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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

SALVATION MADE SIMPLE.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, April 3rd, 1927.
(Stenographically Reported.)

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage."—II Kings 5:11, 12.



THIS is the story of a man who was made angry by the preacher's sermon. The preacher could not have been like some modern preachers—apparently he made no special effort to please his congregation. This particular man was a very important man—but he had to receive the simple message just like ordinary folks; and he was not accustomed in his regular walk of life to be treated with such little deference. Consequently he was very angry, and went away "in a rage."

It is still true that people are sometimes displeased with the sermon. I do not know of any business that requires such little knowledge, such little skill, such little expertness in general, in order to its effective exercise, as the business of finding fault with preachers—any one in the world can do it.

This is an old story of a very famous man, a military leader, a man of prominence in his own country, a man of great influence with the government of the day; for he was a "great man with his master," a man of distinguished ability, a man who had delivered Syria again and again from her enemies. But in spite of it all he was a leper, and needed cleansing. It is about God's way of cleansing the leper I shall speak this morning, because there is a very complete analogy here to the conditions upon which God, in our day, is pleased to cleanse men from their sins.

I.

To begin with, then, THIS MAN NEEDED NOT TO BE PERSUADED OF HIS NEED OF HEALING: it was not necessary to take him to a physician to discover what was the matter with him; no argument was necessary to prove that he was in ill health. In spite of all his greatness, he was a leper—and he knew it. I shall not speak so particularly this morning to those who do not know they are sinners, as to those who know they are. I shall not argue to prove that you need salvation, I shall assume there are some here this morning who are fully

aware of that fact. My great endeavour will be to show you how you may be saved.

This man knew he was a leper, a leper *in spite of his great ability*; he was a mighty man of valour; he was distinguished in the profession of arms; he was a great soldier; he was a faithful servant of the state; he had wrought valiantly for his master and for his fellow-citizens. He was not a man whose life had been idly or aimlessly lived; he had lived fruitfully and beneficially, occupying a large place in the nation's life—all that, notwithstanding his secret disease which was sapping the very fountains of life.

Now the fact that a man is a sinner does not keep him away from his office, it does not prevent this rendering a certain kind of service to the community. When the Bible tells us that we are sinners, it does not mean that we are necessarily altogether useless to our day and generation. It may be that there are many here this morning who have got that of which they may, on the natural plane at least, legitimately be proud. They have many accomplishments to their credit; they have wrought heroically in the battle of life. Many a man I have talked with who has been fond of reviewing his record, and telling of his early struggles, and how everything was against him in the beginning, how he overcame great obstacles, how he fought his way through to recognition in certain departments of life, and how at last he won some measure of success.

Well, that is all to the good—and there is no necessity of discounting the natural powers which men possess and exercise. But in spite of all that, there is another side to life, and there are many men who, knowing all these things which I have just suggested, are equally aware that these great advantages are discounted, and neutralized, and altogether nullified, by the fact that there is an enemy within over which they have no power. There may be a fretting leprosy against which all human effort is directed in vain; and while outwardly the man is winning his way, he is being defeated at the very centre and heart of things; and he knows that in spite of these worldly achievements he is going down instead of up. There is a moral quality in his nature over which he has no control, his motives are not pure, his aims are not the noblest, he has failed utterly to live unselfishly, altruistically, he has lived for himself; and all that he has accomplished has been wrought for one end. In his saner moments he knows that he has been defeated by the "strong man armed" who "keepeth his palace." In spite of his apparent success, he is a sinner. Do you know that?

Then here is a man of distinguished rank, *a man of prominence in society*. I am well aware that sin, in some of its aspects, in some of its grosser manifestations, causes a man to lose caste even among his fellows, and will drag him down from any sort of prominence into the gutter. But when the Bible speaks of sin, it does not speak only of those more flagrant manifestations of moral evil. I do not suppose everyone knew that Naaman was a leper! His splendid robes, his exalted position, his great achievements, all combined perhaps to conceal the trouble of his life from the ordinary observer. But it was a disease of the blood, it was a thing that was in him that he could not shake off; albeit he attained to a position of honour among the world of men. He "was a great man with his master, and honourable," he was one of the famous men of Syria to whom men bowed in honour, and in recognition of his greatness when he passed by. Notwithstanding it all, there was that terrible malady against which he had no power, that was spoiling all the pleasures of life; there were bitter dregs in the cup; there was a worm at the heart of all his pleasant fruit; there was always a thorn in his pillow; there was always a haunting fear at his heart that some day the enemy that refused to bow to his superior strength would get the mastery of him, and that hard on his heels the grim monster, Death himself, would come.

Oh, that is a picture! "The rich man died, and was buried"—and was buried, I suppose, with great pomp, and with multiplied recognitions of his earthly greatness. What sins are committed by preachers at funerals! What fearful exaggerations and hypocrisies often characterize the obsequies of men who are marked among their fellows as men of greatness and of rank! It may be, my friends, that in the circle which you move—I suppose there are no famous people here—famous in the world's estimation, most of us live in a very little world—and in that little circle of which you are the centre, you may be proud of what you have done, and the position to which you have attained. And yet here is this terrible thing, that in spite of all your resolutions, in spite

of all your most earnest endeavor, the disease is still making progress; and as you turn your thoughts upon your heart and conscience, you have to admit that the world has a firmer grip upon you that it used to have, that your eyes are less keenly observant of the true values of life. Instead of going up, you are really going down, you are losing the greatest of all battles in spite of the applause of the world to which you belong.

Ah yes, this man knew at last that *he was afflicted with an incurable malady*. There were physicians in Syria, perhaps, but there was no remedy for his disease, there was no antitoxin, there was nothing that could be injected into that fevered frame that would check the spread of that poison. He was being inwardly eaten up by a disease whose progress he could not check. So is it with sin. You know how difficult it is to persuade men that any disease is incurable. And most sinners know that they are indisposed, they know that something is wrong—but they sometimes do not know what is wrong. Yet when a man is really convicted of sin, and when he has had experience in the battle, and has been defeated a thousand times at least, at last he reaches the conclusion which Naaman had reached, that for this thing there was no cure. "The wages of sin is death." There is no human cure for this fell malady.

II.

NAAMAN HEARD OF A REMEDY TO BE HAD IN A FAR COUNTRY, not in his own country; but he heard of one who was a healer, and *he heard through a little servant girl*, a little captive who waited upon his wife; and that little child had been in her own country of the great prophet Elisha, and of the marvellous divine power which accompanied his ministry. She had heard of his working wonders in the name of the Lord, and although she was a captive in her master's house, although by force she had been taken away from home and kindred, yet her youthful heart was moved with sympathy toward her master, and in the privacy of the home she heard her mistress talk, and she heard the other servants talk about the terrible disease that had laid hold upon the great man of the house. I have little doubt that she had heard something of the family counsel, she may have heard how one hope after another was dashed to the ground, and it may be that some day, finding her mistress in tears, and knowing the occasion of her sorrow, that her husband was soon to be taken from her side, that little child, with beautiful simplicity, said, "Oh, I wish my master were in Samaria that he might go to the great prophet, and be recovered of his leprosy!"

Was that not a simple story? Why, you little girls can tell that story, you girls of the Junior Department—and even of the Primary Department—you can say to father, "Father, if you would only come to the Lord Jesus, He would help you."

Dr. A. C. Dixon told me a story years ago about one whom I have always considered it one of the greatest honours of life to be privileged to call friend, the great Russell H. Conwell, not long since gone home to glory. One morning Dr. Conwell came before his congregation after a hard week—for when I knew him first he was lecturing two hundred and ten nights a year in addition to his church and college work, travelling all the time, giving the proceeds of his lectures for the education of poor students—and he came home very, very tired on this occasion and dragged himself into the pulpit Sunday morning—he had just come off the train after travelling all night. He preached as well as he could, but knew he had not preached well, and was feeling rather glum about it himself. As he stepped down from the pulpit he heard a member of his congregation say to another, "Well, not much to eat this morning, was there?" They did not know that the pastor heard, but Dr. Conwell said to himself, "Well, that is true, there was not." A little while later he heard someone else say, "I feel as though I had been feeding on wind, I did not get a thing, the Doctor was down this morning, he had not much to say." When the people had dispersed, Dr. Conwell went quietly to his vestry, and afterward to the Sunday School—he was a musician, and he played the organ. That day the superintendent said, "Pastor, will you come and speak to the Primary class this afternoon?" He said, "Yes, I shall be delighted. I ought to have stayed in the Primary Department, that is about all I am good for. I feel as if I would like to teach a Primary class this afternoon." So he went into the class, and told the boys and girls the story of Jesus and His love. And then he said,

"I want you to promise me something. I will be here next Sunday afternoon, to talk to you again; and when you go home to-day, and when you are seated at the table—I want every one of you to turn to your father and say, 'Daddy, are you a Christian?' Then listen for his answer, and if he says, 'No,' then you say to him, 'Well, please, Daddy, why are you not a Christian?' and carefully listen for his answer. Remember his answer, and come back and tell me next Sunday afternoon what your father said." Dr. Dixon gave one example of the result. There was a little girl seated at tea that Sunday afternoon who did exactly what Dr. Conwell had asked her to do. She said, "Daddy, are you a Christian?" "A what?" he said—he was a druggist—"Are you a Christian?" "Why, no," he said, "how dare you ask me that question?" She said, "I am sorry, but Dr. Conwell told me this afternoon, that I was to go home and ask you that question." "Well," he said, "I will not have him teaching you to ask such impertinent questions of your father, it is none of his business." "I am sorry, Daddy," she said, "I will tell him, because he said I was to tell him next Sunday what you said." "Oh," he said, "you must not do that. I have great respect for Dr. Conwell. I will tell you why I am not a Christian before next Sunday, there is plenty of time; but you must not tell Dr. Conwell what I have said. Perhaps I spoke rather harshly and hastily." "So," said Dr. Dixon, "all the week long that man was kept busy trying to find an answer to his little girl's question,—but he could find no answer." And Dr. Dixon told me that as a result of that one afternoon in the Primary class, Dr. Conwell baptized forty fathers who had been led to Christ by the questions of their little children.

Oh, this little Israelitish maid had not been to a theological seminary—if she had, she would probably have been ruined. She still knew how to tell a story simply so that people could understand it; and with the frankness and simplicity of a child she said to her mistress, "If my master were in Samaria, and would go and see the prophet, he would be all right, he would be healed."

And that is all you need to do: tell people that if only they come just as they are to Jesus Christ they will be healed. I wonder how many of you boys and girls will do that for me? I wonder how many of you will go home, and at dinner to-day will ask that question of your fathers? Will you say to him, "Father, are you a Christian?" And if he says, "No", will you say, "Why are you not a Christian?" How many of you will do that, put up your hands? How many of you boys will ask your fathers that, put up your hands? Are the rest of you afraid to do it? Well, I will not ask the girls to put up their hands, but I see a little girl putting hers up without being asked. Why should we not all do it? Why should we not put that question to everyone in the house—Are you a Christian? And if they say no, ask them, Why are you not a Christian? and pray that God may bless the question. That is how this great man heard about the way of healing,—not through a great prophet, but through a little girl who simply bore her testimony for the Lord.

Then he came with his horses and his chariots—I suppose all the servants were engaged to get him ready for the journey. And he took a great many presents with him, made most elaborate preparation; and before he went, he went to see the king, his master. And do you know what the king did? The king gave him a letter, not to the prophet, but to the king of Israel. *Do you see how the king of Syria spoiled the little maid's message?* The little girl had sense enough to know it was not the king, it was the prophet; but when the king of Syria heard about it he said, "Oh well, if the prophet is a great man, the king will be much greater." There always have been people who think that governments have something to do with religion! And so the king gave him a letter, and on he went with his letter, not to the prophet as the little maid had said, he did not go to the prophet, he went to the king. And when the king of Israel read the letter, he was full of alarm. "Why," he said, "this man is seeking mischief against us, he has actually sent a leper to me to recover him of his leprosy; he knows I have no power to do that"—and the king of Israel was afraid when Naaman came.

But when the prophet heard of it, he said, "Send him to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." And so the great man came. And do you know, *that is just a picture of a great many people coming to church?* Listen: "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at

the door of the house of Elisha." Did you ever see people go to church like that? Did you ever see them walking down the aisle, as much as to say, "Everyone knows that I have come"! And often some very humble people nudge others and say, "There is a great man." "Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha."

I suppose that would be enough to turn the head of a modern preacher, would it not? A great man like Naaman calling on him! And they came in and told Elisha that he was there—and Elisha went on with his work! He said, "Go and tell him to wash in Jordan seven times, good-bye"—and he went on with his work. That is the proper way to treat these "big" men when we speak in the name of the Lord. But I suppose it is not surprising that Naaman should have been angry, because he was a great man. Now listen: he was a leper, he knew it, he had heard there was a healer in Israel, he came to him, he wanted to be healed, he wanted to be healed more than he wanted anything else in life, it was the supreme desire of his heart that he should get rid of this leprosy—and the servant of God told him how to get rid of it; he said, "Go down there to that little stream, Jordan, and simply dip yourself in it seven times, and the seventh time when you come up you shall be whole." And Naaman said, "I certainly want to be healed—but not that way."

And there are many people like that. There are men and women here this morning, who know they are sinners, and who really have a desire for salvation; but you have your own preconceived notions as to how you are going to be saved,—and it is just because you want to dictate to God that you are not saved. *There is an intellectual pride which stands in the way.* "Behold, I thought," said Naaman, "I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper—and everyone will know what has happened when he pays me that deference, that distinction. Instead of that the prophet said, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." And Naaman was angry.

There is nothing, I suppose, that flatters men more than to be told they are "thinking" men, to be told, "You do not need to hear the gospel nowadays because you can do your own thinking." These modernist parrots—for that is what they are—who have not one new thing to say, nor a new idea in their heads—and if they had a new idea they would not have any place to put it in many cases—parrotting out what has been said ten thousand times, do no thinking at all. They talk about those who listen to the Word of God as having minds that are "static", they assume we are mentally stagnant. I heard a man in Ottawa last week who was perfectly furious—I do not know whether he was complimentary or insulting, perhaps a little bit of both—he said, "Why, by sheer force of personality you have impressed a lot of very weak people to follow you." Now you know, you Jarvis Street people, what your measure is! Anyone who believes the Word of God is supposed to be weak nowadays. I wish some of these theological midgets would go back and read something, they would discover that they have not yet learned the alphabet of correct thinking—and they are not men to begin with, half of them.

But this is the attitude, "Behold, I thought"! Very well, Naaman, you have been doing a lot of thinking for a long time, but *by your own wisdom you have found no way of healing.* Do you believe salvation is to come by the way of your "thinking"? What did you come here for? You can think in Syria just as well as in Samaria! My friends, let me be severe with you if that is your mental attitude. You say, "I have read a great deal." Very well, what have you accomplished by your reading? Has it touched your leprosy? "Well but, I have my own idea of things"—and what have your ideas done for you? Have they saved you from your sin? "But I believe we ought to keep up-to-date in this matter"—and does your up-to-dateness stop the progress of your leprosy? "Behold, I thought"—and you can keep on thinking your thoughts, and go to hell! The only kind of thinking that is safe is to think God's thoughts and after Him, and listen to what He has to say.

"Behold, I thought." A great many people want a religion that will minister to their own pride. Naaman said, "I want to get rid of my leprosy, but it has got to be in such a way as is befitting Naaman, captain of the hosts of the king of Syria"! I remember some gentleman professing conversion when Dr.

Chapman was here a good many years ago. I was not at all surprised at what followed in later years, but what I want to relate to you is that I was dealing with someone who was really seeking Christ; and this very important man came up and said, "Will you let me speak to him a moment?" I said, "Yes, if you desire to, Mr. So-and-So." And he said, "I am a business man, I occupy a position of prominence in the city; and if I, a business man, can accept Christ, why can't you?" I pulled him by the arm and said, "Just step aside, will you?"—"Behold, I thought," he said in effect, "that I paid the Lord God a great compliment because I am a big business man"! I wonder what the Lord thinks of what men call "big" business? With all your business skill, I wonder if you have any scales in your store that can weigh the mountains? He does "big" business; and let me tell you that it is no compliment to Him if you should come to Him; and there is no salvation for a man who demands that God shall stoop to his pride.

And that is the reason some people are not saved—"I thought." Well, if you are going on that line you will not get very far, because, you see, this has to do with something that all human thinking has not helped. I challenge anyone, I don't care who he is, to show me one cure for that thing which the Bible calls sin, and which is manifestly present in human life. I challenge you to show me one single instance where that has been touched by any human power. All your thinking has failed, my friends, and when you get to the end of your thinking, will you allow God to think for you on that matter? "Oh but", you say, "that would be stultifying my intellect"—would it? Would it? When you get on a railway train, who does the thinking? It is the engineer, is it not? If you have a case at law, why do you employ a lawyer? Because he is supposed to be expert in a business about which you know nothing, and you let him do your thinking. Some great engineering problem—why, you might have money to build a bridge, or something of that sort, and you know what you want, but you cannot do it. "Behold, I thought"—but nobody wants to go over your bridge, and so you put your case in the hands of experts and say, "You know more about it than I do, build that bridge for me." Or when a man is ill, he goes to a doctor. He may be a very distinguished man, he may be president of a great university, he may be head and shoulders above the average man, but on this matter he goes to a doctor and says, "Doctor, what is the matter with me?" And the doctor tells him—the doctor does his "thinking" for him. And if he is a wise man he accepts the result of the expert's thinking, and does as he is told.

Is it belittling to a man to bow before Almighty God and say, "I have no thoughts on this matter, I am weary of thinking, I am beaten, I am defeated—graciously think a way out for me"? God replies in effect: "I will do your thinking, now do as I tell you." There is no greater glory that can come to a man, than comes by the submission of his intellect to the Word of Almighty God.

Naaman was full, *not only of pride but of prejudice*. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? If it is a matter of washing, then I will wash at home! Abana and Pharpar are just as good as the waters of Jordan." Some man here this morning may say, "The preacher said something a moment ago which rather hit me—but of course it would never do for me to be converted in Jarvis Street Church! The fact is, I am not a Baptist; and is it not true that I can find salvation in some other church just as well as I can here?" No, it is not; you will not find salvation in any church, that is the point. "But the waters of Abana and Pharpar are just as good as the waters of Jordan, are they not?" None of them are any good, there is salvation in no waters. God, in His sovereign mercy, chose to select the waters of Jordan—but I do not suppose there were any more healing properties in the waters of Jordan than in Abana and Pharpar; but there is complete healing in the submission of the whole man to God, that is where the healing comes.

"So he turned and went away in a rage." I would rather have you saved this morning—but if you must go away in a rage, may you come back a little wiser.

It is the old story, you know: *this man was willing to pay*. And, by the

way, he had his chariot full of treasures; and I venture to say that if I were in a position to say to you this morning, You can have salvation at a price, if I could offer you salvation at the price of a thousand dollars, you would go and mortgage your house to pay it! You see people going to a Roman Catholic church at six o'clock in the morning, or seven o'clock, and they pay their money for saying prayers for the dead,—and it is a very popular religion, because people are taught that they can buy salvation. But to receive it as a gift, that is another matter.

But the servant said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean—*Why stumble at the simplicity of the thing? Why not humble your pride? You love to do a great thing, but the prophet directs you to do a little thing. Now will you not do it?*" And he came back! *Do you see whom the Lord uses? A little girl, and then the servant who was with him.* "Then he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God." I suppose he came up the first time just as much a leper as ever—and the second time—and the third time—and the fourth time—and the fifth—and the sixth. And did he dare to say, "Is it of any use? There is no change",—until he submerged himself the seventh time, and as he came out of the water "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

What was there in that? Why did he do it? First of all, *he humbled himself to do it*—and we have got to humble ourselves to be saved. There is no room for pride in the presence of God. What was another element in his act? *Faith.* It was because he believed it was worth while, he believed the thing would happen that he wanted to happen. What was the third element? *Obedience.* He did as he was told to do, and he was made whole. That is the way of salvation, just to humble ourselves, to believe what the greater Prophet than Elisha has said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." And then he obeyed. "But", you say, "I do not understand it"—you never will until you believe and obey; but as you trust Him, and do as you are commanded, the thing will take place.

And then he came with all his presents, he wanted to pay for his salvation still; but the prophet refused to receive them.

III.

And there is just one point before I close—I am sorry it is here, I am sorry that men do that sort of thing, but they do. *Naaman might have been a mighty power for good; but after his perfect healing, he said to the prophet, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing—of course I shall not believe in Rimmon any more, it is just an idol, it is nothing to me, there is only one true God—but when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, I shall go in as his servant, and when he bows I will bow myself in the house of Rimmon too. May I be forgiven if I do not give my testimony, if I go back as a secret disciple of Jehovah?"* I think there was perhaps a touch of irony in what Elisha said, he replied, "Go in peace." I rather think he meant, "If you can, if you can find peace that way."

"So he departed from him a little way." Perhaps somebody will come to me at the close of this service and say, "Well, I always love to hear the old gospel when it is put in the simplest fashion, and I am with you."—and do you know what he will do to-night? He will bow in the house of Rimmon just the same! "Oh", you say, "I am a fundamentalist of the fundamentalists. I believe in the whole gospel"—and then you will go and join an organization that is existing to destroy the faith of Christ. What right have you in the house of Rimmon? Rimmon is no god. Let the God who heals you, and saves you, have your full allegiance, be out-and-out for Him; if you are really saved, let all the world know it. Do not allow yourself to be put to shame by the little Israelitish maid in the house of her mistress in Syria. When nobody believed in God she stood out and gave her testimony. And if our battle for the faith is being lost anywhere to-day, it is being lost by the Naamans who still bow in the house of

Rimmon instead of carrying back a blazing evangel, and saying, "I will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. I will stand for the faith of Christ."

Are you saved? Are you glad of it? Are you grateful for it? Will you let the whole world know it? And if you are not saved, will you just dip yourself in Jordan seven times, which, being interpreted, means, Will you take God's way of salvation, and receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and rest with gladness upon the promise of God Who cannot die.

I think we will have our usual hymn this morning—it fits the subject particularly well:

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

A friend of mine told me only this week that he went to a church in Los Angeles and heard a minister preach. He said to himself, "It is mostly true, but there is something wrong. What is it? It does not grip me somehow." For the closing hymn the minister announced this hymn, "Just as I am." You know the first verse,

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me"—

the minister announced this hymn and said, "We shall begin at the second verse", and my friend said, "Now I know what I missed, there was no blood"—the waters of Abana and Phampar rather than Jordan; man's way instead of God's way.

Let us take God's way this morning. And if you are trusting Him, if He is really yours, if you do now trust Him, come out and boldly acknowledge your faith in Christ.

Editorial

WHAT WILL BE DONE AT THE ASSOCIATIONS?

In our last issue under the heading, "What Should Be Done At The Associations?", we said that every Board of the Convention would be represented at the Associations, and that "every Board representative will speak in support of the Bill—the fact is, they will not represent Home and Foreign Missions, Education, and so on: they will go to the associations for one particular purpose, and that will be to use their influence to secure the Associations' consent to the Bill. Of course, some of the brethren will deny that they have any such purpose—and they may not all discuss the matter publicly—but in a delegation of a hundred people or less, it is comparatively easy for three or four representatives to canvass the delegates individually, just as the Private Bill's Committee was lobbied, so that before there is any public discussion of the question, the whole case will be prejudiced."

Since writing the above we have received a copy of the programme of the Western Association, on the last page of which we find the following:

"Who's Who—Our Guests and Speakers.

Dr. J. Austin Huntley is the Pastor of the James Street Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ontario; Rev. R. C. Bensen is one of our great Missionary leaders in India, now home on furlough; Dr. George T. Webb is the Superintendent of the Sunday School Board; Professor N. H. Parker occupies the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis in McMaster University, Toronto; Miss Ernestine Whiteside is the Principal of Moulton College, Toronto; Mrs. Klochkoff is the wife of Rev. Boris Klochkoff, Pastor of the Russian Baptist Church, Toronto; Rev. L. F. Kipp is the Editor and Manager of *The Canadian Baptist*; Mrs. E. J. Zavitz is the President of the Women's Baptist Home Missionary Society of Ontario West; Dr. C. C. McLaurin was for many years Superintendent of Missions in Alberta; W. C. Senior is the Secretary of the Convention Plan of Finance; Carl V. Farmer is the Secretary of the

Convention Social Service Board; Eugene A. Therrien is the Field Representative of Grande Ligne Mission, Quebec.

Who says *The Gospel Witness* is not a true prophet? Here are no less than twelve speakers brought in from the outside to speak at the Western Association! Can anyone have any doubt as to the purpose of their going? It is very probable that other Associations are similarly packed. We wonder who will be the leader of the attacking party? We have been in the Convention a number of years, and have never seen an Association programme like that of the Western. We should be glad to hear from any who have ever heard of twelve special speakers being imported for an Association meeting before! We promise to publish the name of the writer.

A Suggested Resolution.

Last week we printed a resolution which had been passed at a Toronto protest meeting, and suggested that this resolution might be made a model for other Associations. Since that time we have given some thought to the matter, and we believe the resolution proposed last week might be improved upon. All that is necessary to secure at the Associations is a pronouncement for or against the Bill; we therefore suggest the following:

RESOLVED that we are of the opinion that the best interests of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec will be served by voting down the proposed Amendment embodied in the Bill which has recently passed Parliament, when it is submitted to the Convention for approval next October.

Such a resolution as this would confine the discussion to the principle of the Bill, and give every delegate an opportunity to vote on the one question, Shall the Bill be approved or rejected?

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.

It is very interesting to read the various opinions of the Southern Baptist Convention recently held in Louisville, Ky. The Southern Baptists are a great people, and undoubtedly are overwhelmingly orthodox. Here and there, we fear, there are some who are strongly tainted with Modernism, but the people and the ministry, in the main, are sound.

The Baptist Bible Union has held three pre-Convention meetings in the South, at which it has endeavoured to give its testimony against Modernism everywhere; and any little ripple upon the surface of the Convention's peace was charged to the account of the Baptist Bible Union. This year no meeting of the Baptist Bible Union was held in the South. The Southern Convention made a clear pronouncement in opposition to evolution last year, in which all lovers of the truth and of our Baptist work rejoiced. And that pronouncement came from the lips of the President, Dr. George McDaniel. There was no mistaking its meaning; and when it was adopted by the Convention it cleared the air in the Southern Convention as nothing else could have done.

But this year Dr. McDaniel went further. We wish we had space to print his entire address, which was not very long. Dr. McDaniel spoke on three things: Confidence, Courage and Co-operation. Under the first head Dr. McDaniel spoke as follows:

As your servant my heart's desire has been to restore and increase confidence,—confidence in our loyalty to the New Testament, and in the unity of our faith in the essentials; confidence in the magnitude and merit of the objects fostered by Southern Baptists; confidence in the autonomy, integrity and mission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Confidence is the basis of all successful partnerships, whether commercial, domestic or spiritual. Destroy or disturb confidence and you dissolve a business partnership, loosen the marriage bonds and shake the pillars of the denominational structure. Strengthen confidence and a failing business stops the leaks and losses and shows a profit instead of a deficit, a discordant home resounds with the joy of mutual love and a divided and defeated denomination becomes harmonious, cohesive and victorious.

If the Convention will strengthen the stakes of confidence, it will surely

enlarge the place of its tent. We have but one authoritative guide in faith,—the New Testament, to which the hearts of our people beat true. We are more nearly one in doctrine than any religious group of similar size. We might wisely emphasize our agreements. Blessed be God that individual freedom has voiced common agreement once and again through the Southern Baptist Convention! Therefore, leaving the principles of the Doctrines of Christ, on which we have remarkable unanimity, let us go on with the practical tasks of the Convention, not reviving discussion upon questions already settled as far as they be settled among a free people.

Speaking on courage, Dr. McDaniel said in part:

To attain such a desirable end calls for courage. Following the lines of least resistance, seeking to please everybody, repeating methods demonstrated to be impracticable, will be ineffectual. A part of the people will remain loyal and support every movement of the Convention. They constitute the "Old Guard".

Many, however, will stand aloof or render half-hearted support. They are our brethren. They love the Saviour, they hold the faith once delivered unto the saints, but they are not as intimately affiliated with the present plans of the Convention as could be wished and are not in hearty accord with past plans. They are grave concern. They constitute the difference between the present and the possible power of the United Budget. By reducing the number of objects to those unmistakably Southwide, and by stating the appeals simply and clearly, the receipts will be substantially increased.

Courage is requisite to this achievement. Experience may either discourage or hearten. In either event it is an expensive teacher. May the costly lessons of the past seven years, very disheartening to many, teach us wisdom and impel us bravely, but fraternally, to do our duty! You are here as messengers of the churches to transact the business of the Convention in the fear of the Lord and in the interest of the Kingdom of God. One motive only should prompt—the love of Christ; one spirit alone should prevail,—the Holy Spirit. Personalities dwindle into insignificance in the presence of stupendous issues. Special pleadings and special interests melt away in the white light of a dominant Kingdom purpose. Our sensitiveness ought to be crucified when we stand beside the cross on which the Prince of Glory died.

For this Convention to adopt the course suggested may wound beloved brethren. Time will heal the wounds, reluctantly inflicted, and vindicate your action. The Convention will regain prestige and Home and Foreign Missions, theological education and ministerial relief will receive adequate support. The responsibility for other proper objects will rest where it belongs. In the end they will fare better. The present regime cripples all and enhances none.

But the most striking part of his address was in the last four paragraphs in which he spoke of co-operation. He said:

Heroic measures must be adopted to avoid bankruptcy. I suggest the following: sell all property not actually in use for religious purposes, or immediately essential to the work of the agency having it, and apply the proceeds upon the debts of the respective agencies. Budget every agency of the Convention and forbid expenditures beyond that budget. Reduce the salaries of officials that they may share the curtailments already made in the appropriations of the Boards and thereby have closer fellowship with the missionaries and those pastors who live on small or moderate salaries. Conduct and complete by December 11th an every member canvass with the goal of a tithe as the minimum of a Christian's contribution. Supplement this canvass by a generous cash offering during the holidays to pay the debts of the Home and Foreign Boards.

Ask the states to launch no new enterprises until our financial condition is improved. Ask the churches not to permit building enterprises to curtail receipts from those churches to denominational objects. Ask the pastors and all denominational employees in the states to bind themselves to contribute every dollar they receive from salaries or otherwise, above their present contributions and necessary living expenses, to defray the

indebtedness on our mission Boards. Such a program, with the pastors setting the example, will succeed.

A wave of enthusiasm and sacrifice will roll over Southern Baptists. Laymen will contribute their income and draw on their capital for such an appealing cause. Women will surpass all others in their liberality as they break many an alabaster box of precious ointment. The heaviest burden will be lifted and others can be lifted later.

Brethren, loving our Lord supremely and Southern Baptists as ourselves let us get together, stand together, work together, sacrifice together and join, not in voice only, but in heart and purpose, in singing:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till Moons shall wax and wane no more."

"The Baptist Record" on the Convention.

It is interesting to note some of the comments made upon this Convention. *The Baptist Record*, of Jackson, Miss., has the following to say:

The reactionaries and destructionists, led by Dr. Geo. W. McDaniel and encouraged by some things in the report of the Crouch committee, showed great strength, but utterly failed to stampede the Convention. We thank God for the steadiness of the Southern Baptist Convention.

So far as we remember, nearly all the disturbances were raised by brethren from the eastern part of our territory—and we had supposed that disturbances arose only in the West.

Thus it comes to pass that even a President of the Southern Convention, honoured by his brethren by election to their highest office for several years, because he has the courage to insist upon reform, is classed as a leader of "reactionaries and destructionists".

Dr. L. R. Scarborough on the Convention.

Brother Scarborough is one of the psychological puzzles of the ministry. When he attended the Ontario and Quebec Convention last year he delivered a series of splendid addresses that were as sound as they could be. He sat through the long Educational discussion, from the morning of one day to the early morning of the next. When asked whether Professor Marshall's view of man's natural depravity would be accepted in the South, he returned an emphatic negative saying, "In the South we go all the way." When asked further whether Professor Marshall's view of the Atonement would be accepted by Southern Baptists, his negative was equally emphatic, adding on this occasion, "What Dr. Shields read from Spurgeon represents the Southern view." Notwithstanding that, he went to the Southern Theological Seminary on his way back, and delivered an address which was the opposite of the testimony given above. He spoke in a similar fashion in an article in *The Standard*, of Dallas. Brother Scarborough's orthodoxy is a full sixteen ounces to the pound intellectually, but he is a strange mixture of principle and policy.

The Fundamentalist of Fort Worth quotes him as follows:

Dr. L. R. Scarborough Bitter and Resentful Over Southern Baptist Convention.

In this week's *Baptist Standard*, Dr. Scarborough says, "The Convention was not a very good Convention." He uses such terms as "the shadow of pessimism"—"the spirit of destruction"—in going after Dr. McDaniel he calls him "the iconoclast"—the Convention was panicky over our debts.

The following is taken from Dr. Scarborough's article in *The Standard*:

"The mind of the Convention was different from Houston and Memphis Conventions. One and two years ago we were mad over doctrinal differences. None of that appeared at Louisville. This year we were sad over our financial failures. This cast the shadow of pessimism over everything. There was consequently a spirit of destruction. It expressed itself in changing machinery and an effort to destroy certain causes. When the effort to change machinery succeeded and the effort to destroy certain causes failed, the spirit of the Convention steadily improved, and at the close got good.

"Dr. McDaniel in his retiring address proposed a panacea for all our ills. Mr. Eugene Levering proposed a committee and resolutions by which this panacea was to be applied. The method they used in getting this sinecure by the Convention was not the best in a democratic body. Its spirit was pessimistic and destructive. The proposal failed, and rightly so. The surgeon's knife in radical diseases is often curative and constructive, but the careless use of an ax is often a poor method of construction. Confidence cannot be permanently restored in a great democracy by the slashing method of the iconoclast.

"The effort to destroy the Education Board, if it had succeeded, would have cast a dark shadow over education among Southern Baptists. The abolishment of this board is not the solution of this difficulty. The main criticism of the board is its debts.

"The Convention was panicky over our debts. I never saw such pessimism in one big Convention of big people in my life. Our debts are too large; but, thank God, our assets are also large. Our debts, both state and South-wide, are around \$18,000,000.

"Pessimism will never pay debts. Economy, co-operation, wise optimism, faith in God, and a constructive program of debt-paying will pay us out, save our cause, our morale, and enable us to go on in a greater fashion.

"The convention should have done more to pay off debts than it did. Only two things were proposed—the increase of gifts through the budget and a quiet campaign for large gifts. We should have, and sooner or later will have, to do something extra and special for debt-paying. It could be done through the budget and not hurt the budget. The Convention worked really at only one end of our debt problem and that was the expenditure end. We must work at the other end in an especial manner, the larger income end. We must approach our debts, not in pessimism and panic, not destructively, but in faith, optimism and constructively.

"The Convention was not a very good Convention."

A somewhat different view is expressed by Mr. M. H. Wolfe, who was, until a short time ago, Chairman of the Deacons' Board of Dr. Truett's church in Dallas, Texas. We quote the following also from *The Fundamentalist*:

DEACON M. H. WOLFE HAPPY OVER SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.

"Southern Baptists on Right Track."

"Southern Baptists in the recent Convention at Louisville, Ky., evidently struck the right track. An old coon dog always knows when he strikes a hot trail.

"The morning the Southern Baptist Convention opened in Louisville, I was sitting about the middle of the 4,000 messengers, and when Dr. George W. McDaniel delivered his message as retiring president of the Convention, I could see that he rang the Baptist bell and every messenger around me knew that he had struck the Baptist trail that would lead us back to the great Commission. He did not soft-pedal the issues in order to save the feelings of the brethren, but he put the cause of Jesus Christ above men and in plain English pointed the way out of the ditch into which Baptists have fallen.

"Some time ago one of my best friends, a Methodist bishop, was holding conference out in West Texas. The presiding elders were there from all over the West. The bishop was asking each one how his work was going. Finally a good old presiding elder arose and said to the bishop that he was having the worst time of all his long experience as a minister; and the bishop pressed him to specify his troubles. The good brother blurted out the information: "A drove of young Baptist preachers from Simmons University at Abilene are going all over the country with their New Testaments in their pockets and have literally ruined us Methodists; they are baptizing everybody."

"One great lesson should have been learned by us all and that is, when we stick to the great Commission and magnify the faith once delivered, God's blessings rest upon us, but when we go off on some sidetrack the ditch is always just ahead."

SIEGE OF SIANFU. TERRIBLE PRIVATIONS.

Graphic Story at Missionary Meeting in Bristol.

Editor's Note: We publish below a report of an address by Dr. Clement Stockley, son of Rev. T. I. Stockley, formerly of West Croydon Tabernacle, London, who has come to Toronto to take up his duties as instructor in the new Toronto Baptist Seminary. The address will give some conception of the terrible state of things in some parts of China. This address appeared in the "Western Daily Press," of Bristol, England, May 10th, 1927.

A thrilling story of his experience in the seven months siege of Sianfu was told by Dr. Clement Stockley, who has recently arrived home from China and is among the deputation of Baptist missionaries in Bristol for the 108th anniversary meetings of the Bristol Auxiliary of the Baptist Missionary Society. Last night's meeting at Broadmead Chapel, which was largely attended, was the first of the series to be held this week, and was presided over by the Rev. J. Arthur Jones.

The financial statement was presented by Mr. J. E. Hussey, who reported that last year's subscriptions totalled £1,059 15s 5d, a decrease of £45 on the previous year. Old King Street Baptist Church headed the list with £132 3s.

The Chairman remarking upon the missionaries' conduct during the siege of Sianfu said it was the greatest story of modern heroism he had ever heard, and one which should be known throughout other lands.

Dr. Stockley, at the outset remarked that the only foreigners remaining in the interior of China to-day were Dr. B. C. Broomhall and the Rev. E. Phillips at Sianfu, and he asked that the prayers of all would be with them. Relating the circumstances which led up to the siege he said the attacking commander, General Lin, had been ousted from the Governorship of Shensi by General Li in 1924. All during the following year he was gathering together an army and on April 16, 1926, he descended upon Sianfu, where Li was stationed and made an attempt to enter the city. His attacks were repulsed, whereupon he issued the ultimatum that unless the town was cleared within a month he would starve them out.

Hospital Overcrowded.

It being decided to resist his attacks were made in earnest and the city was subjected to bombardment. The most heavily shelled area was in the South where the mission was situated. To the missionaries were brought the wounded, who numbered at least 50 after each attack. So pressed were the mission staff that Dr. Stockley told the Chinese Red Cross they must take their share and it was finally agreed that the missionaries should take the most serious cases, their equipment being much better than that of the Chinese. Throughout the summer they had no fewer than 3,500 out-patients and 1,900 in-patients, of which number 200 died. The hospital staff consisted of but four doctors and 25 nurses. Time went by and the city was in desperate straits. At last it was decided that a deputation of missionaries and Chinese officials should cross the lines and interview General Lin with the object of petitioning him to let the refugees, who had entered the city to the number of 100,000 before his approach, leave. Only one Chinese was willing to go, by the way, others being afraid to risk their lives. Lin's reply to the petition was: "You would not come out in the beginning. You shall not come out now." However, more tender-hearted officers in his army secretly guaranteed that some of the refugees should be permitted to leave by the south gate. Their troubles, however, were by no means at an end, for on passing over many fell in the hands of the soldiers and were robbed of their silver and clothes. "No one in the city thought the siege would have lasted so long," continued Dr. Stockley, "and we now occupied ourselves with finding a method to get the ladies and children of the mission from the city. We asked the Civil Governor's permission for their removal, but he denied it. At last a colonel whom we had treated in the hospital agreed to give an escort from the city provided that the missionaries would remain with them to help them with drafting peace terms and tending to the sick. To this we agreed, and eventually we managed

to get them out of the city." Immediately afterwards things became more desperate. The relief that had been expected did not come, and the city was on the verge of starvation.

Human Flesh Eaten.

"Newly-born babies were killed for a meal for a family, while bodies were dug up from the ground and the flesh sold in the markets," remarked Dr. Stockley, commenting upon the awful conditions existing. Such was the shortage of food that 2,500 died during the last few months of the siege, and it was not uncommon to see the dead lying in the streets. Dr. Stockley said that many were the devices to augment the food supply at the hospital, and one of the most successful was to demand of the Chinese officers, who invariably carried a food supply with them, 20 lbs. or so of flour before he would extract a bullet from them. This was only the case, he it added, when the injury was by no means dangerous. Conditions within the city became worse and worse. The streets were strewn with dead. The soldiers robbed the people of all food supplies. It was impossible to buy food, and many were subsisting on bean cakes normally used for cattle food or fertilizing purposes. The awful state of affairs which existed can well be judged from the following letter from Dr. Stockley, which his brother, Dr. Handley Stockley, at great risk, carried across "no man's land," to the attacking soldiers that it should be delivered to the Rev. J. Shields, also of the Sainfu Mission:—

"Dear Mr. Shields:

"This is just a note to ask you once again to try and get permission for our hospital staff to leave the city and go to their respective homes. We have only a few days' food left, and then our supply comes to an end. We have long stopped feeding our patients, and they have to feed themselves as best they can, for I have no food for them. We are truly in a desperate state and nothing but starvation stares us in the face. Hundreds are dying in the city daily. You cannot understand the state of affairs, it is just simply awful. It is difficult to bury all those that die of starvation and many lie in the streets for days unburied and uncared for. We foreigners can last about two weeks, if we are allowed to keep the little we have."

A Welcome End.

The people, hereabout, declared that they would open the gates and surrender the city but they were prevailed upon to wait three days, what time the soldiers would endeavor to fight a way out. The siege, however, was to come to a welcome end. "On November 28—a beautiful Sunday morning—I was told on awakening that the city gates were open," went on Dr. Stockley. "I did not know what had happened, but on hastening out was overjoyed to find that the trenches outside were empty, and that the attacking force were being hotly pursued by a relief force that had come up."

The speaker concluded with a strong appeal to young men and women to join them, as recruits were never more needed than at the present time.

"GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU."

In our issue of May 12th we published a tract written by Mr. G. A. Lind, of the Sunshine Mission, 604 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill., a skeptic converted when nearly seventy years of age. We gladly give space to this further testimony of God's grace.

"Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."—Jeremiah 33:3.

By G. A. Lind.

God's promises are as true as their Author. When a sinner seeks salvation, he finds it; when he in faith accepts Jesus as his personal Saviour, the condemnation goes out and a wonderful sweet peace comes in—that I know by experience, praise God!

A child of God has this blessed promise: "If you abide in Me and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). When *everything* seems to be spelled *impossible* God's prom-

ises stand, and when, abiding in Jesus, we call upon God for help he delivers us gloriously and becomes dearer than ever. God allows such things to come in our way which can get a cry out to Him from the heart and strengthen the faith and make us humble and acceptable for greater blessings from Him. It is lovely to see the sun smile upon us, but the refreshing rain comes from the clouds, hallelujah!

During the few years I have served my Lord, not having a penny in salary and not asking either in private or in public for any money, God has wondrously provided for all my needs. Sometimes it was long between meals, but what an appetite when at last I sat down to eat! A dyspeptic millionaire would perhaps pay a big sum for such an appetite.

One evening before my street-meeting I had only ten cents for my supper. Of course it was easy to figure out what dishes I could get for that amount. I went into a restaurant, sat down on a "roller" and studied the "bill of fare" printed on the wall. A young man came and sat next to me, saying, "I am treating, what will you have?" I looked at him and said, "Do you mean it?" "Of course I do", and he smiled when I modestly replied, "A glass of milk and a couple of rolls." He said to the waiter, "Bring us ham and eggs and on top of that apple pie and coffee." And when I said, "God bless you", and thanked him he pressed a dollar bill in my hand, saying: "Am glad you enjoyed the supper. Have heard you preach and telling how you were converted, and I am mighty glad you enjoyed my treat." I went into that restaurant with ten cents, had an excellent meal and came out with \$1.10. Yes, God provides wondrously. That happened in Oklahoma City.

During my second missionary journey to Kentucky I had to go from Pikeville to Paintsville to hold a series of meetings. When I asked about the fare I was told it had advanced forty cents. Well, there I stood, lacking forty cents, and the train coming. No time to arrange for the forty cents and it was the only train to Paintsville. What could I do but pray! It was a cry from all my heart, and God heard and answered it. Even as I prayed, an old Kentuckian said he was not returning to Paintsville and that I could have his ticket for nothing, just as the train stopped at the station. I got on and came in good time to my destination and preached that evening in the Methodist Church.

You may think what you will, but as for me, I am strongly convinced God had that old Kentuckian to buy that return ticket for this His messenger, even if he did not know it. Surely God's promises are true.

Many incidents could be told in regard to God's wonderful care of this His happy servant, but this tract has not space enough. So, dear child of God, do not look on obstacles and become discouraged, but take hold of God's promises and trust Him. He who is able to save to the uttermost whosoever will, is also able to take good care of every one of His children, hallelujah! Sometimes we are not heard because our prayer has no "seeking" and "knocking" in it. Have faith in God and let your prayer be of the prevailing kind and He "will answer and show great things." Blessed be His Name forever!

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

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T. T. SHIELDS, Editor.

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Lesson 12

Second Quarter.

June 19, 1927.

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

LESSON TEXT: Acts, Chapter 21.

GOLDEN TEXT: "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:14).

1. FROM MILETUS TO JERUSALEM.

1. How a genuine Christian affection found expression. Finding disciples at Tyre, they expressed their concern over Paul's going to Jerusalem, but as he was about to leave them, even their wives and their children went a little way with them to say good-bye; and ere they separated they knelt down on the shore and prayed. What was it that attracted these strangers to each other? What was it that bound their hearts together as though they had been

old friends? It was the "tie that binds"; it was their common interest in Jesus Christ (vs. 1-5). 2. A visit to the house of Philip the evangelist. This Philip was one of the seven deacons, and the one who was so mightily used of God in the great divine visitation at Samaria when multitudes were saved. Paul and his friends had many a hard experience in their journey, but it must have been a treat to find themselves under the hospitable roof of such an one as Philip. What would be the subject of their conversation? As Paul lost no opportunity, even when among unbelievers, to bear witness for Christ, how wonderful must have been the conversation of these two veterans of the Cross! Would they talk together of the Samaritan revival of long ago? Would they exchange experiences, and speak with gratitude of the blessing of God upon them? Philip had four daughters, and they were not only Christians, but they had the gift of prophecy. In such a family circle, what a delightful time Paul and Luke and others with them must have had. Writing about it, perhaps long afterwards, Luke had a very distinct recollection of the many days he spent in the house of Philip. 3. Agabus the prophet (v. 11). Paul's heroic spirit was tested to the utmost. From the beginning the Lord had said, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake". One wonders why it was necessary for Paul to be advised in advance of all the troubles that were awaiting him—not only did he know it for himself, but others had also been forewarned. How many of us could face such a prospect? 4. Paul's friends bade him avoid danger (vs. 4 and 12). How many such counsellors all heroic spirits have! It is considered both wise and prudent, especially in our day, to practise the principle of "safety first". 5. (We have Paul's answer to all such advice in verse 13: he tells them it is not kindness to offer him such counsel; already he has laid himself on the altar—his life is no longer his own, and he is ready to die for the name of Jesus Christ. How magnificent to hear this man, after perhaps twenty-five years of service, still full of love and zeal for the Lord.

II. PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

1. His message to the saints seems to have been always the same wherever he went: he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry (vs. 17-19). It is a fine introduction for any man when he is able to tell what he has seen of the mighty power of God.

2. Paul was advised by the prudent saints at Jerusalem that he had a somewhat doubtful reputation among thousands of believers who were also zealous of the law. Those who thus spoke to him did not understand, apparently, that Paul had earned this reputation by a devotion to a gospel of unadulterated grace,—that it was, indeed, his very loyalty to the fundamentals of the faith that had set in circulation these baseless rumours of his opposition to the law. 3. The political saints advised Paul how to disabuse the minds of his critics, and to win their favour (v. 24). There always have been, and always will be, such counsellors. 4. Paul consented to their proposal, whether heartily or only that he might give them an example of the folly of trying to effect peace in religious matters by compromise, we do not say (v. 26); but all the way from Miletus he had encountered people who were advising him to be careful. He was only human, and perhaps it was only natural that he should at last yield somewhat to his friends. 5. But the failure of this political method was complete (vs. 27-36): if all his friends had deliberately planned to stir up the whole city, they could not have done it more effectively. Such methods as were here recommended always lead to greater confusion; it is invariably better and safer to face one's difficulties frankly, and to meet them in the open and in the light of day. So long as a man takes a straight course, which is perfectly in accord with truth, it is folly for him to trouble himself about false reports of his conduct. They will die by their own weight in the end: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass"; "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass: and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." 6. In the end Paul had to meet his difficulties himself in any case (vs. 37-40). The centurion had heard something about Paul, too, for he supposed him to be an Egyptian which was the chief of four thousand murderers! Cheer up, brother preacher, most of us will have to go some distance yet to catch up with Paul!