out of the north country and from all countries whither they have been driven, to dwell in their own land—in comparison with that wonder, the miracle of Egypt will fade into insignificance. 5. But all this shall be accomplished on the basis of the one supreme achievement—"According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." The resurrection of Christ is the pledge of our individual resurrection, of the resurrection of the just and of the unjust.

III. The Chief Cause of National and Social Declension is Here Indicated.

This is false teaching respecting man's responsibility to God. When sin is established in the house of God, what may be expected elsewhere? God charges that Israel's and Judah's sin is due to the false witness of the false prophets (vs. 9-14). 2. Some of the characteristics of this false teaching are mentioned: (a) they make men vain by flattery (v. 16); they substitute human wisdom for the divine Word (vs. 16, 17); (c) they promised peace without repentance (v. 17); (d) they run without being sent (v. 21). 3. A terrible judgment is here promised for such false teaching (vs. 15, 19, 20). 4. In contrast we have some of the characteristics of the true prophet set forth: (a) the true prophet stands in the divine counsel, and finds his supreme authority in God's Word; (b) gives the people the unadulterated Word of God, and turns them from their evil ways. 5. The folly of evading the truth of God (vs. 23-25). Here are set forth: (a) His omnipresence, (b) His omniscience. 6. The superiority of the divine Word is here declared (vs. 26-32). It is charged against the prophets that they "caused my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness". One of the chief characteristics of the modernists is that they do not take their religion seriously: they are always characterized by lightness; the truth, apparently, has never laid hold of them to the extent of becoming a conviction; they have only opinions which they can change as they change their clothes; they are unable to understand people whose religious convictions are dearer than life. The verses named under this section will yield much to those who study them. The prophet is bidden to tell his dream for what it is,—only a dream; but if he has God's Word to speak it faithfully: "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord." Human wisdom, human knowledge, human imagination—these are only the chaff. In the metaphors which follow there is much of teaching, where the Word of God is likened to a fire, and to a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. Fire purges, fire destroys. The natural man is said to have a heart of stone: the hammer of the Word can break it.

IV. The Debasement of Holy Words.

The message of the true prophet is ever a burden. It ought to be a burden (v. 33). 2. The people are themselves described as a burden, for that is the meaning of verse 33—a burden of which God proposes in judgment to relieve Himself. 3. The abandonment of debased words—as of debased currency—is enjoined in verses 25 to 40. The true prophets are directed really to provide themselves with a new vocabulary. What a lesson we have here for our time! There is scarcely a term of Evangelical Christianity which Modernism has not debased: inspiration, the vicarious death of Christ, the atonement, the new birth, the resurrection,—all these mean one thing in the mouth of the fundamentalist, and something vastly different in the mouth of a modernist. And when thus the enemy steals our terminology, we must find new words, according to the teaching of this lesson.

THE PASTOR ON THE WING AGAIN.

Dr. Shields will leave Monday evening, November 9th, for Chicago where he is scheduled to speak on the 10th and 11th. He will be joined in Chicago by Mr. W. J. Hutchinson, and together they will go to Lexington, Ky., to conduct an evangelistic mission in the First Baptist Church, of which Dr. George Ragland is the pastor, November 15th to 30th.